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BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the following government offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Justice (DOJ) and its attached agencies 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (1st District, Davao City), listened to the presentation on the proposed FY 2019 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the DOJ and its attached agencies, OMB, COMELEC, and COA.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Doy Leachon (1st District, Oriental Mindoro), sat as the presiding officer during the budget briefing of the four government offices.</p> <p>DOJ Secretary Menardo Guevarra said that under the FY 2019 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the DOJ and its attached agencies are set to receive P21.35 billion, which is 8.59% higher compared to their current budget of P19.66 billion.</p> <p>The DOJ's budget for FY 2019 is distributed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the Secretary (OSEC) – P7.18 billion; Public Attorney's Office (PAO) – P4.29 billion; Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) – P2.94 billion; National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) – P1.64 billion; Land Registration Authority (LRA) – P1.56 billion; Bureau of Immigration (BI) – P1.34 billion; Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) – P1.06 billion; Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) – P983 million; Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) – P212 million; and Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) – P138 million. <p>Guevarra also apprised the Committee of the DOJ's key strategies, core programs, and major accomplishments.</p> <p>On the query of some of the Members of the Committee with regard to the Dengvaxia case, PAO Chief Persida Rueda-Acosta said that criminal cases have already been filed with the DOJ involving the former and incumbent officials of the Department of Health (DOH) and 38 others, including the officers of vaccine manufacturer, Sanofi Pasteur, and its distributor, Zuellig Pharma, for the deaths of children who had been given the Dengvaxia dengue vaccine.</p> <p>Acosta added that the DOJ is working closely with the NBI and other concerned government agencies, such as, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Philippine National Police (PNP), and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), to resolve similar cases filed before it.</p> <p>The DOJ Secretary clarified that all complaints filed in connection with the Dengvaxia case are now under preliminary investigation by a panel of prosecutors from the DOJ.</p>

<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission on Audit (COA) 	<p>budget of P10.28 billion. Out of the proposed budget, P4.02 billion will be distributed as follows: personnel services (PS), P2.84 billion; maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P773.40 million; capital outlay (CO), P211.12 million; and retirement and life insurance premium (RLIP), P198.71 million.</p> <p>The remaining P6.26 billion will be allocated for the following activities/projects: conduct of the national and local elections, P6 billion; continuing registration for overseas absentee voting and payment for expenses of the Office of the Overseas Voting, P189.74 million; and implementation of the information systems strategic plan, P67.09 million.</p> <p>Replying to the query of several lawmakers, Alarcon disclosed that the COMELEC's proposed 2019 budget does not provide for the conduct of a plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law, which she said may require an additional budget of about P854 million.</p> <p>Alarcon requested that the Commission be granted an additional budget of around P2.1 billion to also cover the honoraria of teachers during the 2019 national and local elections.</p> <p>COA's proposed budget under the FY 2019 NEP is P11.58 billion, distributed as follows: PS, P10.37 billion; MOOE, P554.74 million; CO, P18.33 million; and RLIP, P631.38 million.</p> <p>COA Chair Michael Aguinaldo said that the DBM-recommended budget is 13.6% lower than COA's original proposal of P13.4 billion. He explained that the decrease is largely due to the disapproval of COA's proposal to construct additional eight provincial satellite auditing offices (PSAOs) in certain parts of the country. In the last three years, Aguinaldo said that COA was able to complete 38 PSAOs nationwide and intends to establish more PSAOs in all 81 provinces of the country by 2022.</p> <p>Rep. Antonio Tinio (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) opined that the reduction in COA's budget may be considered a violation of the Commission's fiscal autonomy that is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution.</p> <p>Aguinaldo informed the Committee of a joint resolution recently adopted by the members of the Constitutional Fiscal Autonomy Group (CFAG) requesting the DBM to retain/restore the lump sum amount for filling up vacant positions and for retirement and life insurance premiums in the PS budget of their respective offices. Aguinaldo promised to furnish the Committee with a copy of the said resolution.</p> <p>The CFAG is composed of the Supreme Court, Commission on Elections (COMELEC), Civil Service Commission (CSC), COA, Commission on Human Rights (CHR), and Office of the Ombudsman (OMB).</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Ciriaco Calalang (Party-List, KABAYAN) if funds being handled by barangays are subject to audit, Aguinaldo replied in the affirmative. However, Aguinaldo said that the challenge lies in effectively auditing 40,000 barangays around the country with COA having only 6,000 state auditors.</p> <p>Rep. Calalang likewise inquired if government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) that failed to meet their collection targets should be closed down. Aguinaldo said that abolishing or closing down GOCCs is an option open to the government, recalling the abolition of the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (Quedancor) last year for operating at a loss and for no longer</p>
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Continuation... Appropriations		achieving its objectives, among other reasons. It also figured in questionable transactions using the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF).
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Games and Amusements	HRs 132, 321, 343, 394, 1646, 1698 & 1705	Reps. Dimaporo (A.), Floirendo, Velasco-Catera, Sambar, Castelo, Pineda, and Rodriguez (M.)	Congratulating and commending Filipino boxers for defending or winning world boxing titles in different divisions	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Gus Tambunting (2 nd District, Parañaque City), approved the Committee Reports on the seven resolutions.
	HB 2698	Rep. Castelo	Mandating the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) to admit presentation of secondary and other circumstantial evidence if the lotto ticket cannot be validated by the machine while maintaining its integrity and freedom from any fraudulent claim	The Committee discussed with PCSO the status of its contracts with TMA Australia (TMA), the DFFN Inc. (DFFNI), and the Philippine Gaming Management Corporation (PGMC), including the legal cases involving these contracts.
	HBs 2910 & 2946	Rep. Castelo	Authorizing the utilization of PCSO funds from unclaimed lotto prizes for disposition and administration by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for its social welfare programs	PCSO Manager Anna Liza Inciong apprised the Committee of the continuing legal battle between PCSO and TMA Australia which started in 2011 when the contractual joint venture agreement (CJVA) between the two entities was cancelled by PCSO allegedly for violation of certain laws.
	HB 4324	Rep. Olivarez	Requiring the PCSO to print the lotto tickets on a non-thermal paper or any kind of recyclable paper which ensures that the printings thereon cannot be easily erased or obscured by simple scratches and crumples, and can withstand reasonable heat, thereby reducing the possibility of ticket spoilage	The CJVA, executed in December 2009, provides, among others, for the establishment of the first thermal coating plant in the Philippines and the marketing of thermal papers in the local and international markets. PCSO was also under obligation to purchase its thermal paper requirements from this plant.
	HB 5026	Minority Leader Suarez	Declaring the PCSO's "Philippine lotto" and small town lottery the solely recognized legal numbers games	Inciong mentioned that after several cases filed since 2011 between and against the contending parties, the PCSO is now faced with a court ruling issued in December 2017 declaring the CJVA valid, and a writ of execution ordering PCSO to implement the CJVA. Opposing the decision of the court, the PCSO appealed the case before the Court of Appeals (CA). PCSO General Manager Alexander Balutan also informed the Committee that a court order was issued garnishing PCSO's funds deposited with the Philippine National Bank (PNB) amounting to P707 million as payment for the thermal paper delivered to PCSO by TMA after the issuance of the writ of execution. Assistant Government Corporate Counsel Marilyn Estaris of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) said

Continuation... Games and Amusements				<p>that the OGCC filed a petition opposing the court order and seeking the issuance of a temporary restraining order before the Supreme Court (SC), which is still pending resolution.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to issue a subpoena to compel the attendance of TMA Australia representatives in its next meeting. Likewise, representatives from the PNB will be invited to shed light on the garnishment of PCSO's deposits with the bank.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed the legal dispute between PCSO and DFFNI which stemmed from PCSO's termination of its equipment lease agreement (ELA) with DFNNI in 2005. The ELA provided for the exclusive lease from DFNNI of all the hardware, software, and know-how to design and develop a system that would allow processing of bets form personal communication device users nationwide.</p> <p>DFFNI Vice Chair Ramon Garcia Jr. stated that the Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) granted his company's petition for the issuance of a writ of execution with regard to the collection of P310 million from PCSO for liquidated damages and penalties. Nevertheless, Garcia said that the DFFNI is willing to arrive at a compromise with PCSO to settle its claims.</p> <p>Still on another legal dispute, Inciong explained that the PGMC filed for injunctive relief with the Makati RTC to restrain PCSO from proceeding with the bidding for its Nationwide Online Lottery System (NOLS).</p> <p>Inciong said that the NOLS was supposed to be implemented by PCSO upon the expiration this year of its ELA with PGMC and the Pacific Online Systems Corporation (Pacific Online).</p> <p>PGMC Corporate Secretary Jose Bernas claimed that PGMC has exclusive rights to supply online lottery equipment for lotto operations in Luzon under the said agreement. On this basis, Bernas mentioned that PGMC filed a case against PCSO for allowing Pacific Online to operate and supply lottery equipment also in Luzon in the past years. Pacific Online's area of operation is supposed to be in Visayas and Mindanao.</p> <p>PCSO OIC-Assistant General Manager Arnel Casas disclosed that PCSO will extend the contracts of PGMC and Pacific Online for a period of one year during the transition period of NOLS.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	HBs 1909, 7172 & 7288	Reps. Yap (M.), Calderon, and	Providing for the establishment of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) training	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2 nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved the three bills, subject to style and

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education		Dimaporo (M.K.)	centers in the Provinces of Negros Occidental, Cebu, and Lanao del Norte, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>amendment, and the corresponding Committee Reports. The bills shall be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for review of their funding provisions.</p> <p>TESDA Policy and Planning Division Chief Celestino Millar underscored the need to provide budget allocations for the three training centers under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) to sustain their operations.</p>
	HB 7383	Rep. Hofer	Establishing the Philippine Higher Education Career System (Phil-HECS)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study the bill further.</p> <p>Rep. Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon) was designated as the TWG Chair.</p> <p>Rep. Hofer, author of HB 7383, explained that the bill establishes the Phil-HECS in order to strengthen and improve the academic competencies and leadership capabilities of executives and managers of state universities and colleges (SUCs) towards a globally-competitive Philippine education system.</p> <p>Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) President Tirso Ronquillo expressed support for the bill. Similarly, Director Joselito Alisuag of the Office of Institutional Quality Assurance and Governance, Commission on Higher Education (CHED-OIQAG), expressed his support but recommended that the Committee also review existing laws and procedure on the selection of SUC presidents.</p> <p>The PASUC and CHED were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill for consideration by the TWG.</p>
	HR 117	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Urging the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd) to jointly study, research and consider the revision of the current college curricula by reducing the residency of students from five years to four years for five-year degree courses and from four years to three years for four-year degree courses and submit the result of such study at the soonest possible time to the Congress of the Philippines for the passage of an appropriate legislative action	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HR 117.</p> <p>HR 117, authored by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), seeks to determine the possibility of eliminating a year of college education and simplify the college curricula to allow the students to focus more on the major subjects. This proposal will save the students and their families time and money.</p> <p>Rep. Escudero expressed her objection to the intent of the resolution stating that students need more time in college in order to be more prepared.</p> <p>On the other hand, Assistant Chief Aline Magalong of CHED's Office of Programs and Standards Development (CHED-OPSD), expressed support for the measure but requested to be given more time to study it further. The PASUC president also agreed to study the measure further and suggested that</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				an inter-agency body be created that would assess the quality of the Philippine educational system as a whole.
Higher and Technical Education jt. w/ Labor and Employment	Substitute Bill to HBs 5729, 5889, 5923 & 6287	Reps. Vargas, Tugna, Herrera- Dy, and Villafuerte	Instituting a Philippine labor force competency competitiveness program and free access to technical-vocational education and training (TVET)	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2 nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), Chair of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, and Rep. Randolph Ting (3 rd District, Cagayan), Chair of the Committee on Labor and Employment, approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment, and the corresponding Committee Report.
Women and Gender Equality	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 5781, 5956 & 5213	Reps. Villarín, Antonio, and Rocamora	Defining gender-based street, public spaces and online sexual harassment, providing protective measures and prescribing penalties therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BAGONG HENERASYON), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Director Rosalie Dagulo of the Community Programs and Services Bureau, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), suggested the inclusion of other recreational spaces such as cinema halls, theaters, and spas in the definition of “public spaces” in Section 3 (Definition of Terms) of the bill. She added that the definition of “online sexual harassment” should also cover the uploading and sharing of audio recordings and videos without the consent of the subject of harassment.</p> <p>The National Project Officer of the United Nations (UN) Women Safe Cities Global Initiatives, Charisse Jordan, recommended that the term “gender-based harassment” should likewise be clearly defined in the bill, aligning it with RA 9710 (Magna Carta of Women Act of 2009).</p> <p>Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Commissioner Karen Gomez-Dumpit, however, suggested that the term “gender-based street, public spaces, and online sexual harassment” be defined altogether for uniformity purposes.</p> <p>Rep. Tom Villarín (Party-List, AKBAYAN), author of HB 5781, agreed with the suggestions of the resource persons as these are all supportive of the main objective of the bill which is to protect women and to raise consciousness and awareness on women issues.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their position papers on the draft substitute bill on or before August 31.</p>

Comments, suggestions and requests for copies may be sent to the Committee Publication Staff, Committee Management Support Service I, 3rd Floor, Ramon V. Mitra, Jr. Bldg., Batasan Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City. Tel. Nos. 9326118; 9315001 local 7122. Also available at <http://www.congress.gov.ph>