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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)	Consolidated Bill on HBs 73, 2248 & 3233	Reps. Barbers, Cabochan, and Sarmiento	Instituting the Magna Carta of benefits for the officers and personnel of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA)	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1st District, Western Samar), approved the consolidated bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The TWG will hold another meeting to present the amended version of the consolidated bill to the members and the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento, author of HB 3233, explained the importance of his bill as it recognizes the constant risks PDEA personnel are exposed to in the course of performing their duties. The proposed law grants PDEA employees additional benefits commensurate to their responsibilities.</p> <p>Committee Chair Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), author of HB 73, stated that his bill grants combat pay to PDEA drug enforcement officers and other personnel who are exposed to hardship and combat situations or actually assigned in strife-torn or embattled areas. He said that the PDEA Director General is given the discretion to extend the combat pay to other qualified PDEA employees.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the TWG adopted most of the provisions of the consolidated bill. However, the TWG decided to await the submission by the Department of Budget and Management of its recommendations pertaining to the following sections of the consolidated bill: Section 10 - Uniform or Clothing Allowance; Section 15 - Longevity Pay; Section 19 - Basic Salary; Section 23 - Hazard Duty Pay; and Section 24 - Combat Pay.</p> <p>Government Service Insurance System Acting Chief Legal Counsel Lucio Yu Jr. objected to the proposed optional retirement age of 55 and mandatory retirement age of 60 for PDEA personnel. He reiterated that at present, the optional retirement age is 60 and the compulsory retirement age is 65 for government employees.</p> <p>PDEA Director General Wilkins Villanueva expressed his gratitude to the bills' authors for proposing additional benefits for PDEA personnel. He assured the body that PDEA will continue to faithfully fulfill its mandate and implement an efficient and effective campaign against illegal drugs.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their additional recommendations for the TWG's consideration in drafting the amended consolidated bill.</p>
	HBs 5405 & 5804	Reps. Baronda and Belmonte	Institutionalizing Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADAC) in provinces, cities, municipalities and barangays	The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Leonardo Babasa Jr. (2 nd District, Zamboanga del Sur), agreed to consolidate the bills.

<p>Continuation... Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)</p>			<p>throughout the country and providing funds therefor</p>	<p>Iloilo City Rep. Julienne Baronda, author of HB 5405, said that the fight against illegal drugs is a shared responsibility of the entire community and not just the government. ADACs shall spearhead the planning and implementation of all local anti-drug abuse programs, projects, and activities at the LGU level.</p> <p>Rep. Barbers manifested his support for the bills as these will surely help in the government's anti-illegal drug campaign.</p> <p>On the composition of the ADAC, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Ricojudge Janvier Echiverri commented that the inclusion of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Executive Judges in the Council might be in violation of the principle of separation of powers between the Executive and the Judiciary. This view was supported by Department of Justice Senior State Counsel Rosario Cuevas who also opined that it might put into question the independence and impartiality of member judges in deciding on cases filed by the ADACs.</p> <p>On the recommendation of Echiverri, Cuevas, and Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) Undersecretary Benjamin Reyes, the TWG agreed to remove the RTC Executive Judges as members of ADAC. For the same reason, the RTC judges and Municipal Trial Court judges were removed from the membership of the city and municipal ADACs, respectively.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, through its Project Development Manager Jarred Martin Clarianes, suggested that LGUs be exempted from the cap set on the budget for personnel services (PS) prescribed under the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160). According to Clarianes, this would provide the LGUs with the needed flexibility to accommodate additional personnel who will man the proposed ADACs.</p> <p>Department of Budget and Management's Regional Coordination Bureau Director Aries Macaspac opposed this exemption. Macaspac also objected to the DDB and DILG's proposal mandating LGUs to allot at least 2% of their annual budget to implement programs and projects of the ADAC. According to him, requiring LGUs to allot a fixed part of their budget to ADAC programs might hamper their ability to deliver equally important services. Macaspac believes the allocation of funds is best left to the discretion of the LGUs.</p> <p>The TWG agreed that the funding requirement for the institutionalization of ADACs shall be provided through an appropriation by Congress.</p>
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