



# Committee Daily Bulletin

18<sup>th</sup> Congress  
Second Regular Session

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## COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food	HB 4626	Rep. Roman	Establishing the Bataan Rice Research and Development Center in the Municipality of Abucay, Province of Bataan, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1<sup>st</sup> District, Quezon), approved HB 4626 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Geraldine Roman (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bataan), author of HB 4626, sought to amend her bill by establishing instead the Bataan Rice Research and Development (BRRD) Center to be located in Bataan Peninsula State University in the Municipality of Abucay, Bataan.</p> <p>Originally, HB 4626 seeks to establish the Dinalupihan Rice Development Center in Dinalupihan, Bataan. Rep. Roman said that the BRRD will have the same functions as the originally proposed body which are to train farmers to upgrade their entrepreneurial skills and to coordinate with local government units (LGUs) and the private sector on researches pertaining to rice development.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were the Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), and the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA). The PhilRice recommended that it be included among the agencies that the BRRD will collaborate with, and that the scope of BRRD's research will also include vegetables and other high value crops.</p> <p>Rep. Noel Villanueva (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Tarlac) said that prior to the approval of the proposed law, PhilRice should already send some of its personnel to train farmers in Bataan in preparation for the creation of the BRRD.</p> <p>Meanwhile the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) recommended that PhilRice be consulted regarding the proposed functions of the BRRD to avoid duplication.</p> <p>Rep. Roman said that she is amenable to all the suggestions.</p>
	HB 997	Deputy Speaker Romero	Strengthening the sugarcane industry, increasing its annual supplemental budget	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on the three measures.
	HB 2971	Rep. Sagarbarria	Amending Section 11 of RA 10659, otherwise known as the Sugarcane Industry Development Act (SIDA) of 2015 [by proportionately allocating expenditures based on productivity and granting the Sugar Regulatory	<p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Occidental) was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>SRA Administrator Hermenegildo Serafica gave a status report on some of SRA's main</p>

Continuation... Agriculture and Food			Administration (SRA) greater oversight and coordinating powers with pertinent government agencies with regard to importation of sugar]	programs such as its infrastructure program and socialized credit program. He also made a report on SRA's annual budget appropriations for the last five years showing a decreasing trend, as follows: 2016, P1.80 billion; 2017, P1.41 billion; 2018, P1 billion; 2019, P500 million; and 2020, P500 million.
	HR 225	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Inquiry into the reported failure of the SRA in the implementation of RA 10659, causing adverse effects to the sugar industry in general and notably to the small farmers and workers	<p>SRA's 2020 budget was further reduced to P325 million pursuant to DBM National Budget Circular 580 entitled "Adoption of Economy Measures in the Government due to the Emergency Health Situation" issued in April of this year. For 2021, the proposed budget of the SRA is P1.97 billion but the DBM only approved the amount of P712 million.</p> <p>Serafica explained that the SRA experienced some setbacks in the first few years of its implementation of the SIDA, such as the lack of technical personnel. Despite this, he said that the SIDA law, which was enacted in March 2015, is still the best legislation ever enacted for the sugarcane industry. Thus, he requested that it should be given more time to be implemented fully.</p> <p>Serafica also informed the body that the SRA has already executed a multi-year Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Public Works and Highways for its infrastructure programs and has assisted sugar farmers in securing loans from the Landbank of the Philippines (LBP) under its socialized credit program.</p> <p>LBP Assistant Vice President Edgardo Luzano apprised the body that out of the 2,290 individual loan applications that were received by the LBP, 1,906 were approved involving an aggregate amount of P308.55 million as of July 31, 2019. He explained that the reason for the disqualification of some applicants was mainly due to lower capacity to pay citing their past due obligations with other banks.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary Rodolfo Vicerra expressed support for the action plans of the SRA, but recommended that these plans be aligned with DA's current thrusts on farm consolidation and clustering.</p> <p>Meanwhile, DBM Chief Budget and Management Specialist John Castillo recommended that the bills be studied further, including an assessment of the SRA's programs and their impact on the sugar industry to determine the necessity of increasing its budget. He added that the government's collections from the excise tax for sugar-sweetened beverages may be used to further augment the SRA's budget if need be.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the measures were the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Philippine Sugar Millers Association, Inc., Confederation of Sugar</p>

<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food</p>				<p>Producers Associations, Inc., and the Philippine Association of Sugar Refiners Inc. They said that the proposed bills will be beneficial to the sugarcane industry.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) if the sugarcane farmworkers were able to benefit from the Social Amelioration Program, Serafica said yes, adding that a special assistance program with a budget of P49 million was instituted under which each sugarcane farmworker will receive P1,000.</p> <p>Rep. Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD) said that the amount is too small and called on concerned agencies to increase this financial assistance further.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Eufemia "Ka Femia" Cullamat (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), Serafica said that the country is not importing sugar right now. He said the country has a high supply of sugar at present as the demand for sugar decreased during the pandemic.</p> <p>Reps. Estrellita Suansing (1<sup>st</sup> District, Nueva Ecija) asked the SRA why its budget allocations for 2019 and 2020 were reduced to P500 million, which is a huge decrease considering the budget allocations for earlier years averaging P1-billion and above.</p> <p>She also reiterated that under Section 288 of RA 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, a portion of the 30% incremental revenue collected from the excise tax of sugar-sweetened beverages should be used for the benefit of the sugar farmers.</p> <p>Serafica replied that he would coordinate with the Department of Finance on the matter. On the reduction of their budget for 2019 and 2020, he said that according to the DBM it was because of SRA's low absorptive capacity. He attributed this to SRA's lack of proper coordination with the LBP and the DPWH with regard to the implementation of its programs in the previous years.</p> <p>Rep. Villanueva asked the SRA if it has any internal problems which are probably causing its underutilization of funds. Serafica said that one problem is about restrictions in the bidding process which result in failure of bidding and the disqualification of many suppliers insofar as the high standard of specifications are concerned, such as for farm machineries.</p> <p>Rep. Benitez requested the SRA to submit a quarterly accomplishment report on all of its interventions or programs, while Rep. Enverga requested the SRA to submit its roadmap for the development of the sugarcane industry.</p>
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<p><b>Cooperatives Development</b></p>	<p>HR 781</p>	<p>Rep. Canama</p>	<p>Inquiry into the implementation of RA 11364, otherwise known as the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) Charter of 2019</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to HR 781 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Canama inquired on what the CDA has done so far after the approval of RA 11364; the status of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 11364; and the budget of CDA for 2021.</p> <p>CDA Administrator Myrla Paradillo informed the Committee that after the law's approval, the CDA has convened a team which was tasked to draft the IRR of the law. Likewise, the CDA conducted various consultations with cooperatives nationwide and concerned government agencies to get their inputs to the IRR. CDA also consulted with the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) regarding the reorganization of the agency as prescribed under RA 11364.</p> <p>On the status of the IRR, CDA Chairperson Orlando Ravanera said that the IRR was already approved and will be available in two weeks' time. He stressed that the CDA badly needs additional funds in order to properly implement the provisions of the law.</p> <p>CDA Executive Director Ray Elevazo said that the CDA submitted its budget proposal for 2021 in the amount of P806 million to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). However, he surmised that the CDA's budget will probably remain at about P600 million, which will be around the same level as its budget in 2019 and 2020.</p> <p>DBM Budget Specialist Nadjib Bantuas confirmed that the DBM-approved budget for CDA for 2021 is around P611 million. He, however, said that the National Expenditure Program for 2021 has not yet been finalized.</p> <p>Also during the meeting, the Committee agreed to endorse the letters of the cooperative sector to the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP).</p> <p>The cooperative sector's letter to the BIR pertains to Rule IV of the Joint Administrative Order No. 1-2019 which states that the failure of the cooperative to comply with reportorial requirements on first instance will lead to the revocation of its Certificate of Tax Exemption (CTE) and the prohibition to avail of the tax exemption for a year.</p> <p>On the other hand, the letter addressed to LBP pertains to the bank's loan facilities and interest rates available for the cooperatives as well as the request of cooperatives to be recognized as conduits of LBP for its loan programs.</p>
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Continuation... Cooperative Development				Earlier in the meeting, Rep. Canama presented the accomplishments of the Committee from July 22, 2019 to June 4, 2020. He likewise thanked Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” Cayetano (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Taguig City-Pateros), Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Leyte), and the House Secretariat for the support accorded to the Committee.
<b>Energy</b>	Substitute Bill to HBs 1193 & 1266	Rep. Velasco and Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Establishing the Philippine Energy Research and Policy Institute (PERPI)	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair, Rep. Presley de Jesus (Party-List, PHILRECA, approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 1193 and 1266 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The Substitute Bill will be referred to the Committees on Ways and Means and Appropriations for review of its tax and appropriation provisions, respectively.</p> <p>Several Members expressed their support for the passage of the proposed law.</p> <p>University of the Philippines’ (UP) Vice President for Legal Affairs Hector Danny Uy expressed his support for the creation of the PERPI under the UP system which shall be organized in the same way as UP’s Philippine Center for Economic Development and shall operate as a separate and independent personality from the UP.</p> <p>Department of Energy (DOE) Assistant Secretary Gerardo Erguiza Jr. said that the creation of another institute is untimely because of the current pandemic and economic crisis and proposed instead to enhance the existing Energy Policy and Planning Bureau of the DOE.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Bureau of the Treasury’s Director for Research Service Robert Dominick Mariano suggested that the funding of the proposed law should be sourced from the Special Account in the General Fund (SAGF).</p> <p>Rep. De Jesus informed the body that a similar bill, Senate Bill (SB) 1296 authored by Senator Win Gatchalian, was already approved on Third Reading by the Senate on February 26.</p>
<b>Energy jt. w/ Information and Communications Technology</b>	HBs 515 & 646	Reps. Roman and Tambunting	Mandating all electric, cable and telecommunications companies to conduct periodic inspections of their respective utility line installations to ensure strict compliance with the standards and regulations provided under the Philippine Electrical Code	The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Presley de Jesus (Party-List, PHILRECA), Vice Chair of the Committee on Energy, and Rep. Victor Yap (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Tarlac), Chair of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, directed the Secretariat to come up with a substitute bill.
	HB 4222	Rep. Go (M.)	Mandating the proper installation and maintenance of electric and cable wires and posts by certain public utilities for purposes of public safety and good housekeeping	<p>At the outset, Rep. de Jesus said that the bills seek to address the current problem of tangled or dangling cable wires in electric posts by requiring concerned companies or entities to properly install and maintain their electric cable wires in order to ensure public safety and avoid accidents in the future.</p> <p>Rep. Yap concurred with the statement of Rep. de Jesus and expressed his support for the immediate passage of the bills.</p>

<p>Continuation... Energy jt. w/ Information and Communications Technology</p>				<p>Rep. Joy Myra Tambunting (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Parañaque City), author of HB 646, and Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, author of HB 4222, said that the purpose of the proposed law is to make public utilities more accountable and compliant with the standards set in the Philippine Electrical Code.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bills were the resource persons from the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of Public Works and Highways, Professional Regulation Commission's Board of Electrical Engineering, Manila Electric Company, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company, Sky Cable Corporation, Philippine Federation of Electric Cooperatives, Philippine Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, and the Philippine Electric Plant Owners Association.</p>
	<p>HBs 3960 &amp; 5845</p>	<p>Reps. Almario and Herrera-Dy</p>	<p>Mandating all companies, service providers, industries, and other similar entities that use wires and/or cables, especially those that are engaged in the business of providing telephone, cable, internet service, and power supply to the public, to relocate and/or install their wire and cable system underground or use colored wires and cables to identify their corporation</p>	<p>The Joint Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on the two bills.</p> <p>Although supportive of the intent of the bills, the public utility sector said that moving the existing aerial wires and cables to the underground would entail a huge cost which would be passed on to the consumers. Moreover, the process of moving the wires would be disruptive and might affect the economic activities in the locality, considering the roads that need to be excavated for this purpose.</p>
<p><b>Foreign Affairs</b></p>	<p>Substitute Bill to HBs 340, 1371, 4288, 5316, 5729, 5968 &amp; 6399</p>	<p>Reps. Romualdo, Go (E.C.), Hofer, Eriguel, Nieto, Ditol. (dec.), and Rodriguez</p>	<p>Providing for a new Passport Law, repealing for the purpose RA 8239, otherwise known as the "Philippine Passport Act of 1996"</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The bill will be submitted to the Committee on Appropriations for its consideration of the funding provision.</p> <p>Rep. Hofer said that the proposed law seeks to simplify the passport documentation requirements of the Office of Consular Affairs of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA); to harmonize the provisions of the existing Passport Law with current domestic laws and international agreements affecting the application and issuance of passports; and to provide stiffer penalties to passport related offenses.</p> <p>DFA Office of Consular Affairs (OCA) Passport Division Director Maria Alnee Gamble proposed some amendments to the substitute bill such as the definition of the terms "fugitive from justice," "biometric data," and "biometric information" in Section 3 (Definition of Terms). Likewise, she suggested that only documents issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) will be accepted by the DFA for verification of the applicants' identity, hence documents issued by the local civil registry shall no longer be accepted.</p>

Continuation... Foreign Affairs				<p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro City) suggested that recruitment or travel agencies should be allowed to assist and file the passport applications of applicants on the latter's behalf. Rep. Rodriguez added that in this time of pandemic, the travel agencies are the most affected sector and so they should be allowed to take any opportunity to earn to help speed up the sector's recovery. This will also benefit the applicants needing such assistance.</p> <p>Reps. Rodriguez and Sandra Eriguel (2<sup>nd</sup> District, La Union) suggested that senior citizens be accorded the special privilege of not appearing personally for the application or renewal of passport and that online interview may be done where their photos can be captured.</p> <p>DFA Office of Consular Affairs Assistant Secretary Neil Franck Ferrer said that through its mobile passport service, the DFA goes to different localities so that those who cannot go to the DFA office, including senior citizens, can apply for passports with convenience. However, Ferrer said that at the moment the mobile service is suspended due to the pandemic.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Hofer, Ferrer said that Diplomatic Passports would no longer be subject to revalidation every time the holder travels.</p> <p>With regard to Section 15 (Other Travel Documents), Gamble said that the DFA proposes the issuance of a travel document with a one-year validity in lieu of a passport on the following circumstances: for a Filipino citizen with an urgent travel requirement who lost one's passport or had a damaged or expired passport; and for a Filipino citizen with an emergency health situation but cannot get a regular passport due to time limitations. The Committee adopted this suggestion.</p>
	HR 200	Rep. Castelo	Condemning in the strongest possible terms the shooting at Texas Walmart Store and near a bar in Dayton, Ohio, USA, on August 3 and 4, 2019 respectively, which killed 29 people and wounding 16 others and condoling with the families of the victims	The Committee laid on the table HRs 200, 676, and 692 as they have already been overtaken by events.
	HR 676	Rep. Cabochan	Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives to oppose the unilateral decision of President Duterte to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) between the Philippines and the United States	
	HR 692	Pimentel	Urging President Rodrigo Duterte to allow for the review of the VFA with the United States of America before its termination	

<p><b>Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</b></p>	<p>HRs 1066, 1068, 1069, 1073 &amp; 1074</p>	<p>Reps. Tambunting, Barbers, Defensor (M.), Vargas, and Zarate</p>	<p>Investigation into the alleged corruption in the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)</p>	<p>The Joint Committee, presided by Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, will continue its inquiry pursuant to the five resolutions in its next meeting.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Committee continued its discussion on issues arising from PhilHealth's disbursement of funds under its Interim Reimbursement Mechanism (IRM) and adoption of the case rate payment system in reimbursing hospitals and healthcare institutions (HCIs).</p> <p>Rep Defensor stated that COVID-19 claims may reach P32.45 billion if the PhilHealth's case rate payment system will be followed which means that there will be huge overpayment to HCIs. He stressed that this policy should be totally scrapped because it is unacceptable for PhilHealth to pay a specific amount to HCIs for managing cases or illnesses even if the medical expenses incurred are much lower.</p> <p>Under the case rate payment system, PhilHealth reimburses HCIs a fixed rate for a specific illness/case, covering the fees of health care professionals and the use of hospital facilities. The reimbursement is not based on the actual cost of medical care.</p> <p>Citing the figures submitted by the Department of Health and PhilHealth, Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Marikina City) asked why the number of claims for reimbursement of hospitalization expenses of COVID-19 patients in Regions I, IV-A, IV-B, and VI exceeded the recorded number of patients admitted in the hospitals in these areas.</p> <p>PhilHealth Senior Vice President for Health Finance Policy Sector Israel Pargas explained that some COVID-19 patients may not have been included in the figures yet because of some delays in the transmission of information or other reasons. He added that the number of PhilHealth claims also include those probable and suspect COVID-19 cases.</p> <p>Rep. Quimbo did not buy Pargas' explanation saying that even if there are delays, the discrepancy should have not been that huge.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. (4<sup>th</sup> District, Cavite) if dialysis centers, private birthing facilities, and infirmaries were among the health care institutions that were given IRM funds, Pargas answered in the affirmative.</p> <p>Rep. Barzaga then warned the PhilHealth officials that they may face charges of technical malversation or illegal use of public funds because of the misuse of the IRM. He explained that pursuant to PhilHealth Circular No. 2020-0007 or the Guidelines on the Provisions of Special Privileges to those Affected by a Fortuitous Event, the IRM funds</p>
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<p>Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>should only be used for fortuitous events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Based on this PhilHealth Circular, the Interim Reimbursement Mechanism is a “special privilege for the provision of substantial aid to an eligible Health Care Institution directly hit by fortuitous event with clear and apparent intent to continuously operate and/or rebuild the HCI in order to provide continuous health care services to adversely affected Filipinos.”</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) asserted that PhilHealth Circular No. 2020-0007, which was signed last March 20, should only take effect after its publication in major newspapers and after a copy of it has been furnished the Office of the National Administrative Register (ONAR) of the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center. The ONAR, he said, only received its copy on June 11.</p> <p>Grilled by Deputy Speaker Marcoleta, PhilHealth Senior Vice President of Legal Sector Rodolfo del Rosario Jr. admitted that the release of IRM funds to various healthcare facilities before June 11 was illegal.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Defensor questioned PhilHealth’s decision to only impose fines against WellMed Dialysis Center for committing fraud by submitting to PhilHealth fake claims.</p> <p>Del Rosario explained that there was no more need to suspend WellMed Dialysis Center because its accreditation with PhilHealth was already cancelled last June 2019.</p> <p>Likewise, Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Surigao del Norte) questioned Del Rosario why PhilHealth had not filed any criminal case against its employees involved in the non-remittance of premium payments of Accenture Inc.’s employees amounting to P114 million in 2012.</p> <p>Rep. Barbers said that the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) was not able to access the documents pertinent to the case because Del Rosario invoked the Data Privacy Act. However, Del Rosario countered that the NBI had not asked him for data necessary for its investigation.</p> <p>Confirming anomalies in PhilHealth transactions, Rep. Argel Joseph Cabatbat (Party-List, MAGSASAKA) recounted a case he handled before as a lawyer involving Dr. Mark Dennis Menguita. Rep. Cabatbat said that Menguita is a neurologist based in Region XII and is part of the alleged “mafia” operating in PhilHealth. He said that he exposed Menguita’s involvement in the multimillion-peso false medical claims from PhilHealth and suspected that Menguita could be behind the attempt on his life last February 2018.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>Rep Defensor stressed that this mafia in PhilHealth Region XII disclosed by Rep. Cabatbat should be thoroughly investigated.</p> <p>Senior Deputy Majority Leader Jesus Crispin Remulla (7<sup>th</sup> District, Cavite) and Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy (Party-List, Bagong Henerasyon) were of the opinion that top officials of PHilHealth including Del Rosario and PhilHealth Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Arnel de Jesus should not have been appointed to their positions for lacking certain qualifications. However, the two lawmakers averred that the qualification standards for these positions were deliberately lowered to allow these PhilHealth officials to assume their posts.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez (1<sup>st</sup> District, Laguna) questioned PhilHealth's procurement of IT equipment which he alleged to be overpriced. He likewise called the attention of PhilHealth officials for removing from their website the agency's bid information during the previous years after he brought up the issue on overpriced IT equipment. He reminded the PhilHealth officials that even if they attempt to cover-up wrongdoings, documents can be obtained elsewhere such as from the Department of Budget and Management's Procurement Service - Philippine Government Electronic Procurement Service (PS-PhilGEPS).</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
<p><b>Dangerous Drugs</b> (Technical Working Group)</p>	HBs 68, 2765 & 5932	Reps. Barbers, Rodriguez, Cabochan	Strengthening drug abuse prevention and control, amending for the purpose RA 9165, as amended, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002	The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), terminated its discussion on the 12 bills. The Secretariat was directed to come up with a substitute bill taking into consideration the recommendations of the resource persons.
	HB 368	Rep. Yap (V.)	Adopting the higher prescribed penalty, including death, of the national law of an alien found guilty of trafficking dangerous drugs and other similar substances, amending for the purpose RA 9165	The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.
	HB 742	Rep. Biazon	Amending certain provisions of RA 9165 [by strengthening the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) and establishing the PDEA Academy, among others]	The TWG extensively discussed the proposed amendments to Section 21 of RA 9165, which provides for the custody and actual disposition of confiscated, seized, and/or surrendered dangerous drugs, controlled precursors, and essential chemicals by the law enforcement agencies in order to prevent recycling.
	HBs 896 & 1548	Reps. Mariño and Garbin	Providing for the immediate destruction/disposition of the confiscated, seized and/or surrendered dangerous drugs, plant sources of dangerous drugs, and controlled precursors and essential chemicals, amending for the purpose RA 9165, as amended	The Committee Chairperson, Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Surigao del Norte), proposed the inclusion of a provision in Section 21 of RA 9165 stating that law enforcement agencies must properly document their actual anti-illegal drugs operations, from the beginning

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)	HB 1547	Rep. Garbin	Providing for the legal procedure in the disposition and rehabilitation of drug dependents and/or drug pushers or dealers who voluntarily surrender, amending for the purpose RA 9165, as amended	until the end, through a valid and legitimate technology such as wearing of body cameras. This will help law enforcement agencies in proving that the rules on the custody of evidence have been complied with.
	HB 2995	Rep. Castro	Exempting journalists from acting as anti-drug operations witnesses and amending RA 10640 or the law further strengthening the anti-drug campaign of the government, amending for the purpose Section 21 of RA 9165	Likewise, Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro City) raised the concern of media practitioners that members of media should not be considered as witnesses to the drug buy-bust operations because this puts them in greater risks. He likewise said that media practitioners will be spending much time in attending court hearings as witnesses which could otherwise be used for attending to their work.
	HB 3755	Rep. Rodriguez	Amending Section 36 of RA 9165, on drug testing (by providing for random drug testing instead of a mandatory one)	It was agreed that members of the media may be invited to join or cover anti-drug operations of the government only for journalism purposes. Details and facts about the operation should not be used as condition for the reporter to sign the inventory.
	HB 4104	Rep. Rodriguez	Further amending Section 21 of RA 9165, as amended by RA 10640 (by allowing the presence of media to cover anti-drug operations for journalism purposes only)	Under Section 21 of the law, members of the media who accompany raids are required to sign the inventory of confiscated items. There are times when they are called to testify as witnesses during the hearings of drug cases that they covered.
	HB 5761	Rep. Belmonte	Strengthening the drug abuse prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation, amending for the purpose RA 9165	
<b>Revision of Laws jt. w/ Welfare of Children</b> (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 210, 480, 1689, 2707, 3735, 4160, 4449, 5795, 6073, & 6215	Deputy Speaker Puno, Rep. Brosas, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Cuaresma, Zubiri, Romualdez (Y.M.), Castelo, Benitez, Lim, and Acosta-Alba	Providing for stronger protection against acts of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including increasing the age for determining statutory rape, amending for this purpose Act No. 3815, as amended, also known as the Revised Penal Code, RA 8353, otherwise known as the Anti-Rape Law of 1997, and RA 7610, also known as the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discriminatory Act	<p>The joint technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1<sup>st</sup> District, Agusan del Norte), terminated its deliberation on the Substitute Bill to the 10 bills.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to prepare the final version of the substitute bill, which will be presented to the Joint Committee for approval in its next meeting on August 25.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The crime of rape is a public crime and may be committed against either male or female;</li> <li>• The lack of resistance from the rape victim shall not be construed as giving consent;</li> <li>• The reckoning age for statutory rape will be pegged at 16 years. But, statutory rape shall also apply if the victim, regardless of age, is afflicted with any physical, mental or psychological disability or condition that he or she does not have the capability to resist or give consent;</li> <li>• The "sweetheart clause" will be included in the bill to recognize the existence of a truthful relationship involving minors and will not constitute statutory rape. It pertains to a situation where one or both of the lovers is/are below 16 years old and the age difference between them does not exceed three years;</li> </ul>

<p>Continuation... Revision of Laws jt. w/ Welfare of Children (Technical Working Group)</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The penalty of <i>reclusion perpetua</i> shall be imposed on all forms of rape;</li> <li>• An Affidavit of Desistance and amicable settlement shall be prohibited; and</li> <li>• A relationship, even if consensual, between somebody aged 16 to 18 years and another who is older by at least 10 years shall constitute “statutory seduction.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Welfare of Children</b> (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>Substitute Bill to HBs 5581, 6153, 6160, 6221, 6258, 6265, 6267, 6289, 6304, 6488, 6544, 6681, 7240, 2282 &amp; 2349</p>	<p>Reps. Romualdez, Lim, Castelo, Tan (A.S.), Defensor, Roman, Alonte, Yu, Ferrer (J.), Garin J.), Suarez (A.), Hofer, Vergara, Acosta-Alba, and Deputy Speaker Escudero</p>	<p>Codifying the alternative child care laws and providing funds therefor</p>	<p>The technical working group, chaired by Rep. Rosanna ‘Ria’ Vergara (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Nueva Ecija), will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Program Management Bureau Director Wilma Naviamos gave a briefing on the structure and processes of domestic adoption. She also cited existing laws on alternative family care and discussed DSWD’s regulatory functions particularly in authorizing private residential care facilities to operate.</p> <p>Social welfare officer Anna Maria Alexa Ledesma of the DSWD’s Standards Bureau added that private residential care facilities undergo a series of evaluation and accreditation processes before they are issued a license to operate. This is to ensure that these facilities have the administrative, financial, and technical capacity to provide services that are compliant with DSWD’s standards.</p> <p>Naviamos reported that as of July this year, a total of 8,218 children were identified for permanent placement, 7,818 of whom were issued with a certification declaring them legally available for adoption.</p> <p>With regard to the proposed creation of the National Authority for Child Care (NACC), a one-stop agency within the DSWD, Naviamos was not amenable to it. Instead, she proposed the creation of a bureau within the DSWD that will ensure the proper implementation of childcare laws. She explained that the main reason for the backlog in adoption cases is the lack of personnel to handle such cases.</p> <p>Committee Chair Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez (Party-List, TINGOG SINIRANGAN), author of HB 5581, said the creation of the NACC would address the concerns of the DSWD and improve the latter’s performance in processing adoption cases.</p> <p>The Department of Justice (DOJ) recommended that all adoption cases should remain judicial while the Inter-Country Adoption Board (ICAB) recommended that the adoption process should be administrative.</p> <p>Naviamos agreed that the adoption process should be administrative and should be within</p>

<p>Continuation... Welfare of Children (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>the jurisdiction of the DSWD. She explained that the DSWD would be better equipped for this role, considering the number of its personnel who are specially trained in child development.</p> <p>Rep. Ma. Lourdes Arroyo (5<sup>th</sup> District, Negros Occidental) inquired on the possible interventions that can be done when adoptive parents show a change of behavior in the treatment of their adopted child, who have later on showed signs of defects or abnormalities.</p> <p>Naviamos said that the purpose of conducting intensive evaluation during the adoption process is essentially to prevent these kinds of scenarios from occurring.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Kristine Alexie Tutor (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Bohol) on the possibility of a speedy trial or procedure for adoption cases involving adoptive parents who are related to the child by blood, Naviamos answered that the same adoption procedure is being followed for such cases.</p> <p>DOJ's National Prosecution Service State Prosecutor Claire Eufracia Pagayanan said that the procedure is more tedious when the potential adoptive parent and the child are related by blood because aside from securing the consent of the biological parents, an assessment of the child's situation needs to be conducted to justify the necessity of the child leaving his/her parents to be adopted by relatives.</p> <p>The DSWD social worker will make a home visit to the child's birth family and assess the child's situation and reason for the proposed adoption. In some cases, an ICAB social worker will also visit the home, if the child will be adopted by a relative living abroad. Various documents will be gathered to come up with an Eligibility Assessment and Child Study Report.</p> <p>The DOJ was requested to submit a report on the causes of delay in the adoption process.</p>
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