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Second Regular Session

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## COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Good Government and Public Accountability	HRs 823 & 870	Reps. Yap (E.) and Aumentado	Inquiry into the alleged mishandling or anomalies in the implementation of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1<sup>st</sup> District, Bulacan), will continue its inquiry into alleged anomalies in the implementation of the SAP in its next meeting.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Camarines Sur) said that the purpose of the inquiry is to identify and address the weaknesses in the distribution of financial assistance by the government so as to prevent mishandling of funds or anomalies in program implementation.</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Undersecretary for Social Welfare and Development Danilo Pamong reported that for the second tranche of SAP, P81.1 billion has been released to 13.54 million families or 95% of the total target beneficiaries.</p> <p>Meanwhile, DSWD Undersecretary for Operations Aimee Torre Franca-Neri gave an update on the digital payment scheme being implemented by the DSWD as an alternative mode of distribution for the second tranche of the SAP. She said that the DSWD is in partnership with the following financial service providers (FSPs): PayMaya, GCash, Starpay, Unionbank, Robinsons Bank, and the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC). Out of the P7.3 billion fund channeled to accounts with the seven FSPs, P3.41 billion has been cashed out by the beneficiaries.</p> <p>As requested by the Committee in its meeting on July 16, Undersecretary Torre Franca-Neri reported that as of August 25, there were 150,695 public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers who were able to receive the cash subsidy under the SAP's second tranche.</p> <p>Rep. Sy-Alvarado asked if solo parents are qualified to receive the SAP. DSWD Assistant Secretary Glenda Relova said yes, as long as the parent is living with the child. However, she said that the parent will be ineligible if employed and is still receiving a monthly salary that is more than the minimum wage.</p> <p>On Rep. Sy-Alvarado's query on the total number of beneficiaries under the SAP's first tranche to date, Pamong answered that 17.65 million families have already benefitted from the first tranche of the program.</p>

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>Deputy Speaker Villafuerte chided the DSWD for not yet completing the distribution of the first tranche of the SAP, noting that there are 18 million families targeted as beneficiaries under this program. He also informed the DSWD that beneficiaries are complaining about the P50.00 service fee for every cash-out transaction in some FSPs such as the M Lhuillier.</p> <p>Undersecretary Torre Franca-Neri said that such service fee will only be charged if transactions will be done in FSPs that are not in partnership with the DSWD.</p> <p>On the status of cases filed against public officials who were involved in anomalies in the handling of the SAP, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) Director Joel Napoleon Coronel informed the body that as of August 24, the CIDG is investigating 341 cases involving 1,103 probable suspects, 479 of them are public officials. He added that 28 cases have been resolved while the rest are still pending preliminary investigation.</p> <p>Reacting to the report of the CIDG Director, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte urged the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to already undertake the necessary disciplinary measures against these erring public officials.</p> <p>Rep. Sy-Alvarado urged the DSWD to regularly update its list of beneficiaries under the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) so that eligible graduates can be removed to make way for families who are in desperate need of financial assistance at this time.</p> <p>The Committee will issue a subpoena to Iriga City Mayor Madelaine Alfelor-Gazmen and other officials who failed to attend today's inquiry despite the invitations sent by the Committee.</p>
<p><b>Labor and Employment</b></p>	<p>Substitute Bill to HBs 81, 181, 1019, 1766, 4875, 5596, 6157 &amp; 6549</p>	<p>Rep. Ong (R.), Deputy Speaker Romero, Rep. Castelo, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Rodriguez, Nieto, De Venecia, and Gaite</p>	<p>Protecting workers in the film, television and radio entertainment industry</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to the eight bills.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda said the proposed law is a fitting tribute to the late veteran actor Eddie Garcia.</p> <p>Rep. Christopher de Venecia (4<sup>th</sup> District, Pangasinan), author of HB 6157, agreed with the Chair and said that the proposed law will also be known as the "Eddie Garcia Act" as it was filed in response to the actor's unfortunate accidental death during a shoot for a television series.</p> <p>The Substitute Bill contains provisions on the working hours and conditions for the workers in the film, television, and radio entertainment industry who are senior citizens and minors. It</p>

Continuation... Labor and Employment				<p>also includes provisions on mandatory personnel and production insurance coverage, identification of workplace hazards, and the creation of standard operating procedures.</p> <p>Safety and medical checklist and emergency operational standards and protocol will be required in production sites as well as the presence of safety officers and medical personnel. The payment for full hospitalization and loss of means of livelihood will also be covered should a worker meets an accident on the set.</p>
<b>Tourism</b>	HBs 1562, 2209, 2421, 2534, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2672, 3292, 3362, 3667, 3868, 3869, 4440, 4566, 4717, 4842, 5160, 5262, 5263, 5264, 5265, 5266, 6232 & 6233	Reps. Angara, Aragonés, Abueg-Zaldivar, Espino, Nograles (J.F.F.), Tallado, Plaza, Chungalao, Fuentebella, Amatong, Suarez (D.), Acosta, Deputy Speaker Savellano, and Rep. Fariñas (R.C.)	Declaring provinces, cities, municipalities and other sites in certain parts of the country as ecotourism zones/tourist destinations and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragonés (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Laguna), made an omnibus approval of the 25 bills subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Aragonés requested the authors to submit the technical description of the areas to be declared as ecotourism or tourist destinations as well as the corresponding Sangguniang Resolutions from the respective local government units (LGUs) endorsing the proposed declaration.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bills were the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Public Works and Highways, and the Department of Transportation.</p>
	HB 5770	Rep. Gorriceta	Declaring the year 2020 as "National Golf Tourism Year" in the entire country	<p>The Committee approved HB 5770 subject to style.</p> <p>Rep. Michael Gorriceta (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Iloilo), author of HB 5770, said that his bill seeks to make the Philippines as a premier golf tourism destination in the year 2020 and onwards. He said this will boost the popularity of the game in the country, enhance various golf facilities, and improve the living standards of people employed in golf facilities with the influx of tourists who are golf enthusiasts.</p> <p>DOT Undersecretary Benito Bengzon Jr. expressed his support for the bill.</p>
	HR 119	Rep. Villa	Expressing the full support of the House of Representatives in the observance of World Tourism Day	<p>The Committee adopted HR 119 subject to style.</p> <p>The DOT expressed its support for the measure.</p>
<b>Ways and Means</b>	Substitute Bill to HB 7241	Rep. Sy-Alvarado	Granting San Miguel Aerocity Inc. a franchise to construct, develop, establish, operate, and maintain a domestic and international airport in Bulakan, Bulacan and to construct, develop, establish, operate, and maintain an adjacent airport city	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Albay), approved the tax provisions of the Substitute Bill to HB 7241 subject to amendment and style.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA) presided over the deliberations of this measure.</p> <p>Under Section 16 (Tax Exemptions), the Committee agreed to limit the tax exemptions</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>proposed to be granted to San Miguel Aerocity, Inc. to activities pertaining to construction, development, establishment, and operation of the airport and the Airport City.</p> <p>This, according to Rep. Jesus "Bong" Suntay (4<sup>th</sup> District, Quezon City), will delineate the scope of the concession agreement between the government and San Miguel Corporation (SMC). The San Miguel Aerocity, Inc. is the newest subsidiary of the SMC – one of the largest diversified conglomerates in the country.</p> <p>Likewise, the Committee agreed to amend Section 17 (Internal Rate of Return and Revenue Sharing) of the Substitute Bill, by stating that after the determination by a competent authority that the SMC has fully recovered its investment cost, any excess of the Airport City's 12% per annum internal rate of return (IRR) shall be remitted to the national government.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Reps. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) and France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) manifested their opposition not particularly to the tax provisions but to the franchise bill itself. They are of the opinion that the construction of the airport in Bulacan will have adverse social impact on the community as this will displace thousands of individuals who are presently residing in the proposed project site.</p> <p>SMC's Head of Operations Edgar Dona assured the Committee that SMC shall provide livelihood training and housing, among other benefits, to the displaced individuals.</p> <p>Rep. Garin stressed that constructing a new international gateway will help decongest the Ninoy Aquino International Airport which may subsequently address Metro Manila traffic. These, she said, can be counted as among the substantial benefits of the project.</p> <p>The Committee shall pursue in the plenary concerns regarding the delineation of the geographical extent of the Airport City project, as raised by Rep. Suntay, as well as the reckoning period for the computation of the Airport City's IRR, as raised by Bagiuo City Rep. Mark Go.</p> <p>Likewise, the Committee will look into the following issues: social impact on the communities directly affected by the project; estimated foregone revenues due to the proposed tax exemptions; and the determination of the "competent authority" referred to in the bill.</p>
Youth and Sports Development	HR 1156	Rep. Martinez	Congratulating and commending Filipino pole vaulter Ernest John "EJ" Obiena for winning the bronze medal in the 11 <sup>th</sup> Edition of the International Association of	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Eric Martinez (2 <sup>nd</sup> District, Valenzuela City), adopted HR 1156 and the corresponding Committee Report.

Continuation... Youth and Sports Development			Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Diamond League Athletics held in Monaco on August 15, 2020	
	Substitute Bill to HB 4594	Rep. Torres-Gomez	Institutionalizing a comprehensive national grassroots sports development program centered in the Philippine National Games (PNG)	<p>The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 4594 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The bill will be submitted to the Committee on Appropriations for its consideration of the bill's funding provision.</p> <p>Rep. Alberto Pacquiao (Party-List, OFW FAMILY), Chair of the Subcommittee on Sports which deliberated on the bill, presented the Substitute Bill. One of the salient provisions of the bill is the creation of the PNG, which shall be the lead policy-making and advisory body for the preparation and conduct of the national games.</p> <p>The PNG Board shall be headed by the Executive Secretary, with the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) as the Vice Chairperson and the Chair of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) as the Secretary General. Members of the PNG Board are the Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd), Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and President of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC).</p> <p>Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA) suggested to exclude the AFP among the members of the PNG Board. He explained that pursuant to Article XVI Section 5, paragraph 4, "no member of the armed forces in the active service shall, at any time, be appointed or designated in any capacity to a civilian position in the government including government-owned or controlled corporations or any of their subsidiaries." Hence, Rep. Nograles said the membership of the AFP in the PNG Board is unconstitutional. He, however, clarified that the Constitution does not prohibit the members of the AFP from participating in the national games.</p> <p>Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez (4<sup>th</sup> District, Leyte), author of HB 4594, agreed to the suggestion of Rep. Nograles.</p>
	HB 6339	Rep. Tan (S.A.)	Strengthening the Filipino youth involvement in agriculture and entrepreneurship	<p>The Committee directed the Committee Secretary to draft the substitute bill, incorporating the comments of the Members and resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Sharee Ann Tan (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Samar), author of HB 6339, underscored the need to harness the full potential of the youth sector for the agricultural industry. In her explanatory note attached to the bill, Rep. Tan stated that many Filipino youth refuse to venture into farming which is a threat to food security considering that the average age of farmers in the country now is 57. In order to attract the</p>

<p>Continuation... Youth and Sports Development</p>				<p>younger generation to the agricultural sector, it is necessary to educate the youth on the economic viability of farming by conducting trainings on agriculture, entrepreneurship and financial literacy.</p> <p>Reps. Edward Vera Perez Maceda (4<sup>th</sup> District, Manila) and Antonio "Tonypet" Albano (1<sup>st</sup> District, Isabela) expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>Also expressing support for the proposed law were resource persons from the PSC, DepEd, DILG, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Commission on Population and Development (POPCOM), National Youth Commission (NYC), and National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA).</p> <p>DILG Undersecretary Ricojudge Janvier Echiverri made the following recommendations: to define the term "agricultural hubs" in the bill; to clearly identify the kind of partnership agreement between private and public organizations; and to designate the Department of Agriculture as the implementing agency.</p> <p>NCDA Chief Information Officer Rizalio Sanchez suggested the following: inclusion of agricultural courses in the higher education curriculum; the grant of financial assistance to interested youth under the Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Act; the use of idle lands in universities as venue for agricultural hubs; and the inclusion of the University of the Philippines Los Baños and the Department of Tourism as among the agencies which will implement the proposed law.</p> <p>POPCOM Executive Director Juan Antonio Perez said that the increase in economic participation of the youth will lead to reduction in youth unemployment in rural areas.</p> <p>DTI Assistant Director for Small and Medium Enterprises Development Bureau Alicia Opeña, DSWD Sustainable Livelihood Program National Program Management Office Director Macuto Restituto, and DepEd Bureau of Curriculum Development Assistant Director Samuel Soliven informed the Committee of their respective programs catering to the youth, which can be tapped in the implementation of the proposed law.</p>
	<p>HB 6340</p>	<p>Rep. Tan (S.A.)</p>	<p>Creating a comprehensive policy enabling youth participation in adolescent pregnancy prevention</p>	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6340 in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Tan, author of HB 6340, said that it is alarming to note that the teenage pregnancy incidence in the country is on an increasing trend. Hence, it is imperative to put in place a comprehensive policy that will address adolescent pregnancy. The bill creates a Local Council on Adolescent Pregnancy in the</p>

Continuation... Youth and Sports Development				<p>local government of each province or highly urbanized city to provide a coherent, rational, unified, and confidential response to this problem.</p> <p>Perez expressed support for the bill, adding that the POPCOM has recommended to the President the issuance of an executive order declaring adolescent pregnancy as a national emergency. He also suggested that the proposed Council be made an integral part of the existing local special bodies in local government units (LGUs) such as the local youth development council, local schoolboards, and local health board which already have budgets and can act on projects addressing adolescent pregnancy.</p> <p>Echiverri suggested that the mandate of the Council as the highest policy making body to decide on matters affecting adolescent pregnancy should be elaborated further in the bill so as not to undermine the ordinance-making power of the Sanggunian as well as the local executive power of the local chief executive. He suggested further that the policy-making power of the Council be recommendatory in character.</p> <p>Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association (PGCA) Public Relations Officer Francis Ray Subong expressed support for the bill and suggested that Sangguniang Kabataan members should be trained to have counselling skills.</p> <p>Rep. Tan requested the PGCA to conduct webinars on mental health issues, to which Subong agreed.</p>
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SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Subcommittee on Labor Standards (Labor and Employment)	HB 2476	Rep. Taduran	Providing enhanced protection, security and benefits for media workers	<p>The Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), approved HB 2476 with amendments. The bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Rowena Niña Taduran (Party-List, ACT-CIS), author of HB 2476, said that her bill seeks to provide media workers with added benefits and protection in recognition of their contributions to society and the dangers and risks involved while at work.</p> <p>In today' meeting, the Subcommittee thoroughly discussed all the sections of the bill and noted the comments and suggestions of the resource persons.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<b>Youth and Sports Development</b>	Briefing by the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) and the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) on the preparations of athletes for the Tokyo Olympics amidst the COVID-19 pandemic	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Eric Martinez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Valenzuela City), listened to the presentation of the POC and the PSC on the country's preparations for the Tokyo Olympics amidst the COVID-10 pandemic.</p> <p>POC Chef de Mission for Tokyo Olympics Mariano Araneta Jr. reported that four Filipino athletes have already qualified for the Olympics, namely: Ernest John Obiena, pole vault; Carlos Yulo, gymnastics; Eumir Marcial, men's boxing; and Irish Magno, women's boxing. Mariano disclosed that the POC is still awaiting approval from the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF) to allow the resumption of training for these athletes even if only gradually.</p> <p>PSC National Training Director Marc Velasco reported that the agency has identified the Philippine Institute of Sports Complex and five other sports venues where these athletes can train safely.</p> <p>Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA) asked about the status of PSC's budget for the Olympics to be held in Tokyo, Japan.</p> <p>PSC Chair William Ramirez said that the Department of Budget and Management has deducted a substantial amount from the PSC's budget to pool funds for the government's COVID-19 response. Part of this budget was allocated for the preparatory activities for the Olympics. He appealed for Congress' support to restore this amount in the PSC's budget.</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games which was originally scheduled on July 24 to August 9, 2020 will now be held on July 23 to August 8, 2021.</p>

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<b>Metro Manila Development</b>	Assessment of the contact tracing, testing, and quarantine efforts of the government in Metro Manila	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (1<sup>st</sup> District, Manila), discussed with concerned government agencies and private organizations their efforts relative to contact tracing and testing, and the quarantine measures adopted to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 in Metro Manila.</p> <p>Rep. Lopez underscored the importance of revisiting the efforts that the country has undertaken so far to stem the transmission of COVID-19 in the country, especially in Metro Manila where most of the COVID-19 cases were reported. He lamented that six months after the different community quarantines were imposed in most parts of the country, the COVID-19 cases are still increasing exponentially.</p> <p>Rep. Lopez said that since the proposed Bayanihan to Recover as One Act entails huge expenditures in reviving the economy, the Committee would like to exercise its oversight function to see to it that the government's strategies are "responsive and victorious" in addressing the challenges of COVID-19. He said that instead of resorting to the imposition of enhanced community quarantine which has its economic setbacks, the country could now shift to enhanced contact tracing, testing, and quarantine efforts.</p>

<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>	<p>Health Professionals Alliance Against COVID-19 (HPAAC) representative, Dr. Aileen Espina, said that the group was alarmed by the spike in the number of confirmed cases despite all-out efforts by the government to slow down the transmission of the disease. Early this month, the HPAAC has called on the government to revert Metro Manila to enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), which is the highest and strictest level of community quarantine, amidst the worsening health situation and to provide respite to an already overwhelmed and overworked health workers. (The HPAAC is a coalition of 172 organizations of healthcare professionals nationwide.)</p> <p>Espina explained that the continuing increase in COVID-19 transmission can be attributed to the following: people do not recognize the need to seek medical consultation despite the onset of symptoms; people do not have access or do not know where to seek medical assistance from; people are afraid to seek medical help because of the financial cost it entails or for fear of getting infected when they go to a health facility.</p> <p>To slow down the transmission of COVID-19, the HPAAC proposes a both a family-based and community-based approach. A family-based approach involves strengthening and providing guidance to the family so that each family member would know how to take care and support each other in this time of pandemic. As to community-based approach, it is important to strengthen active case finding and surveillance right in the barangays.</p> <p>Espina urged the government to adopt an efficient contact tracing strategy citing the importance of catching the first generation contacts of a COVID-19 patient at a time that they are still in the incubation period (asymptomatic) and are not yet infectious. She also said that test results should be released in a timely manner so that contact tracing can be conducted immediately.</p> <p>Espina also spoke of the importance of having a central referral network wherein mild to severe COVID-19 patients can be directed promptly to the appropriate and available health or isolation facility.</p> <p>University of the Philippines Assistant Professor Ranjit Rye, who is a member of the UP-OCTA Research Team, conveyed the team's findings that by the end of September, the projected COVID-19 cases in the country will reach 330,000 to 375,000. He added that the National Capital Region (NCR), being the epicenter of the country's COVID-19 pandemic, contributes 55% of the total number of COVID cases to date. However, UP Professor Guido David, also a member of the UP-OCTA Research team, said that the NCR is close to flattening the curve. (The UP-OCTA is a group of researchers from UP and the University of Santos Tomas (UST)).</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Marikina City) questioned the basis of the UP-OCTA Research Team for saying that the curve is flattening. She said that the doubling rate for COVID-19 cases is decreasing, which means it takes a shorter number of days for cases to double, thus clearly suggesting that COVID-19 cases are quickly increasing.</p> <p>UST Professor, Fr. Nicanor Austriaco, also a member of the research team, said that the number of admissions in hospitals has been decreasing for the past two weeks, which should not be happening if the case doubling rate is decreasing.</p> <p>Both Reps. Quimbo and Jose Christopher Belmonte (6<sup>th</sup> District, Quezon City) contended that not all COVID-19 patients are being hospitalized. Hence, the declining hospitalization rate is not a valid indicator that cases are already decreasing.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Baguio City Mayor and contact tracing czar, Benjamin Magalong, emphasized the importance of enhancing the contact</p>
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<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>		<p>tracing capability of local government units (LGUs) in order to prevent local transmission of the disease. With the current situation in Metro Manila, Magalong said that if contact tracing will be improved, the exposure of people to confirmed COVID-19 cases will be lesser which will also lower the chances of transmission.</p> <p>In the case of Baguio City, Magalong shared that the Baguio City government has trained people to do contact tracing and that it continues to innovate ways to further enhance its contact tracing capability. He likewise recognized the participation of the Philippine National Police in the city's contact tracing efforts.</p> <p>Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Deputy Director General Aniceto John Bertiz informed the Committee that TESDA will launch its contact tracing training in September. He encouraged the local governments to hire the trainees after they have completed the training program.</p> <p>Michael Salalima, head of the Public Safety Office and Disaster Risk Reduction Management, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), discussed the projects of the National Task Force (NTF) for COVID-19 in Metro Manila. Some of them are the following: establishment of mega swabbing facilities; conduct of enhanced community testing; establishment of a One Command Center which accepts calls regarding COVID-19 cases and refers patients to hospitals; and implementation of the Oplan Kalinga.</p> <p>Under the Oplan Kalinga Program, COVID-19 patients who are asymptomatic or have a mild case are referred or brought to identified government quarantine facilities where they can stay for free.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Edgar Erice (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Caloocan City) and Rep. Edward Vera Perez Maceda (4<sup>th</sup> District, Manila), Magalong and Espina said that extensive contact tracing should be done to stop the chain of COVID-19 transmission. Magalong maintained that the leadership of the local chief executive is a major factor in the success of this endeavor. Espina added that it is imperative that people should be encouraged to behave as if they have the virus so that they would always take precautionary measures and observe the minimum health protocols set by the government.</p> <p>Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1<sup>st</sup> District, Valenzuela City) shared how the local government of the City of Valenzuela responded quickly to the challenges of the pandemic. He said that since January, the local government has been studying and applying the best practices of other LGUs including that of Baguio City in managing the disease. He also said that the LGUs should be given enough funds to capacitate them and enable them to establish the needed facilities to effectively respond to the pandemic.</p>
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