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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources	HB 2979	Rep. Torres-Gomez	Defining and providing for more severe penalties for large scale exploration and exploitation of corals and coral reefs, and fishing or taking of threatened or endangered species, and other similar acts of destruction of our marine and aquatic resources, further amending for this purpose certain provisions of RA 8550, as amended by RA 10654	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Leo Rafael Cueva (2nd District, Negros Occidental), approved HB 2979 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez (4th District, Leyte), author of HB 2979, underscored the need to impose stricter penalties to put a stop to the destruction and exploitation of the country's marine and aquatic resources, particularly corals and coral reefs, and threatened or endangered species.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC).</p>
	HB 4623	Rep. Dimaporo (A.)	Establishing a coastal aquaculture center in the Municipality of Lala, Province of Lanao del Norte and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 4623 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Abdullah Dimaporo (2nd District, Lanao del Norte), author of HB 4623, said that since the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is still unable to find a suitable site for the proposed coastal aquaculture center, he proposed that the center be established instead inside the existing BFAR Aquaculture Fish Farm located in the same municipality.</p> <p>The BFAR agreed with the proposal of the bill's author.</p> <p>DILG Undersecretary Ricojudge Janvier Echiverri expressed no objection to the bill.</p>
	HB 6342	Rep. Espina	Establishing a multi-species marine hatchery in the Municipality of Biliran, Province of Biliran and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 6342 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Biliran Rep. Gerryboy Espina said that establishing multi-species marine hatchery in the Municipality of Biliran will boost the development of aquaculture in the area which can provide direct and indirect employment to the people.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were the BFAR, DILG, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), and the Biliran Province State University.</p>
	HB 6428	Rep. Bascug	Establishing freshwater aquaculture center in the Municipality of Talacogon,	The Committee approved HB 6428 subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources			Province of Agusan del Sur and appropriating funds therefor	Rep. Alfel Bascug (1 st District, Agusan del Sur), author of HB 6428, said that establishing a freshwater aquaculture center in Agusan del Sur would enhance the capabilities of its fish farmers and eventually improve the economic competitiveness of the province. BFAR-CARAGA recommended the approval of the bill while the SEAFDEC said that it will first conduct a feasibility study on the subject of the bill.
	HB 2407	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Establishing an aquatic research and experimental breeding station for lake, river, and other inland fishes in the first district of the Province of Nueva Ecija, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the two bills and come up with a substitute bill. Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1 st District, Nueva Ecija), author of HBs 2407 and 2408, said that HB 2407 is a refiled bill which was approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives in the 17 th Congress, but was not passed by the Senate for lack of time.
	HB 2408	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Establishing multipurpose fish and shrimp hatcheries in all suitable areas in the first district of the Province of Nueva Ecija, and appropriating funds therefor	BFAR informed the Committee that a suitable site has been identified that could accommodate both the proposed aquatic research and experimental breeding station and the fish and shrimp hatcheries.
	HBs 1728, 3234, 4883, 5413 & 5530	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Sarmiento, Amatong, and Dujali	Establishing multi-species marine hatcheries, aquatic research and breeding stations, and aquaculture centers in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred consideration of the five bills to give BFAR more time to find suitable sites for the proposed hatcheries and research and breeding stations.
	HB 2978	Rep. Torres-Gomez	Strengthening the provisions of RA 8550, otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, by increasing the amount of bail for violation of Sections 87 and 97	The Committee deferred consideration of HB 2978 pending the submission of the official position paper from the DOJ.
	HB 7372	Rep. Tan (S.A.)	Establishing a multi-species marine hatchery in the Municipality of Basey, Province of Samar and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee requested the resource persons to submit their respective position papers on the bill. Since HB 7372 was just referred to the Committee on August 24, Rep. Cueva said that he will give the resource persons more time to come up with their position papers prior to the bill's deliberation.
Health	HB 6995	Rep. Tan (A.)	Providing for the stockpiling of strategic and critical drugs and medicines, vaccines, devices, and materials for public health emergencies, creating for the purpose the Health Procurement and Stockpiling Bureau under the Department of Health (DOH), and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4 th District, Quezon), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune HB 6995. Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2 nd District, Bataan) temporarily took over as presiding officer to allow Rep. Tan to sponsor her bill. Rep. Tan presented the salient features of HB 6995. She said that the proposed creation of the Health Procurement and

Continuation... Health				<p>Stockpiling Bureau will avoid supply shortages of critical drugs and medicines, vaccines, devices and materials needed during public health emergencies as currently being experienced by the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Under HB 6995, the proposed Bureau shall be tasked to establish a transparent, fair, proactive and innovative procurement system and to stockpile, conserve and facilitate the release of adequate amounts of potentially life-saving pharmaceuticals, vaccines, devices, and materials.</p> <p>Rep. Teodorico Haresco Jr. (2nd District, Aklan) proposed to include a provision in the bill that will impose penalties against mismanagement in the procurement and supply of medicines throughout the country, citing the experience of certain localities that were allegedly supplied with near-expiry drugs and medicines.</p> <p>DOH Procurement Service Director Crispinita Valdez was questioned by several Members of the Committee regarding the shortage of critical drugs and essential medical supplies and the expired and almost expired medicines in the DOH warehouses. Valdez attributed this to the problem with logistics – warehouses and transport facilities – that would efficiently store and distribute the medicines. She said the DOH has to bid out these facilities every time these are needed and the bidding process takes time to complete. She added that the current system of procurement and stockpiling has been overwhelmed by the pandemic, especially coming right after the Taal Volcano eruption.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit their respective position papers for the consideration of the TWG.</p>
	HBs 426, 3111, 3552, 4151, 7122 & 7444	Reps. Rodriguez, Dujali, Marquez, Haresco, Garcia (J.E.), and Yap (E.)	Establishing district, geriatric, and emergency hospitals in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved the 14 bills subject to style and amendment and compliance with the requirements set by the DOH.</p>
	HBs 3086, 3266, 3561, 3590, 4046, 4142, 4234 & 4290	Reps. Villanueva, Veloso, Haresco, Bondoc, Deputy Speaker Pimentel, Reps. Chatto, Bernos, and Ortega	Converting/increasing the bed capacity of hospitals in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	<p>DOH Health Facilities Development Bureau Director Roderick Napulan presented the criteria set by the DOH for establishing, converting, and upgrading hospitals, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an unmet need of hospital beds in an area based on a ratio of 1 bed per 1,000 population; • A Certificate of Need must be obtained from the DOH Center for Health Development to ensure compliance with the bed to population ratio as well as travel time, accessibility, integration with

Continuation... Health				<p>the local hospital development plan, and track record;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feasibility study is undertaken, which includes health care needs analysis, health resource analysis, benchmarking against DOH standards, investment planning, stakeholder mobilization, and planning for monitoring and evaluation; and • The integrity and safety of the hospital facility, especially during emergency crisis and in times of disasters, is ensured. <p>Napulan emphasized that local government units (LGUs) should still exercise administrative and supervisory control over hospitals proposed to be placed under the DOH.</p>
	HB 3120	Rep. Tejada	Providing for the upgrade, modernization, and conversion of the Cotabato Provincial Hospital in the Province of Cotabato into the North Cotabato Regional Hospital under the control, management and supervision of the DOH and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 3120.
	HB 3143	Rep. Bagatsing	Upgrading the Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center (JRRMMC) into a DOH National Center for Trauma, Cancer, and Dermatology and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 3143.
	HB 4213	Rep. Vargas	Providing for the construction of a super health center and lying-in clinic in Barangay Novaliches Proper, Quezon City and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 4213 subject to style.
	HB 1617	Rep. Suarez (A.)	Converting the Quezon Medical Center in Lucena City, Quezon Province, to a regional hospital to be known as the Quezon Regional Hospital, increasing its bed capacity to 300, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the consolidation of HBs 1617 and 2478.
	HB 2478	Rep. Suarez (D.)	Converting the Quezon Medical Center Hospital from secondary to tertiary level hospital and regional training center under the full administrative and technical supervision of the DOH, increasing its bed capacity from 200 to 700, and appropriating funds therefor	
Persons with Disabilities (Special Committee)	HB 7091	Rep. Crisologo	Further amending RA 7277, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, to strengthen its implementation and strict monitoring of its accessibility, appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Arroyo (5 th District, Negros Occidental), will deliberate further on the two measures in its next meeting.
	HR 454	Rep. Yap (E.)	Inquiry into the implementation of RA 10754 or the law expanding the benefits and privileges of persons with disability (PWD) and on the process of the issuance of the identification card for the PWD	At the outset, Rep. Arroyo underscored the need for the establishment of a PWD database and a review and strict implementation of the guidelines for the issuance of PWD cards. She averred that, aside from fake PWD IDs, there were also a lot of cases wherein non-PWDs were able to

<p>Continuation... Persons with Disabilities (Special Committee)</p>				<p>secure such IDs and have taken advantage of the benefits and privileges under RA 10754.</p> <p>Rep. Anthony Peter "Onyx" Crisologo (1st District, Quezon City), author of HB 7091, believes it is high time to amend the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 7277), particularly in expanding the scope of penalties that may be imposed to those involved in the manufacture, sale and use of fake PWD cards.</p> <p>Likewise, Party-List Reps. Rowena Niña Taduran (ACT-CIS) and Ronnie Ong (ANG PROBINSYANO) manifested that the proliferation of these fake PWD cards has created a stigma against legitimate PWDs.</p> <p>Reps. France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) and Dahlia Loyola (5th District, Cavite) both supported the idea of a centralized and up-to-date registry/database for PWDs.</p> <p>Chief Health Program Officer Frances Cuevas of the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, Department of Health (DOH), agreed that the PWD database needs to be updated regularly, pointing out that the information currently being used is based on the last census conducted in 2010.</p> <p>Resto PH President Eric Teng and Southstar Drug General Manager Christine Tueres requested that clearer guidelines be issued in the grant of PWD cards.</p> <p>Rep. Ong presented the case of the Chong family who became the topic of news reports for allegedly having six fake PWD cards under the name of each member of the family. Renato Cada, head of the Quezon City's Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO), told the Committee that the case against the Chong family has already been referred to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and that the personalities involved have been ordered to report to the Quezon City Government Legal Office.</p> <p>Rep. Arroyo informed the Committee that the Chong family had issued an affidavit claiming that they did not violate any law inasmuch as they went through the regular process of securing the PWD cards and were only exercising the rights given to them under existing laws.</p> <p>The Chong family as well as QC government employees involved in the issuance of their PWD cards will be invited in the next meeting of the Committee to shed light on the matter.</p>
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<p>Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>	<p>HRs 1066, 1068, 1069, 1073 & 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, chaired by Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, and Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) that will formulate the Joint Committee's recommendations with regard to the five resolutions.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Joint Committee focused its discussion on the qualification standards that PhilHealth adopted for the hiring or appointment of its top-ranking officials; and the various schemes employed by PhilHealth personnel, in collusion with private individuals or entities, to defraud the state-run health insurance corporation.</p> <p>Rep. Defensor showed a video clip of the Zoom meeting of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) during which CSC Chairperson Alicia dela Rosa-Bala supposedly issued a "verbal guidance" not to disclose to anyone, who would be asking either for investigation or in aid of legislation, the details of the pending administrative cases against PhilHealth officials.</p> <p>Dela Rosa-Bala denied the accusation, saying that she "made no directive, guidance, or insinuations for the Commission to suppress information in any case." She claimed that CSC Commissioner Aileen Lourdes Lizada had a wrong recollection of what transpired during the CSC meeting on August 11. (Lizada was the one who disclosed to the Joint Committee in a previous meeting that there was a "verbal guidance" from Rosa-Bala to withhold information from anyone who would be asking about the details of cases against PhilHealth officials.)</p> <p>The CSC Chairperson went on to explain that the CSC's meeting on August 11 was called to assist the Task Force PhilHealth (which was created by the President) in its task of investigating the alleged PhilHealth fund scam. She further clarified that the pending cases before the CSC are mostly administrative cases involving personnel action, which are non-disciplinary in nature, and that the Commission does not handle criminal cases involving graft and corruption.</p> <p>Several lawmakers took turns in questioning the CSC why it allowed PhilHealth to downgrade the qualification standards for certain positions including those of its top-ranking officials.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>Dela Rosa-Bala said that the CSC only sets the minimum standards of qualification for each salary grade (SG) or position, but government agencies are allowed to set higher qualification standards. In the case of PhilHealth, the agency used the minimum qualification standards for salary grades corresponding to the position of Senior Vice President (SVP) for Legal and SVP for Actuary, adding that there are no qualification standards specific to these positions.</p> <p>On the disbursement of the Interim Reimbursement Mechanism (IRM) during the pandemic, Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) said that funds were released to 712 healthcare facilities nationwide. She added that out of the 458 facilities with liquidated IRMs, 346 or 75% have no COVID-19 claims, which translates to P1.2 billion of IRM funds.</p> <p>PhilHealth SVP for Health Finance Policy Sector Israel Pargas explained that the IRMs were intended to address the direct and indirect effects of the pandemic on the healthcare system.</p> <p>Several Committee Members claimed that the IRMs were used as payment for PhilHealth's past due debts to the healthcare institutions (HCIs).</p> <p>On the suggestion of Rep. Quimbo that the IRM be suspended first, Pargas agreed, adding that PhilHealth is already in the process of reviewing the IRM.</p> <p>Based on PhilHealth Circular No. 2020 - 0007, the IRM 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) brought up the alleged irregularity committed by PhilHealth Internal Legal Department Senior Manager Rogelio Pocallan, who issued a legal opinion that the PhilHealth Board can overturn the 2015 Court of Appeals (CA) ruling on the case versus Perpetual Succor Hospital Inc. in Cebu. The CA decision affirmed the PhilHealth's earlier judgment to suspend the hospital for three months. Because of Pocallan's legal opinion, the erring hospital was only fined the amount of P100,000 and was later reaccredited by PhilHealth.</p> <p>Pocallan explained that the legal opinion he issued was not irregular and was also</p>
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<p>Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>affirmed by the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC).</p> <p>Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte) surmised that Pocallan was ordered to render the legal opinion to suit the wishes of the PhilHealth Board.</p> <p>Upon the motion of Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. (4th District, Cavite), the Joint Committee cited Pocallan in contempt for the latter's unacceptable remarks. Rep. Barzaga chided Pocallan for "misleading the public" that an administrative agency like PhilHealth can change or modify the decision of the CA. Only higher courts can reverse the decision of lower courts. Pocallan was ordered to be detained inside the premises of the House of Representatives until Monday, August 31.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez (1st District, Laguna) said that the PhilHealth's procurement of desktops from Masangkay Computer Center in 2018 was contrary to Section 23 of the 2018 General Appropriations Act (GAA), which states that the information and communications technology (ICT) equipment shall be exclusively procured from the Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management (PS-DBM). Furthermore, the PS-DBM's P39,000 price of a desktop computer is much lower compared to that of the Masangkay Computer Center's price of P62,000, he said.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Fernandez also questioned PhilHealth for allowing the Masangkay Computer Center to enter into a procurement contract with the government when it was already blacklisted by PhilHealth in 2015.</p> <p>With regard to the case of Cardinal Santos Medical Center (CSMC) which owed PhilHealth P240 million in overpayments of insurance claims, former PhilHealth SVP for Legal Sector Edgardo Julio Asuncion affirmed that there was a settlement made in 2011 between PhilHealth and the Hospital Managers Inc., the former hospital manager of CSMC.</p> <p>PhilHealth initially demanded from HMI P240 million because the CSMC allegedly under-deducted from the payment balances of its patients. However, instead of reimbursing the said amount, HMI filed a case against PhilHealth. According to Asuncion, there was arbitration of the case and the judicial accounting ended up with a settlement in which HMI paid only P70 million to the PhilHealth. The amicable settlement, Asuncion added, was submitted to OGCC which opined that the</p>
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Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability				<p>compromise agreement “aply protected the interest of the PhilHealth.”</p> <p>The Joint Committee reiterated its request to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to conduct a fact-finding probe on the alleged P170 million “missing” funds as a result of the settlement between the PhilHealth and the HMI.</p>
Revision of Laws	HB 6923	Deputy Speaker Romero	Prohibiting all forms of online sexual exploitation of children, providing for stiffer penalties and sanctions	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2 nd District, Zambales), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and fine-tune HBs 6923 and 7465.
	HB 7465	Rep. Deloso-Montalla	Defining the crime of sexual abuse or exploitation of children, prescribing penalties therefor, amending for the purpose RA 9775, otherwise known as the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009	<p>The TWG will be headed by the Chairperson herself.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Deloso-Montalla expressed alarm over the growing cases of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) brought about by the advancement in technology and internet connectivity around the world. She cited in particular data collected by international law enforcement agencies showing that the Philippines has the most number of OSEC cases in the world.</p> <p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla urged all stakeholders to participate in local and international cross-section collaboration to protect children from online exploitation.</p> <p>Commenting on HB 6923, representatives from the government and non-government organizations all agreed that the definition of the term “child” be expanded to include not only those who are below the age of 18 but even those who are of legal age but are helpless to protect themselves because of some physical or psychological impairment. The resource persons are from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Department of Justice (DOJ), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Civil Service Commission (CSC), Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Child Rights Network (CRN), Save the Children, and Stairway Foundation</p> <p>DICT legal counsel Chad Martin Moscoso suggested that the provision under Section 22 of RA 9775 on Child Pornography as a Transnational Crime, including its extradition clause, be adopted in HB 6923 to include OSEC as one of the transnational crimes.</p> <p>Likewise, Department of Education (DepEd) Undersecretary Tonisito Umali observed that Section 3 of RA 9775 practically covers what HB 6923 wants to penalize, which is all</p>

<p>Continuation... Revision of Laws</p>				<p>forms of OSEC. Umali suggested that the bill be presented as an amendment to RA 9775, with each section in the bill citing the corresponding section in RA 9775 that will be amended.</p> <p>DOJ State Counsel Grace Quintana and Christian Bioc of the Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP) pushed for stiffer penalties and sanctions than those prescribed under Section 17 of HB 6923. Quintana opined that the penalties and sanctions under the bill are not commensurate with the gravity of the offense and way below than what other related laws prescribe. (The bill provides for minimum penalty of three years imprisonment and a fine of not more than P500,000.)</p> <p>Public Attorney's Office (PAO) legal counsel Christopher Lauren Agatep, likewise, observed that the penalties and sanctions under the bill are all-encompassing and thus recommended that penalties and sanctions be prescribed for each specific offense.</p> <p>Agatep added that the provision on the right to avail of PAO services, Section 15 of HB 6923, must be in accordance with PAO's first come, first served policy and no conflict of interest rule, and must pass the indigent test.</p> <p>On the proposed creation of an Inter-Agency Council on OSEC (IAC-OSEC), Quintana and the representatives from the UNICEF, CRN, CWC, and Plan International Philippines claimed that several inter-agency bodies are already mandated to address the issue on sexual abuse and exploitation of children. They recommended to just strengthen the existing bodies instead of creating a new IAC.</p> <p>Commenting otherwise, CHR representative Aaron Cayabyab underscored the importance of an IAC, particularly with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) as members that will closely coordinate with international law enforcement agencies tasked with handling OSEC cases and other related cybercrimes.</p> <p>PNP Brigadier General Alessandro Abella suggested that the importation and exportation of OSEC materials be classified as contrabands or prohibited goods to allow the Bureau of Customs (BOC) to conduct digital forensic examination of computer devices at ports and airports.</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) inquired whether the bills already incorporate protection for children who are engaged in online learning.</p>
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Continuation... Revision of Laws				Rep. Deloso-Montalla replied that there is no specific provision on the matter but she said it can be incorporated in the bills. The resource persons were requested to submit to the Committee their respective position papers for the consideration of the TWG.
Revision of Laws jt. w/ Welfare of Children	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	The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2 nd District, Zambales), Chair of the Committee on Revision of Laws, and Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez (Party-List, TINGOG SINIRANGAN), Chair of the Committee on the Welfare of Children, approved the Substitute Bill subject to style and amendment.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HB 6721	Rep. Defensor (L.)	Establishing the agriculture information system in all cities and municipalities	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 6721 subject to style and amendment. The Substitute Bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval in its next meeting. Rep. Lorenz Defensor (3rd District, Iloilo), author of HB 6721, said that establishing a nationwide modernized agriculture information system (AIS) would address the mismatch between production and demand as complete and real-time data on agricultural products at the barangay level will be provided by the system. This would result in efficient marketing linkages for small farmers and farm cultivators.</p> <p>He also reiterated that the proposed AIS is already being implemented in Mina, Iloilo which is referred to as the Municipal Agriculture Information System (MAIS).</p> <p>Rep. Benitez asked former Mayor Lydia Grabato of Mina, Iloilo to present the system flow of the MAIS-Farmers Agriculture Resource Management System, for the appreciation of the body.</p> <p>According to Grabato, the MAIS involves the creation of a central information system that provides an up-to-date inventory of all agricultural commodities in the province and provides for easy access to a commodity's real-time supply and production situation at all times. The system also serves as basis for agriculture stakeholders, planners, and local chief executives in coming up with decisions</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Agriculture and Food (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>that would manage agricultural development and production. It also aims to reduce wastage or oversupply of commodities and minimize dependence on importation of commodities that can be grown locally.</p> <p>The TWG thoroughly discussed all the sections of the Substitute Bill. Among the amendments to the Substitute bill that were approved during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a secure, transparent, and independent web application that may be accessed anytime by the public through multi-platform support or cross-platform support devices which can be linked to existing systems in the Department of Agriculture (DA); • Include as part of the demographics of farmers and fisherfolks the following data: age, gender, ethnic group, income, seminars and trainings attended, and assistance received; • Require cities and municipalities through their respective Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) to coordinate with the Municipal Agrarian Reform Office (MARO) in gathering, encoding, and consolidating the profile and demographics of farmers, fisherfolk, and buyers as well as other pertinent data; and • Authorize the Provincial Agricultural Office (PAO) to monitor the submission of reports from municipalities and component cities and to ensure the completeness, accuracy, and validity of the data submitted by the MAO and MARO.
<p>Public Works and Highways (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>Substitute Bill to HBs 175, 238, 364, 723, 825, 923, 1650, 1891, 4008, 5605, 6820, 7334, and HRs 32 & 132</p>	<p>Reps. Tan (A.), Vargas, Yap (V.), Torres-Gomez, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Fernando, Cabochan, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Momo, Suarez (D.), Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, and Rep. Pineda</p>	<p>Regulating the planning, design, construction, occupancy, maintenance, and demolition of buildings; and promoting building resilience against earthquake, fire, flood, landslide, storm, volcanic eruption, and multiple hazards, enacting a new Philippine Building Act, thereby repealing Presidential Decree 1096</p>	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Romeo Momo Sr. (Party-List, CWS), directed the Secretariat to finalize the substitute bill, incorporating therein the recommendations made by the resource persons during the meeting.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Aurelio "Dong" Gonzales Jr. (3rd District, Pampanga), author of HB 825, underscored the importance of accrediting testing laboratories to certify compliance with the highest industry standards. Materials used in construction are tested in these facilities to determine their quality and strength. Hence, it is important that these laboratories are accredited to ensure proper testing procedures and standards for the safety of the public.</p> <p>Both the Deputy Speaker and Rep. Momo, author of HB 5605, agreed that there is a need to amend Batas Pambansa Blg. 220 which sets the guidelines for the construction of</p>

<p>Continuation... Public Works and Highways (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>socialized housing projects in rural and urban areas. Deputy Speaker Gonzales expressed concern on the construction and development of mass housing within the context of BP 220, the standards of which are already outdated. He opined that socialized housing structures may pose a risk to the occupants given the low level of standards provided in the law.</p> <p>Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology head Renato Solidum Jr. agreed with the Deputy Speaker. He added that the standards prescribed under BP 220 may no longer be attuned with present standards in the construction industry.</p> <p>The TWG extensively discussed Sections 40 to 74 of the Substitute Bill and agreed, among others, on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The list of reference standards/codes to be issued every five years by the national building officials shall be reflected in the proposed law's implementing rules and regulations; • There shall be local building officials for special jurisdictions such as the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Department of Agriculture, and other government agencies, as explicitly provided for by applicable laws, who shall regulate the design and construction of buildings or structures under their jurisdiction and/or their registered locators and enterprises; • The local building officials should be licensed and must have a minimum of 10 years of experience in building design and construction; and • Employees of the Office of the Local Building Officials shall be prohibited from practicing their profession and directly competing with private contractors.
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