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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Higher and Technical Education	HBs 6851 7250 & 7349	Reps. Yap (E.), Dalog, and Almario	Establishing Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) training and assessment centers in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, approved HBs 6851, 7250 and 7349 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Mt. Province Rep. Maximo Dalog Jr., author of HB 7250, explained that the establishment of a TESDA Training and Assessment Center in the Municipality of Paracelis, Mountain Province will equip interested residents with adequate entrepreneurial skills and knowledge which will eventually lead to a reduction in unemployment in the community.</p> <p>Rep. Dalog also sponsored HB 6851 in behalf of the author, Rep. Eric Go Yap (Party-List, ACT-CIS). He informed the body that Rep. Yap is amenable to the proposal of the Committee to cluster the adjacent municipalities in the Province of Benguet so that only one training center will be established to serve two or three adjacent municipalities. This would lead to the creation of six training centers to serve the 13 municipalities in the Province of Benguet.</p> <p>The TESDA expressed support for the three bills.</p>
	HB 7020	Rep. Daza	Establishing a provincial office of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Province of Northern Samar and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 7020 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon) sponsored HB 7020 in behalf of the author, Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1st District, Northern Samar). She said that the establishment of a CHED provincial office in Northern Samar will increase the accessibility of the services of CHED and effectively address the concerns of the students.</p> <p>The CHED expressed support for the bill.</p>
	HB 7352	Rep. Singson-Meehan	Converting the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC) in the Province of Ilocos Sur into a state university, integrating therewith the North Luzon Philippines State College (NLPSC) also in the Province of Ilocos Sur to be known as the Ilocos Sur Philippines Polytechnic University (ISPPU) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 7352 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan (2nd District, Ilocos Sur), author of HB 7352, said that the integration of the NLPSC to the ISPSC and the subsequent conversion of the latter to a state university conforms to the CHED's policy on the merger or consolidation of Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) to significantly strengthen and improve the country's higher education sector.</p> <p>The ISPSC and the NLPSC expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>Meanwhile, CHED said that the ISPSC should first comply with the CHED's requirements</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education	HB 6439	Rep. Rodriguez	Upgrading and strengthening the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) to meet the strategic needs of the changing domestic maritime industry, in effect, addressing the global economic and national defense situation	<p>pertaining to the conversion of schools into state universities.</p> <p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6439 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 6439, justified the upgrading of PMMA in order for the school to: offer more technical-vocational undergraduate and graduate maritime courses; accommodate more students from various parts of the country; meet the strategic needs of the changing international and domestic maritime industry; and address the global, economic and national defense situation.</p> <p>The PMMA recommended that it be placed under the CHED and not the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and that the Secretary of the DOTr should be replaced by the Commissioner of CHED in the PMMA Board of Trustees since the objective of the proposed law is to strengthen the learning institution.</p> <p>Further, the PMMA recommended that the Chairpersons of the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education (CHTE) and Senate Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education should be included as members of the Board of Trustees instead of the Chairperson of the Committee on Transportation and the Maritime Command Director of the Philippine National Police.</p> <p>The Committee requested the stakeholders to submit their position papers on the recommendations made by the PMMA relative to HB 6439.</p>
Public Order and Safety	HR 1119	Rep. Pancho	Calling for a one-year extension of validity of firearms registration/license, license to own and possess firearm (LTOPF), and permit to carry firearms outside residence (PTCFOR) due to the COVID-19 pandemic	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1st District, Masbate), adopted HR 1119, as amended, and approved the Committee Report in principle, pending the submission of position papers from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).</p> <p>Rep. Eddiebong Plaza (2nd District, Agusan del Sur) sat as the presiding officer to give the Chair the opportunity to sponsor HR 1119.</p> <p>Rep. Bravo, co-author of HR 1119, explained the need to extend for one year the validity of firearms registration/license as well as the LTOPF and PTCFOR during the pandemic. He said that the implementation of alternative work schemes has reduced the number of personnel handling the applications for renewal of registration and licenses, thus causing delays in the processing and release of the same.</p> <p>Rep. Bravo added that gunowners cannot also attend to the renewal of firearms registration and licenses because of restrictions on mobility pursuant to the quarantine measures imposed in their respective areas.</p>

Continuation... Public Order and Safety				<p>Under RA 10591 or the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act, registration of firearms shall be renewed every four years and all types of licenses to possess a firearm shall be renewed every two years. On the other hand, the validity of the PTCFOR shall only be for one year as stated in the revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 10591.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the measure were the Arms Corporation of the Philippines, Philippine Shooters and Match Officers Confederation, Philippine Practical Shooting Association, Firearms and Ammunition Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (FAMAP,) and the Association of Firearms and Ammunition Dealers.</p> <p>The Body agreed with the suggestion of FAMAP President Gina Marie Angangco to remove the reference to firearm license in the resolution because firearms are not licensed but are only registered based on RA 10591.</p> <p>DILG Undersecretary Ricojudge Janvier Echiverri said that the DILG does not have an official position yet on the proposed measure as it is still waiting for the comments of the PNP and the National Police Commission, which are under the DILG.</p>
	HB 6109	Rep. Cuaresma	Promoting responsible gun handling and ownership, fostering the advancement of the firearms industry and growth of sport shooting by amending for this purpose RA 10591, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act	The Committee agreed to refer HBs 6109 and 6912 to the technical working group (TWG) that was tasked to deliberate on bills seeking to amend RA 10591.
	HB 6912	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Fixing the validity period of the license to own and possess, permit to carry outside residence or place of business and registration of firearms, amending for the purpose Sections 7 and 19 of RA 10591	
Women and Gender Equality	Substitute Bill to HBs 2167 & 4826	Reps. Zarate and Nieto	Declaring May 17 of every year as National Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia, and Phobias on persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1 st District, Bukidnon), approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 2167 and 4826 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bill to HB 1145	Rep. Brosas	Creating the National Filipino Women's Museum	<p>The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 1145 and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>The bill will be forwarded to the Committee on Appropriations for consideration of the bill's funding provision.</p>
	HBs 95, 134, 160, 258, 640, 865, 1041, 1359, 2211, 2870, 4474, 5818 & 6294	Reps. Acosta-Alba, Roman, Belmonte, Cullamat, Deputy Speaker Legarda, Reps. Aglipay,	Prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression (SOGIE) and providing penalties for violations thereof	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the 15 bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee decided to use the bill that was approved on Third Reading during the 17th Congress as its working draft.</p>

Continuation... Women and Gender Equality		Singson-Meehan, Herrera-Dy, Aragones, Olivarez, Abaya, Vargas, and Brosas		Rep. Acosta-Alba, author of HB 95, said that after several years of discussing the SOGIE equality bill in the House of Representatives, the proposed law has never been enacted. This, she said, is lamentable as it shows “our failure to act and acknowledge the issues of violence and discrimination against people on the basis of the diversity of their SOGIESC which has been recognized in the United Nations Human Rights Council as a violation of human rights.” Rep. Acosta-Alba reminded the body that discrimination did not exist in the Philippines before the coming of the colonizers. “It (discrimination) had no place here then, and should definitely not have a place in the present. It is our duty to make sure that it shall have no place in the future,” she stressed.
	HB 1023	Rep. Castelo	Proscribing discrimination against members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community and prescribing penalties for violations thereof	Rep. Acosta-Alba explained that her bill seeks to prohibit the use of sexual identity, gender expression and gender identity as grounds to restrict an individual’s access to education, social welfare, and employment in the military, civil service, and private companies. It also seeks to provide legal protection to members of the LGBT from harassment, bullying, and experiencing harsher disciplinary reactions stemming from their SOGIE.
	HB 4369	Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto	Establishing LGBT, queer, intersexual, asexual, and individuals of various sexual and gender orientations (LGBTQIA+) help and protection desks in all Philippine National Police (PNP) stations, amending for the purpose Title VII of RA 8551, as amended, otherwise known as the PNP Reform and Reorganization Act of 1998	<p>Rep. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), author of HB 134, said that there are Filipinos who are discriminated against simply because they are LGBTQIA+, hence, should be protected by law. Rep. Roman encouraged the lawmakers not to turn a blind eye on this issue and should start crafting laws to address specific problems of specific groups such as the LGBTs.</p> <p>Rep. Roman urged lawmakers to follow the actions of President Rodrigo Duterte, local government units (LGUs), and other developed countries that have promulgated laws protecting the LGBTs against discrimination.</p> <p>In December 2019, the President signed Executive Order 100, which requires all agencies in the Executive branch, including government-owned and controlled corporations, to adopt and implement a diversity and inclusion program that will protect officials and employees from discrimination whether on the basis of sex, age, civil status, religion, ethnicity, physical appearance, health status, as well as sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.</p> <p>Reps. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City) and Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), authors of HBs 160 and 6294, respectively, presented the merits of their bills, citing the Constitution as their main basis. The Constitution’s Declaration of State Policies provides, among others, that the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.</p> <p>Rep. Belmonte added that while many local legislations have already been issued to respond to the clamor to accord equal rights to the LGBTs, national legislation has not yet followed suit.</p>

<p>Continuation... Women and Gender Equality</p>				<p>Other authors of the bills also pushed for the passage of the proposed law, such as Reps. Eufemia "Ka Femia" Cullamat and Carlos Isagani Zarate of Party-List, BAYAN MUNA, and Reps. Michael Edgar Aglipay (Party-List, DIWA) and Alfred Vargas III (5th District, Quezon City).</p> <p>Expressing support for the bills were representatives of the Philippine National Police, Civil Service Commission, Commission on Elections, Commission on Human Rights, Philippine Commission on Women, University of the Philippines College of Law's Gender Law and Policy Program, Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines, Rainbow Rights, Bahaghari, and Lagablab.</p> <p>Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr. (6th District, Manila) explained that while he did not sign up as co-author of any SOGIE equality bill, it does not in any way mean that he disregards the rights of the members of the LGBT. He said "nobody in this country is a second-class citizen," adding that he will defend the people's rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. Thus, the Minority Leader said that he filed an anti-discriminatory bill encompassing all types of discrimination, including discrimination against the LGBT sector. His bill was referred to the Committee on Human Rights.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Armed Forces of the Philippines and religious groups such as the Philippines for Jesus Movement, Jesus is Lord, Lighthouse, Foursquare, Iglesia ni Cristo, and The General Assembly of Presbyterian Church of the Philippines expressed opposition to the bill saying that provisions in the Constitution's Bill of Rights and existing laws already address all forms of discrimination against persons including the LGBTs.</p> <p>Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Ricojude Janvier Echiverri said that the Department is strongly against discrimination towards anybody regardless of sex, age, class, ethnicity, color, religious, and political beliefs, among others. Thus, the DILG advocates equal opportunity and protection for everybody which includes the LGBTs. However, he averred that the Department is against any distortion or abuse of the term "discrimination" and recommended that a clear-cut definition of the term be included in the proposed law to draw the line between what is discriminatory and what is "substantial distinction."</p> <p>Professional Regulation Commission Board of Psychology Member Miriam Cue said that the Board will submit its position paper on the proposed law at a later time.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Information and Communications Technology (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 1655, 4115, 7398 & 7403	Reps. Cabochan, Villarica, Lacson, and Vargas	Establishing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) hubs nationwide	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), terminated its discussion on the Substitute Bill to HBs 165, 4115, 7938, and 7403.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the TWG extensively discussed all sections of the bill.</p> <p>Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Industry Development Bureau Director Rior Santos and Department of Budget and Management (DBM) representative Karen Madrigal interposed no objection to the proposed law.</p> <p>Madrigal, however, sought clarification on whether the fines that will be collected from the violators of the proposed law will go to the government's general fund or will be retained with the DICT.</p> <p>Reps. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO) and Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), respective authors of HBs 1655 and 7398, agreed with the DICT's proposal that the proceeds from the fines be retained by the DICT which may be used for the maintenance of the ICT Hubs.</p> <p>The TWG members were divided on whether or not to include the proposed Digital Infrastructure Fund in the budget of the DICT under the General Appropriations Act. They eventually agreed to elevate the matter to the mother Committee for further discussion.</p> <p>Under the bill, the Digital Infrastructure Fund in the amount of P50 billion shall be appropriated as seed capital and counterpart funding of the national government for the establishment of the ICT hubs.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Higher and Technical Education	Report by CHED on the opening of classes in higher education institutions (HEIs), the use of the flexible learning method, and other issues and concerns relating to the opening of classes	<p>The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, listened to the report of CHED on the opening of classes in HEIs, the mode of learning that will be adopted, and other related issues and concerns.</p> <p>CHED Chairperson J. Prospero De Vera III reported that since the imposition of quarantine measures starting in March, CHED has implemented the flexible learning method in tertiary education through the following modes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full online - for areas with a strong internet connection where students have gadgets and teachers are fully capable of teaching online; • Blended - a combination of online and offline learning for areas where internet connection is medium to weak, where most of the students have gadgets, and where the teachers have some background in online teaching; and

<p>Continuation... Higher and Technical Education</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full offline - for areas without an internet connection, where students have no gadgets, and teachers have little to none online teaching experience. <p>De Vera mentioned Resolution 36 issued on May 13 by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) which sets the date of the opening of classes based on the learning delivery modality of schools. HEIs using full online education may start classes anytime while HEIs that cannot use full online mode can open starting August. Private HEIs are also encouraged to change their academic calendar and open in August. So far, 20 HEIs opened between June and July, 731 HEIs this August, and 186 HEIs will open either in September or October.</p> <p>HEIs are not covered by the directive of the President to move the opening of classes to October as it is applicable only to basic education, according to De Vera. He clarified that the HEIs have different university calendars.</p> <p>De Vera said among the ongoing initiatives of CHED relative to the delivery of education during the pandemic are the PHL CHED Connect, a website or platform containing higher education materials in various formats that are useful for teaching, learning, and research purpose; and the CHED HiEd Bayanihan which offers a virtual and free cooperative learning environment for training, capacity building, and resource sharing among HEI faculty members.</p> <p>The CHED also finalized the proposed guidelines for limited face-to-face classes in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH) and the Public Health Experts Group of the University of the Philippines – Manila. According to De Vera, limited face-to-face classes are necessary especially for college degrees with laboratory and on-the-job training that cannot be fully taught online. Thus, CHED is proposing limited face-to-face classes in 20 provinces and cities classified as low risk or areas under the most lenient modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).</p> <p>De Vera thanked Congress for appropriating P3 billion under the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or the Bayanihan 2 for the development of smart campuses nationwide and P300 million for the social amelioration of teaching and non-teaching personnel of state universities and colleges (SUCs).</p> <p>Several Members expressed concern that not all HEIs are prepared to start classes for the 2020-2021 Academic Year (AY) because of poor internet connectivity, not all faculty members have sufficient training in online teaching, and not all students have the needed gadgets.</p> <p>CHED was requested to submit a report on its consultation with the Department of Information and Communications Technology regarding the internet infrastructure and connectivity of HEIs, as well as the list of areas with poor internet connection.</p>
	<p>Briefing by the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) on its accomplishments and functions under RA 10687 (UniFAST Law) and RA 10931 (Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education), including the disbursement of the tertiary education subsidy (TES)</p>	<p>UniFAST Secretariat OIC-Executive Director Ryan Estevez gave a briefing on the functions and accomplishments of UniFAST under RA 10687 and RA 10931.</p> <p>Estevez said that a budget of P42.5 billion was released for the implementation of the following programs pursuant to RA 10931: 1) free higher education (tuition and miscellaneous fees) in SUCs and CHED-recognized Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs); 2) free Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in public and private institutions registered with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA); 3) Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) or grants-in-aid for poor students in public and private institutions; and 4) Student Loan Program (SLP) for tertiary education students.</p>

<p>Continuation... Higher and Technical Education</p>	<p>For 2020, the original budget of P38.9 billion was reduced to P28.4 billion in compliance with the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) National Budget Circular No. 580 or the "Adoption of economy measures in the government due to the emergency health situation."</p> <p>According to Estevez, there are 559,866 TES beneficiaries for the first semester of AY 2019-2020, of whom 187,042 are enrolled in SUCs, 31,446 in LUCs, and 341,378 in private HEIs.</p> <p>De Vera assured the body that existing TES beneficiaries will continue to be covered by the program. However, new TES grantees for AY 2020-2021 is still up for consideration since there is a possibility that the budget for this schoolyear may be realigned to the programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Rep. Diego "Nonoy" Ty (1st District, Misamis Occidental) sought an explanation as to why some students were reportedly denied of the financial assistance under RA 10931 on account of their place of residence. De Vera explained that the law and its implementing rules and regulations (IRR) provide that a student enrolled in a private school will benefit from the TES only if there is no public school in the locality and the student is a resident of the area. De Vera admitted though that this policy needs to be revisited once the Oversight Committee for RA 10931 convenes.</p> <p>Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN) asked CHED on its specific policies regarding the distribution of the TES under RA 10931. De Vera explained that free tuition and miscellaneous fees and allowances are given to students to cover the cost of their tertiary education. They may enroll in public or private HEIs subject to the requirements under the law. Priority is given to students who are part of households included in the Listahanan 2.0, which is the basis for identifying poor and vulnerable beneficiaries of the government's poverty reduction programs.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Sangcopan on the utilization of the P3 billion allocated to CHED under the Bayanihan 2, De Vera replied that the amount will be used to upgrade the school campuses' connectivity. However, he said that this is still not enough to cover all public campuses nationwide.</p> <p>Committee Members expressed concern on the defects of DSWD's Listahanan 2.0 as there are still many indigent students that are not covered by the list, thus are unable to receive the TES. They also emphasized the need to address issues concerning the "For Later Release (FLR)" expenditure items under the FY 2020 budget which include portions of the budget for TES. If such funds will not be released, the TES beneficiaries, as well as the beneficiaries of other student financial assistance programs, will be adversely affected.</p> <p>The Chair, together with Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), will request a meeting with the House leadership to help resolve the issues regarding the FLR funds.</p>
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