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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Ways and Means	Substitute Bill to HBs 4531, 6765 & 6944 and HR 685	Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto, Reps. Salceda, Garin (S.), and Deputy Speaker Savellano	Imposing value-added tax (VAT) on digital transactions in the Philippines, amending for the purpose Sections 105, 108, 109, 110, 113, 114, and 236 and adding a new Section 105-a of the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997, as amended	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2 nd District, Albay), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 5, 4878 & 5610	Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Rodriguez and Sy-Alvarado	Institutionalizing microfinance programs and access to capital to support and grow micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), allocating funds therefor	The Committee approved the tax provision of the substitute bill subject to amendment. Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), Chair of the Committee on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development, said that the proposed law aims to provide a comprehensive development and assistance programs for MSMEs in all regions of the country to enable them to cope with economic challenges.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 618, 933, 1938, 3174, 3423, 4419, 5401 & 5706	Reps. Marquez, Cabochan, Pineda, Tolentino, Vargas, Suarez (D.), Sy-Limkaichong, and Olivarez	Regulating the use of treatment technology for municipal and hazardous wastes, repealing for the purpose Section 20 of RA 8749, or the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999	The Committee approved the tax provision of the substitute bill subject to amendment. Rep. Carlito Marquez (1 st District, Aklan), author of HB 618, said that a bill with similar subject matter was approved by the House of Representatives on Third Reading during the 17th Congress.
	Substitute Bill to HB 883	Rep. Cabochan	Providing for a comprehensive and rationalized grant of rewards to informers for the discovery of violations of Internal Revenue and Customs laws	The Committee approved Substitute Bill to HB 883. The Secretariat was directed to refer the substitute bill to the Committee on Appropriations for the review of its funding provision.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 597, 1603, 2327 & 2716	Reps. Silverio and Castelo, Deputy Speaker Escudero, and Rep. Gonzaga	Granting hazard pay to judges of the first and second-level trial courts and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill subject to the deletion of Section 2, which states that the proposed hazard pay to judges of the first and second-level trial courts shall not be subject to tax. The Committee agreed to study this tax provision thoroughly and propose a new provision on the matter when the bill is deliberated on at the plenary. Department of Finance Assistant Secretary Dakila Elteen Napao explained that generally, hazard pay is subject to tax. Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon pointed out that under Section 4 of RA 9040 or the Armed Forces of the Philippines Tax

Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>Exemption for Pay and Allowances Act of 2001, the hazard pay granted to AFP personnel "shall not be included in gross incomes and shall be exempt from taxation."</p> <p>Several Members opined that the hazard pay for government employees whose lives are at risk because of the nature of their work should be tax exempt. However, they also said that there should be a ceiling on the amount of hazard pay that would be exempted from tax.</p> <p>Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3rd District, Leyte), Chair of the Committee on Justice, agreed to the decision of the Committee on Ways and Means to delete Section 2 so as not to delay the passage of the proposed law.</p>
HB 6507	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Institutionalizing the task force against illicit trade of tobacco products, appropriating funds therefor, amending for the purpose Section 288-A of RA 8424, as amended, otherwise known as the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) of 1997		<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the measures.</p> <p>Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA) will head the TWG.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), author of HR 79, inquired about the status of the cigarette manufacturer in an economic zone which the BIR recently shut down for allegedly illegally manufacturing cigarettes.</p>
HB 6508	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Amending Sections 129, 164, and 225 of RA 8424, as amended (by addressing the illicit trade of tobacco products to better protect public health interests and ensure the proper collection of taxes)		
HR 79	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Investigation into the manufacturing of illegal cigarettes, fake cigarette labels, and fake revenue stamps; smuggling of fake cigarettes and cigarette-making machines; and loss of revenue because of uncollected taxes		<p>BIR Deputy Commissioner Arnel Guballa said that the cigarette manufacturing company, which was not named during the meeting, is currently being investigated.</p> <p>Senior Vice Chair Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija) wondered why the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) failed to discover that an illegal activity was happening in one of the economic zones. She suggested that PEZA improve its monitoring and regulatory systems to ensure that locators are complying with existing laws, rules and regulations.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Savellano suggested that the Committee conduct an ocular inspection of the PEZA locator in question to know its real status, to which the Committee agreed.</p> <p>Rep. Salceda estimated that the revenue losses from illicit trade of cigarettes may have reached as much as P30 billion in the past two years.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Garin disclosed that there are reports that container vans transporting significant volume of imported goods are "lost" while in transit to the economic zones coming from the ports, intimating that the goods were diverted elsewhere. She called on the concerned government agencies to closely monitor the transport of these container vans to ensure that they reach their intended destination.</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>PEZA Director General Charito Plaza said that the Bureau of Customs (BOC) has devised a GPS-based container tracking system to monitor the transport of all container vans. However, several locator companies opt not to use this tracking system because the BOC charges them P700 per container for it, which for them is too expensive. She also said that other big companies at the economic zones already have their own tracking system.</p> <p>BOC Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero cited the importance of the BOC's tracking system in monitoring cargo movements, including cargoes of importers doing business at the economic zones.</p> <p>Reps. Garin, Estrellita Suansing, Horacio Suansing Jr. (2nd District, Sultan Kudarat), Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA), and Teodorico Haresco Jr. (2nd District, Aklan) called for better coordination between the BOC, PEZA, and BIR in combatting illicit trade.</p>
Welfare of Children	HB 3472	Rep. Ong (R.)	Promoting the rights of deserted or abandoned children with unknown parents, declaring their status as natural-born citizens of the Philippines, and providing penalties against acts inimical to their welfare	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez (Party-List, TINGOG SINIRANGAN), approved HB 3472 subject to style and amendment. The Secretariat was directed to come up with a substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Ronnie Ong (Party-List, ANG PROBINSYANO), author of HB 3472, said his bill seeks to address the discriminatory and oppressive treatment of foundlings or abandoned children because of their inability to identify their biological parents. To protect foundlings from further emotional, psychological, and legal sufferings, the bill mandates the social welfare officer and all other concerned agencies to conduct a proactive and diligent search and inquiry into the facts of birth and parentage of the child. Likewise, the bill declares the status of these children as natural born citizens.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Philippines, Early Childhood Care and Development Council (ECCDC), Inter-Country Adoption Board (ICAB), Association of Child Caring Agencies (ACCAP), Cribs Foundation, Inc., and Adoption Support Group CALABARZON.</p> <p>Among the recommendations that were propounded by the Members and resource persons during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundling certificates should be replaced with birth certificates indicating the foundlings found in the Philippines as natural born Filipinos

Continuation... Welfare of Children				<p>upon adoption;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abandoned infants in Filipino communities outside of the Philippines could also be given a status as natural born Filipino; and The proposed law should have a retroactive effect to all abandoned children found before the bill's passage into law.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 2282, 2349, 5581, 6153, 6160, 6221, 6258, 6265, 6267, 6289, 6304, 6488, 6544 & 6681	Rep. Acosta-Alba, Deputy Speaker Escudero, Reps. Romualdez (Y.M.), Lim, Castelo, Tan (A.S.), Defensor, Roman, Alonte, Yu, Ferrer (J.M.), Garin (J.), Suarez (A.), and Hofer	Codifying the alternative child care laws and providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to harmonize the different positions of the stakeholders. Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) was designated as the TWG Chair.</p> <p>Rep. Diego Ty (1st District, Misamis Occidental) presided over the deliberations on this proposed law to allow the Committee Chair to sponsor her bill.</p> <p>Reps. Romualdez, Aloy Lim (Party-List, RAM), Precious Hipolito Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), and Marlyn "Len" Alonte (Biñan City), respective authors of HBs 5581, 6153, 6160, 6265, 6267, underscored the need to make adoption procedures less tedious and bureaucratic in order to truly uphold the right of the child to family care.</p> <p>The proposed law aims to establish a one-stop agency to improve and expedite the process of adoption, foster care, and other modes of alternative childcare. It also seeks to make adoption administrative in nature, rather than judicial, to make formal adoption accessible.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the measure were the representatives from the DSWD, DFA, DOJ, CWC, ICAB, ACCAP, Child Rights Network (CRN), Adoption Support Group CLABARZON, SOS Children's Villages Philippines, and Bahay Tuluyan.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Roman on why it takes too long to process applications for adoption, DSWD Director Wilma Naviamos said that the DSWD has to undertake a careful review and evaluation of the documents as well as the circumstances of the child and the prospective adoptive parents before coming up with its recommendation. The judiciary process is another aspect in the adoption process and that the DSWD has no control over the length of time this is being done.</p> <p>With regard to the process of adopting Filipino children by foreigners living abroad, Naviamos said that a more careful review is needed as not all children are suitable for inter-country adoption. Naviamos also mentioned that the DSWD is in need of more workers to address the current backlog in processing applications for adoption.</p>

Continuation... Welfare of Children				<p>The resource persons gave the following recommendations during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed one-stop agency on alternative care could be created as an office or bureau within the DSWD; • The adoption process should be done through a combination of administrative and judicial proceedings (hybrid). The DOJ explained that there are cases where administrative procedure for adoption will suffice, such as that provided in RA 11222 or the Simulated Birth Rectification Act. But other cases necessitate a judicial proceeding to allow the court to determine whether the welfare and best interest of the child will be protected through adoption and to observe the demeanor of the parties and the witnesses involved in the adoption process; and • Foreigners who are permanently residing in the Philippines should be eligible to adopt Filipino children.
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)	HBs 68, 368, 742, 896, 1547, 1548, 2765, 2995, 3755, 4104, 5761 & 5932	Reps. Barbers, Yap (V.), Biazon, Mariño, Garbin, Rodriguez, Castro (F.L.), Belmonte, and 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	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), will deliberate further on the 12 bills in its next meeting, using HB 68 as the lead bill.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the TWG agreed to focus its discussion on HB 68 and the amendments proposed by the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB).</p> <p>Committee Chair Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), author of HB 68, said that his proposed measure is a refiled bill which was already approved by the House of Representatives on Third and Final reading during the 17th Congress. He cited the following key provisions of HB 68:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a legal presumption on who is considered as importer, financier, and protector or coddler of illegal drugs; • Penalizes negligent owners or lessors of properties used as clandestine drug laboratories; • Requires Filipino professional and non-professional athletes to undergo mandatory drug testing twice a year; • Extends the criminal liability to the partner, president, director, manager, trustee, estate administrator, or officer of the

<p>Continuation... Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>corporation or partnership which owns the property which was used as a drug den, dive, or resort in violation of the provisions of RA 9165;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures reliability of drug tests by shortening the validity of drug test certificates issued by accredited drug testing centers from the original one-year period to up to three months only; and • Increases the DDB board members to 20 from the existing membership composition of 17. <p>Rep. Barbers recommended that the TWG should no longer discuss the provisions reimposing death penalty, considering that the Committee on Justice will already hold a meeting this Wednesday on bills imposing death penalty on certain heinous crimes.</p> <p>The authors agreed with the suggestion of Rep. Barbers. They also agreed that the Secretariat should come up with a comparative matrix on all the bills which will be discussed in the next TWG meeting.</p> <p>Among the DDB's proposed amendments to HB 68 that the TWG adopted during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of a representative from a media organization and the regional trial court to act as witnesses during drug testing is no longer required, as personnel from the drug testing centers may already act as witnesses who will also ensure that proper procedure in the conduct of drug testing is observed; • A person apprehended or arrested who is found to be positive for drug use and a drug dependent shall be imposed a penalty of not exceeding 18 months of rehabilitation and after care treatment in a government center in order to reduce the risk of relapse; • For apprehended or arrested persons who are not found to be drug dependents after the conduct of drug dependency examination, they shall be referred to counseling or any appropriate intervention as recommended by the Department of Health (DOH)-accredited physician for a period not exceeding six months under such terms and conditions that the Court may impose; and • Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs) and Anti-Drug Abuse Offices (ADAO) shall be established in all local government units (LGUs) to ensure the continuity of program implementation at the LGU level
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Continuation... Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)				especially on preventive education, drug-clearing operations, and community-based rehabilitation. The ADAC will be composed of local officials and representatives of various community organizations tasked to plan, implement and monitor all anti-drug abuse problems in the LGU, while the ADAO shall provide technical and administrative support services to the ADAC and act as its secretariat.
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Good Government and Public Accountability	Briefing on actions taken by the government to address the plight of locally stranded individuals (LSIs) during the COVID-19 pandemic	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), listened to concerned government agencies on the actions they have taken so far to address the plight of LSIs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Rep. Sy-Alvarado stated that the primary objective of the meeting is to ensure that the LSIs will be immediately transported to their home provinces and that they are not infected with COVID-19 so as to prevent the spread of the disease in other parts of the country.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez (1st District, Laguna) asked about the protocols observed by concerned government agencies in attending to the more than 7,000 LSIs who trooped to the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (RMSC) several days ago hoping to get assistance from the government in going back to their home provinces.</p> <p>Presidential Management Staff (PMS) Assistant Secretary Joseph Encabo explained how the huge crowd at the RMSC came about. Referring to the photo that went viral, Encabo said that "a snapshot of the crowd at the baseball stadium does not tell the entire story at all." He added that there are "missing frames" which he would like to inform the Committee so that the latter will appreciate how the technical working group (TWG) handling the government's Hatid-Tulong Program managed the problem.</p> <p>The Hatid-Tulong Program emanates from a presidential directive to help the LSIs stranded in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. It is a whole-of-government approach that provides transportation assistance to the LSIs. The PMS is the lead convener with various government agencies as TWG members.</p> <p>Encabo narrated that at the early stage of the program, the TWG sent text messages to all LSIs who pre-registered or pre-enrolled in the Program giving instructions on what to do next. However, those who received the message passed it on to other LSIs who wanted as well to return to their respective provinces, hence the number of LSIs who went to the RMSC doubled. Given this scenario, Encabo said that the TWG decided to accommodate all the LSIs who were there days before the scheduled send off. The plan was to allow the LSIs entry to the RMSC observing the minimum health protocols. However, heavy rains poured prompting the LSIs to immediately take shelter at the baseball stadium disregarding</p>

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability</p>		<p>the proper entry flow devised by the TWG. Nevertheless, Encabo said that the TWG immediately transferred some of the LSIs to the adjacent football stadium also at the RMSC to avoid overcrowding.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Deputy Speaker Fernandez, Encabo said that the 48 LSIs who tested positive for COVID-19 using rapid testing are still in quarantine facilities awaiting the result of their swab test, which is a confirmatory test for COVID-19.</p> <p>Rep. Sy-Alvarado asked the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) how the government's efforts to transport the LSIs back to their provinces will be affected by the directive of President Rodrigo Duterte placing the National Capital Region (NCR) and the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Bulacan, and Rizal under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) starting August 4.</p> <p>DILG Undersecretary for Peace and Order Bernardo Florence Jr. admitted that there will be delays because under the MECQ, public transportation is suspended. However, Florence agrees with the proposal of the Chair that special passes be issued to LSIs allowing them to travel to their home destinations.</p> <p>On contact tracing, Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN) suggested that the use of the StaySafe.PH – a digital contact tracing application which was approved by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases – be included in the proposed “Bayanihan to Recover as One Act.”</p> <p>Rep. Defensor also stressed the need to disclose the names of persons infected with COVID-19 to allow the Department of Health (DOH) to effectively and efficiently trace the people who may have contracted the disease.</p> <p>DOH National Capital Region Regional Director Corazon Flores said that the Data Privacy Law precludes DOH from making public the names of those infected with COVID-19.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Macnell Lusotan (Party-List, MARINO) raised his concern over the plight of the returning seafarers. He lamented that while the land-based overseas Filipino workers are attended to by concerned government agencies upon their return to the country, giving them swab testing for COVID-19 and accommodating them in government quarantine facilities, the returning sea-based Filipino workers had to rely on their respective manning agencies for these services. Rep. Lusotan stressed that the displaced seafarers should also be assisted by the government and that they should be made beneficiaries of the Social Amelioration Program.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Consultative meeting with the National Economic and Development Authority-Regional Development Council (NEDA-RDC) on its mandate and functions; participation/role of District Representatives and local government units (LGUs) in the RDC; and the implementation of development programs for Regions I & II and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ramon Guico III (5th District, Pangasinan), listened to the presentation of NEDA-RDC on its mandate and functions, participation and role of District Representatives and LGUs in the RDC, and the implementation of development programs for Regions I and II and CAR.</p>

Continuation...
North Luzon Growth
Quadrangle
(Special Committee)

At the outset, Rep. Guico said that the Committee wants to know the NEDA-RDC's strategies and programs in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also said that the Committee intends to determine if the development projects in the three regions are in line with the Regional Development Plan (RDP) and to identify problems that will require solutions in the form of legislation.

NEDA Regional Development Staff Assistant Director Cynthia Villena said that the RDC, which serves as the counterpart of the NEDA Board at the sub-national level, is the primary institution that coordinates and sets the direction of all economic and social development efforts in the region.

Villena said that one of RDC's key functions is the formulation of development plans, policies and programs, such as the RDP and the Regional Development Investment Programs. It also reviews and endorses annual budgets of government agencies at the regional level, state universities and colleges, and special development authorities. The RDC likewise reviews and monitors national plans and programs being implemented in the regions and is in charge of regional coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of national government projects.

NEDA CAR Regional Director Milagros Rimando presented the key projects in North Luzon aimed at improving interconnectivity among the three regions, such as the Itogon-San Manuel Road and the North Eastern Luzon Expressway (NELEX). The conduct of feasibility study for these two projects is on-going. Rimando also presented several priority projects for Regions I, II and CAR that have a total budgetary requirement of P472.7 billion spread over ten years or from 2020 to 2030.

Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan (2nd District, Ilocos Sur) asked about the process and criteria being followed by the RDCs in approving proposed projects.

Rimando said that projects with interregional impact, are vital in achieving the RDP goals, and are aligned with the President's 10-Point Socioeconomic Agenda are given preference by the RDC. Rimando, along with NEDA Region I Director Nestor Rillon and NEDA Region II Director Dionisio Ledres Jr., added that the district representatives are invited to participate in the discussion of which projects are needed for the development of the region as well as in the deliberations of the various agencies' budget at the regional level.

Rep. Guico and several Members maintained that district representatives should be invited to all the meetings of the NEDA-RDC. Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma also said that invitations should be sent to the district representatives days before the scheduled meeting to allow them to adjust their schedules.

Baguio City Rep. Mark Go said he will file a House Resolution requesting President Rodrigo Duterte to include district representatives as a non-voting member of the RDCs.

Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur) pointed out that majority of the projects cited in the report of Rimando are infrastructure projects which may not be a good priority during the pandemic. The Deputy Speaker instead suggested that projects on agriculture and food security be given priority to ensure that the people in the

<p><i>Continuation...</i> North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>		<p>countryside will have food on their table during this difficult time.</p> <p>Rillon assured the Committee that as long as there are no problems concerning mobility, food security in North Luzon will not be a problem. Rillon also reported that there is an oversupply of rice and corn in the area allowing the regions to trade these products outside North Luzon.</p> <p>Rep. Christopher de Venecia (4th District, Pangasinan) suggested that the RDCs include in their priority projects the manufacturing of personal protective equipment (PPEs) using local supplies and materials. This could be an alternative source of income for those affected by the pandemic while boosting the supply of much-needed PPEs, he added.</p> <p>On his part, Rep. Joseph "Jojo" Lara (3rd District, Cagayan) asked the NEDA-RDC to implement first the much-needed infrastructure projects in each region before venturing to interregional projects. Like in his district, he said, basic infrastructure such as bridges are lacking. Rillon explained that although the RDC report focused on interregional projects, there are still a lot of projects catering to the individual needs of the regions.</p> <p>The RDCs in North Luzon were instructed to submit documents relevant to the development projects in the area such as their Regional Development Road Map and the project proposal for the Roll-on/Roll-Off (RoRo) transport system.</p>
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Comments, suggestions and requests for copies may be sent to the Committee Publication Staff, Committee Management Support Service I, 3rd Floor, Ramon V. Mitra, Jr. Bldg., House of Representatives, Constitution Hills, Quezon City, through cmss1.cad.hrep@gmail.com or at tel. nos. 8932-6118/8931-5001 local 7122.
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