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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	Substitute Bill to HB 6375	Rep. Romualdez (Y.M.)	Consolidating all subsequent amendments to the Charter of the Philippine Veterans Bank, reenacting for the said purpose the pertinent portions of RA 3518, as amended, and introducing further amendments thereto	The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, approved the Substitute Bill to HB 6375.
	HB 5913	Rep. Salceda	Providing for a basic regulatory framework for virtual banking	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune the three bills.
	HB 7760	Rep. Salceda	Developing the financial technology industry in the Philippines	Rep. Cua was designated as head of the TWG.
	HB 7863	Rep. Salceda	Establishing fair and inclusive credit reporting mechanisms to ensure equitable credit access to the most vulnerable segments of society	<p>Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay) recognizes that the Philippine banking sector is stable, but noted that it is “very traditional and old-school.” He averred that while it has been a competent steward of the country’s existing wealth, it had not been very effective in creating new wealth for the poor and the working class.</p> <p>On HB 5913, Rep. Salceda stated that providing a regulatory framework for virtual banks will promote the financial inclusion thrust of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). He said the existence of a financial system that is truly accessible is the key to building a strong middle class. He added that virtual banking offers opportunity for fast, reliable and inexpensive delivery of social cash transfer. Thus, accelerating the rollout of critical anti-poverty measures to promptly realize the country’s inclusive growth objectives.</p> <p>With respect to HB 7760, Rep. Salceda said the bill aims to develop a vibrant financial technology sector; attain an enhanced financial inclusion by employing financial technology to provide equitable financial products; facilitate the transfer of expertise from the leading financial technology enterprises to the labor force; maximize the benefits of the shift to the digital economy; and improve the country’s competitiveness in areas of innovation, technological development, and digital readiness.</p> <p>Relative to HB 7863, Rep. Salceda said the bill seeks the development of non-conventional credit scoring system to cover segments of society erstwhile ignored by traditional approaches. He underscored that if the bill is enacted, small businesses, farmers, informal sector workers, and other vulnerable groups</p>

<p>Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries</p>				<p>will have ready access to more affordable credit.</p> <p>Rep. Cua agreed with the statements of Rep. Salceda. He said virtual banking will definitely gain popular support and play a significant role in the future of the banking industry because of its inclusivity, convenience, and cost-saving features. Rep. Cua said the Committee needed to focus on passing urgent bills to respond to the demands of the times, especially with the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bills were representatives from the BSP, Monetary Board (MB), Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines (RBAP), Chamber of Thrift Banks (CTB), Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP), and Credit Information Corporation (CIC).</p> <p>BSP Director Melchor Plabasan, Technology Risk and Innovation Supervision Department, manifested that the BSP welcomes any responsible and constructive innovation in the banking system. Nevertheless, he clarified that virtual or digital banks already exist in the Philippines, but a separate licensing framework for them is currently being developed and finalized by the BSP.</p> <p>BAP President Cezar Consing mentioned several points that must be considered in harmonizing the bills, such as: the need for compatible regulations allowing connectivity of digital banks with conventional ones; the reality that certain products may not be applicable for virtual transactions; the need for supportive telecommunications infrastructures and increased smartphone penetration; and the need to address issues on data-privacy and cyber-security protection, among others.</p> <p>DICT consultant Elias Omar Sana expressed willingness and readiness to provide assistance in technological assessment to the BSP. Likewise, he informed the body that the DICT is currently beefing up the digital infrastructure to support a digital economy. He recommended to invite the National Privacy Commission (NPC) in the TWG deliberations to address the data and cyber security issues.</p> <p>Rep. Cua inquired from the BSP if there has been any collaboration between the BSP and the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (IMF) relative to virtual banking regulations. Plabasan said he is not aware of any such collaboration, but agreed that it is worth pursuing.</p> <p>CTB Vice President Francisco Dizon suggested that the proposed law include</p>
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Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				<p>granting incentives to the banking industry, particularly to the thrift banks, to help them transition to digital or virtual banking. He also proposed that the BSP be given the authority to determine the amount of capital to impose on financial technology firms based on their business activities.</p> <p>Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS) brought to the attention of the BSP a specific concern of the Manila Teacher's Savings and Loans Association. He said that despite being ready to engage and benefit from the use of electronic banking, particularly in the transfer and release of loans, the association cannot just do so because of strict BSP regulations. Plabasan assured Rep. Lacson that he will look into the matter.</p>
Basic Education and Culture	HB 5454	Rep. Kho (W.)	Converting the Villa Elementary School in Barangay Villa, Municipality of Ezperanza, into an integrated school to be known as Villa Integrated School and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, approved HB 5454 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Wilton Kho (3rd District, Masbate), author of HB 5454, manifested that the explanatory note attached to his bill serves as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>Department of Education (DepEd) Undersecretary Tonisito Umali interposed no objection to the bill.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HBs 2075 & 2732	Rep. Sy-Alvarado and Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Strengthening the promotion and delivery of mental health services in basic education through the hiring and deployment of mental health professionals, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, will deliberate further on the Substitute Bill to HBs 2075 and 2732.</p> <p>Rep. Romulo said that the Substitute Bill already addresses the two main issues discussed in earlier meetings of the Committee on the proposed law. These are the insufficient number of guidance counselors that could be hired by the DepEd due to stringent qualifications for the practice of the profession; and the lack of incentives and no career progression for qualified guidance counselors, which discourage them to serve in DepEd schools. Nevertheless, Rep. Romulo asked the Members and resource persons if there are other issues that need to be discussed.</p> <p>DepEd-Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service Director Ronilda Co requested to delete in Section 4 of the bill the disaster risk reduction and management division among those that will be under the proposed Bureau of Health and Well-Being. She said that the function of this division is already being performed by another office in the DepEd equivalent to a bureau.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go inquired if there is an existing bureau in DepEd that handles student and teachers' health and well-being.</p> <p>DepEd Bureau of Human Resource and Organization Development Director Ann Rachel Miguel replied that the School Health</p>

<p>Continuation... Basic Education and Culture</p>				<p>Division and the Employees Welfare Division of the DepEd are the offices tasked to handle the mental and emotional development of learners and teachers.</p> <p>Umali further explained that the two divisions are under two separate bureaus in DepEd. He added that the present organizational setup of the Department is the result of its rationalization program, as such, he thinks that this is already sufficient to effectively perform its mandate. Nevertheless, Umali said that he will submit to the wisdom of Congress on whether or not to create another bureau to address the mental well-being of learners and personnel of DepEd.</p> <p>Rep. Romulo stressed the need to create a new bureau for this purpose to address the problems he cited earlier. He said that there are only 2,000-3,000 guidance counselors catering to 24 million students. He also explained that having a bureau will encourage qualified guidance counselors to stay in DepEd because there is a chance that they will rise from the ranks – from being a guidance counselor in school to working in the bureau itself with a higher position.</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) expressed her support for the bill. She said that the bill will clearly delineate the functions of teachers and guidance counselors. Rep. Castro cited instances where teachers are appointed as guidance counselors instead of licensed psychologists. She stressed that teachers should focus on their primary task of teaching the students while professional counselors should be the ones to handle the mental well-being of students and teachers.</p> <p>Representatives from the Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (<i>E-Net</i>) and Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association (PGCA) manifested their support for the bill.</p> <p>E-NET President Flora Arellano said that the framework, functions, and objectives of the proposed Bureau of Health and Well-Being should be clearly stated in the bill.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to provide all the Members a copy of the position papers of the stakeholders, minutes of the meeting, and a copy of the substitute bill for information and reference.</p>
	<p>HB 4338</p>	<p>Rep. Guico</p>	<p>Establishing a national program for the Filipino gifted children and appropriating funds therefor</p>	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 4338.</p> <p>Representatives from the PGCA and Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP) expressed their support for the bill.</p>

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture	HB 4433	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Integrating "scouting" in the course of study amidst educational institutions, with a view to accomplish the same as a core academic subject, to imbue in the youth patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 4433.</p> <p>Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) National Membership Chair Amelita Dayrit-Go opined that the GSP, which is the national girl scouting association for girls and young women in the Philippines, only conducts scouting outside the formal education. She added that GSP's scouting activities should not be made a formal subject in school.</p> <p>Rep. Go and DepEd Undersecretary for Curriculum and Instruction Diosdado San Antonio agreed with the views of Dayrit-Go. San Antonio said that there is no need to make "scouting" as an academic subject as it is already embedded in the different learning areas in the curriculum.</p> <p>Under HB 4433, "scouting" is defined as a "movement that aims to support young people in their physical, mental and spiritual development, that they may play a constructive role in society, with a strong focus on the outdoors and survival skills."</p>
	HBs 1993 & 6574	Reps. Siao and Lusotan	Integrating mandatory swimming and survival lessons and water safety in K-12 basic education curriculum	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to come up with a substitute bill to HBs 1993 and 6574, incorporating therein the recommendations of the Members and resource persons.</p> <p>MARINO Party-List Rep. Macnell Lusotan was designated as head of the TWG.</p> <p>Rep. Lusotan, author of HB 6574, underscored the need to integrate mandatory swimming and survival lessons and water safety in K-12 basic education curriculum considering that the Philippines is an archipelagic country and is frequently visited by typhoons.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) expressed support for the proposed law. However, she said that some parents of students may not allow their children to undergo swimming lessons in school due to fear for their children's safety.</p> <p>Rep. Go suggested that the proposed law be mandatory. Likewise, he is of the opinion that the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) is the appropriate agency to conduct training on swimming, water survival, and safety protocols for swimming instructors and students.</p>
	HB 5963	Rep. Revilla	Creating new positions for the teaching personnel in the public basic education system, revising the qualification standards thereof and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to deliberate further on HB 5963.</p> <p>Rep. Strike Revilla (2nd District, Cavite) was designated as head of the TWG.</p> <p>Rep. Revilla, author of HB 5963, said that his bill seeks to create the positions of Teacher IV, V, VI, and VII, with corresponding Salary Grades 14, 15, 16, and 17, respectively in</p>

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture				<p>order to provide a gradual and continuous career progression in the teaching track.</p> <p>Currently, he said, the teaching track has Teachers I, II, and III positions, followed by Master Teachers I-IV. There is a gap of four Salary Grades with corresponding substantial differences in Qualification Standards and hiring requirements between Teacher III and Master Teacher I. Hence, his proposal to create four positions in between.</p> <p>As head of DepEd's Bureau of Human Resource and Organization Development, Miguel explained that teachers are seldom promoted because of lack of positions, unless another teacher resigns, is separated from the service, retires, or dies. Miguel said that the DepEd has been working with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) in crafting a career progression policy for teachers, where promotions will be based on the DepEd's Professional Standards of Teachers and the Philippine Qualification Standards Framework. Under the proposed career policy, qualified teachers may already be promoted without waiting for positions to become vacant.</p> <p>Rep. Romulo asked if the career progression policy will require legislation. Miguel said that although this falls under the mandate of the DBM, enacting a law on the matter will institutionalize the policy.</p> <p>The Committee requested DepEd to submit a copy of the proposed policy on career progression for teachers.</p>
	HBs 5392, 7744 & 7833	Rep. Noel, Majority Leader Romualdez, and Rep. Barba	Providing for a teaching supplies allowance for public school teachers and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to consolidate the three bills with the Substitute Bill on Teaching Supplies Allowance previously approved by the Committee.</p> <p>Rep. Angelo Marcos Barba (2nd District, Ilocos Norte), author of HB 7833, manifested that the explanatory note attached to his bill shall serve as his sponsorship speech. He further said that he is amenable to be made a co-author of the approved Substitute Bill.</p>
	HBs 3442 & 5207	Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto and Rep. Vargas	Requiring all public elementary and secondary schools to prepare and implement a land use development and infrastructure plan for the optimum utilization of its resources in addressing basic education facility shortages	The Committee deferred consideration of these bills.
	HB 7138	Rep. Vargas	Providing for the establishment of culture, arts, tourism and heritage councils in every province of the country	
Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)	HR 1326	Rep. Villafuerte	Strongly urging President Rodrigo Roa Duterte to come up with a Comprehensive Bicol Rehabilitation Program in response to the heavy devastation by Super Typhoon Rolly, that includes providing immediate relief,	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jocelyn Fortuno (5th District, Camarines Sur), adopted HR 1326 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur), author of HR 1326,</p>

Continuation... Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)			recovery, and reconstruction for rebuilding a better Bicol	said that the creation of a task force by the national government is necessary to effectively and efficiently implement a comprehensive rehabilitation program in the Bicol Region.
Information and Communications Technology	Substitute Bill to HBs 38, 312, 4132 & 4367	Reps. Biazon, Salceda, Lacson, and Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto	Faster Internet Services Act	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac), approved the Substitute Bill to the four bills with amendments.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, author of HB 38 and also the head of the technical working group (TWG) that was tasked to fine-tune the proposed law, presented the Substitute Bill to the body and discussed the minimum internet speed that was agreed upon by the TWG.</p> <p>Under Section 4 of the Substitute Bill, “the minimum broadband download speed delivered to subscribers shall not be lower than 10 mbps in metropolitan and highly urbanized cities, 5 mbps in all other cities, and 2 mbps in rural areas within a two-year compliance period for fixed and mobile internet connectivity across the country”.</p> <p>Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), author of HB 312, sought clarification on why a mere 2 mbps speed will be required for rural areas which will cover his district in the Province of Albay. He said this proposal is regressive and unfair to consumers residing in the countryside.</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) and Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), author of HB 4132, agreed with the statements of Rep. Salceda. Rep. Lacson added that his bill actually proposes a minimum internet speed of 10 mbps across the board.</p> <p>Rep. Biazon explained that based on the recommendations of stakeholders during the TWG meetings, legislating and setting a high minimum internet speed would be detrimental to small internet service providers (ISPs) as many small ISPs will not be able to comply and would eventually go out of business, considering the hefty penalty that will be imposed for not meeting the said requirement. He also said that complying with a high internet speed requirement would entail a high cost which will only be passed on to consumers.</p> <p>The resource persons from the Project Bandwidth and Signal Statistics (Project BASS), Internet Society of the Philippines (ISOC.PH), Democracy.Net.PH, Philippine Cable Television Association Inc. (PCTA), Smart Communications, Inc., and Globe Telecom, Inc. expressed their support to the Substitute Bill. They also explained that if small ISPs will not be able to comply with the</p>

Continuation... Information and Communications Technology				<p>requirement and eventually stop operating, many rural areas that are being served by these small ISPs will be affected as they will lose access to internet connection. They said that having many players is still the best option as this would encourage competition which would lower the price and improve the quality of service.</p> <p>Rep. Salceda accepted the explanation of the stakeholders and said that he is now amenable to the proposal subject to the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compel accountability on public telecommunications entities (PTEs) and ISPs to truthfully deliver their advertised speeds and published rates with an accompanying penalty for violation thereof; • Engage a third-party auditor to determine if the services of PTEs and ISPs are satisfactory; and • Remove the proviso in the Substitute Bill that disallows ISPs to build international carrier, inter-exchange, local exchange, and mobile radio telephone networks reserved for PTEs as provided for in RA 7925 or the Public Telecommunications Policy Act.
	HB 7864	Rep. Salceda	Establishing the basic regulatory framework for blockchain technology in the Philippines, providing for its use in government service delivery	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to refine further HB 7864 and to consolidate the inputs of stakeholders.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>Rep. Salceda, author of HB 7864, said that his bill seeks to promote the use of distributed ledger technology (DLT) or blockchain in the country as a potential records-keeping and data management system, considering its benefits of providing security in data transactions and low transaction costs in data transmission.</p> <p>The most promising application of blockchain is in the financial sector, with implications for the way stock exchanges work, loans are bundled, and insurances contracted. It could also boost efforts on anti-money laundering and has immense potential in the delivery of basic social services. With the DLT, social benefits could become portable such that beneficiaries can access these services anywhere in the country.</p> <p>According to Rep. Salceda, blockchain is a secure and automated way of passing information from one terminal to another by using a user's digital signature to initiate transactions. The transactions will be broadcast into nodes wherein one or more nodes will validate each other to form data blocks. These blocks are verified by thousands</p>

Continuation... Information and Communications Technology				<p>of computers around the net. Once verified, they are added to a chain which is stored across the net, creating a unique record with a unique history.</p> <p>Expressing their support to the bill were the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and the Democracy.Net.PH.</p> <p>The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the National Privacy Commission (NPC) pledged to submit their official position papers to the Committee.</p> <p>On the recommendation of the Democracy.Net.PH to not limit the proposed law in advancing the interest of just the financial sector, Rep. Salceda assured the body that his bill encourages the use of blockchain in the broader economy, human development programs, and the National Identification (ID) System, among others.</p> <p>The Anti-Money Laundering Council will be invited to attend in the next meeting.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)	<p>Consultation with government agencies on the damages caused by typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses, including post-disaster needs for the purpose of identifying possible sources of funds for the rehabilitation of Bicol Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Budget and Management (DBM) • Office of Civil Defense (OCD) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jocelyn Fortuno (5th District, Camarines Sur), listened to the report of concerned government agencies on the damages caused by three major typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses that recently hit the country including the Bicol Region, as well as the post-disaster needs of the region for the purpose of identifying sources of funds for its rehabilitation.</p> <p>Rep. Fortuno said that the three successive typhoons caused massive destruction to the Bicol Region. It is imperative to implement measures for its immediate rehabilitation and for the restoration of the livelihoods of the people, he stressed.</p> <p>DBM Budget and Management Bureau-E Director Cristina Clasara informed the body that the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Fund (NDRRMF) has a balance of P15.73 billion to date, which may be a source of funds for the Bicol Region.</p> <p>Rep. Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur) suggested that the funding for the rehabilitation of the Bicol Region could also come from DBM's pooled savings from discontinued and unreleased appropriations.</p> <p>OCD Region V Director Claudio Yucot presented OCD's report on the effects of Typhoons Rolly and Ulysses, which devastated the Bicol Region last November 1 and 11, respectively.</p> <p>For Typhoon Rolly, 120,057 families were displaced; and cost of damage to the region was estimated at P23.04 billion, with</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) 	<p>The Committee will formally request the DepEd Central Office to submit a report on the disbursements of the P2-billion QRF fund.</p> <p>Reps. Maria Laarni Cayetano (2nd District, Taguig City), Elisa "Olga" Kho (2nd District, Masbate), and Lagman spoke of the need to rehabilitate old or dilapidated public school buildings in the region so that they are safe to use as evacuation centers during calamities.</p> <p>DPWH Region V Director Virgilio Eduarte informed the body that a budget of P20 million was released to the DPWH Region V to hasten dredging operations in lahar-clogged river systems.</p> <p>Rep. Fernando Cabredo (3rd District, Albay) asked Director Eduarte if there is funding for the rehabilitation of damaged dikes in the region. He noted that the collapse of dikes also contributed to the heavy flooding of some areas in the Bicol Region.</p> <p>Eduarte replied that the contractors of damaged dikes are obligated to repair these structures if they are still within the warranty period as stated in the terms of the contract. However, if these are already outside the warranty period, the repair of the dikes may be sourced from the QRF of the DPWH if the budget requirement is less than P50 million, and from the NDRRMF if the cost will exceed P50 million.</p>
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