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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Human Rights	Substitute Bill to HB 6538	Deputy Speaker Villanueva	Protecting the right of the people to freedom of religion in the Philippines guaranteed under Section 5, Article III of the 1987 Constitution	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus "Bong" Suntay (4th District, Quezon City), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 6538 as amended, subject to style.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Eduardo "Bro. Eddie" Villanueva (Party-List, CIBAC), author of HB 6538, recognizes that tensions exist in some communities due to the exercise of religion. The government has not yet enacted any enabling law that protects the right of citizens to religious freedom.</p> <p>He said that his bill, also referred to as the Magna Carta of Religious Freedom, seeks to promote the exchange of ideas for all faiths wherein communities will be able to propagate their religious beliefs and practices in an environment free from violence, threat, and prejudice. He said that his proposed measure contains provisions identifying the rights to religious freedom and imposing penalties for the violation of such rights.</p> <p>On the query of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) if the right of the indigenous cultural communities to exercise their own religious beliefs and spiritual practices is accounted for in the proposed measure, Deputy Speaker Villanueva replied in the affirmative.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to include the NCIP, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCFM) as part of the group that will craft the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the proposed law.</p>
	HBs 2370 & 3672	Rep. Deloso-Montalla and Deputy Speaker Hataman	Defining hate speech and providing penalties for violation thereof	<p>The Committee approved HBs 2370 and 3672 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Suntay stated that the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion which includes the freedom to practice or manifest religious beliefs, and the freedom of speech and of expression, which encompasses the right against hate speech, are constitutionally-enshrined freedoms which the State must recognize, promote and protect at all times.</p> <p>Rep. Suntay noted that cases of hate speech, often in the context of religious beliefs and practices, have in recent years bred violence</p>

<p>Continuation... Human Rights</p>				<p>and crimes between religious communities in Southeast Asia which resulted in human rights violations. He said it is high time for the Philippines to enact a law that prohibits hate speech to avoid atrocities and violence in communities of diverse religious beliefs.</p> <p>Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), author of HB 2370, said that it is important in a democracy that people can criticize ideas and opinions, including those about religion. She explained that even members of a religious group may have different opinions and should be free to talk openly about them.</p> <p>However, hate speeches that incite violence and discrimination against women and ethnic and religious groups must be addressed by the government. She explained that there are ways by which governments can deter hate speech while ensuring that both the freedom of expression and equality are guaranteed. She informed the body of the United Nations' Rabat Plan of Action, which tells governments on how to stop incitement without damaging freedom of expression. It provides measures to test examples of hateful speeches, which incite violence and discrimination, as differentiated from those that are "harmless."</p> <p>Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN), co-author of HB 3672, noted the growing incidences of hate speech in public discourses in various online platforms such as hostile rhetorics directed at minorities like Muslims, migrants, refugees, women, and the so-called other sexes. She said that these could lead to violence against marginalized groups when left unaddressed, thus HB 3672 seeks to define, prohibit, and penalize hate speech in the country especially those that incite violence and discrimination against a person or group of persons on the basis of ethnicity, race, and religion.</p> <p>Former House Member and now ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) Board Member Teddy Brawner Baguilat Jr. proposed that hate speech should be defined as follows: "All forms of expression that constitutes incitement, discrimination, hostility, and violence against any person or group of persons on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, color, national or social origin, birth, indigenous origin or identity, migrant or refugee status, political or other opinion, sexual orientation and gender identity, sex, language, and disability."</p> <p>He also recommended that the hate speech that will be prohibited under the proposed law should match the hate speech that is considered severe by existing international human rights laws and standards.</p>
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Continuation... Human Rights				<p>Lighthouse Bible Baptist Church Senior Pastor and Secretary General of Bible Believers League for Morality and Democracy (BIBLEMODE) Reuben Abante agrees that hate speech should stop to achieve peace in the communities. He said that people should be more careful with their words as these may result in hostilities.</p> <p>GMA Network First Vice President for Legal Affairs Ma. Luz Delfin manifested that GMA also opposes any forms of discrimination and violence. However, she said that GMA has reservation on any bill that proposes to penalize the media for the release of any statement that may be deemed as "hate speech." She explained that the proposed law may make the media vulnerable to legal problems and may render them ineffective in doing their job of reporting factual information but which may be unfavorable to some.</p> <p>Atty. Yves Gonzales, head of Government Affairs and Public Policy of Google Philippines, gave her recommendations on the penalty provision of the proposed law applicable to providers or users of an interactive computer service.</p> <p>With regard to Section 4 (c) of the two bills which punishes any person committing, consenting to or allowing the commission of hate speech by means of public performance of plays, shows, recordings of audio or visual images, Reps. Deloso-Montalla and Sangcopan clarified that it will only be punishable if the intention is to incite hatred, violence or discrimination.</p> <p>Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) Legal Affairs Division Chief Jonathan Presquito commented that producers of films or shows may have no intention to incite hatred, violence or discrimination, but the viewers themselves may have different perceptions or interpretations of the material that they have watched.</p> <p>Rep. Suntay emphasized the need to determine what will be considered as prohibited hate speech that does not undermine the freedoms of expression and religion.</p>
Justice	Substitute Bill to HBs 4496 & 6369	Rep. Fortun and Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Strengthening the legal staff of the Department of Justice, renaming it as the Office of the Chief State Counsel, redefining, expanding, rationalizing and further professionalizing its organization, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3rd District, Leyte), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 4496 and 6369.</p> <p>Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), author of HB 4496, said that there are only minor changes in the Substitute Bill which were made in consultation with the Department of Justice (DOJ). The changes include expressly stating</p>

Continuation... Justice				that the positions, qualifications, and salaries of the Chief State Counsel and other State Counsels are comparable to those of the members of the Judiciary.
	HB 7668	Rep. Veloso	Amending Articles 183 and 184 of Act No. 3815, as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code (by increasing the penalty for perjury or providing false testimony)	The Committee approved HB 7668. Rep. Veloso, author of HB 7668, noted that there is an urgent need to increase the penalties for perjury under Art. 183 of the Revised Penal Code (RPC), in order to deter people from making false testimonies during legislative inquiries. He also said that persons found guilty of lying under oath shall be disqualified from holding public office, since it involves public trust.
	HB 2286	Rep. Dimaporo (M.K.)	Transferring the seats of two branches of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in the Province of Lanao Del Norte to be stationed at the Municipality of Tubod and creating two additional branches of the RTC in the Province of Lanao Del Norte, amending for the purpose Section 14 (M) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, as amended, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the eight bills. The representative of the Supreme Court's Office of the Court Administrator, Atty. Marilou Marzan-Anigan, did not object to any of the legislative proposals creating additional trial court branches in the areas covered by the eight bills. Likewise, resource persons from the DOJ, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) manifested their support for the bills.
	HBs 3137, 3318, 4154, 4458, 5377, 5559 & 7870	Reps. Limkaichong, Loyola, Haresco, Yu, Babasa, and Deputy Speaker Legarda	Creating additional branches of the RTC, Family Court, and Municipal Trial Court (MTC) in certain parts of the country, amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended, and appropriating funds therefor	
	HBs 5064, 5951 & 7427	Rep. Garin (S.), Deputy Speaker Puno, and Rep. Lopez	Granting Filipino citizenship to Liang Xi Wu, Angelo Kouame, and Bienvenido Marañon, respectively	The Committee approved HBs 5064, 5951, and 7427. The representatives from the DOJ, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), and Bureau of Immigration (BI) all stated that the applicants for Filipino citizenship have no derogatory records in their respective offices.
Tourism	Substitute Bill to HBs 1206, 3684, 3954 & 4839	Reps. Arroyo (J.M.), Villa, Vargas, and Matugas	Providing for the protection of and enhanced services to tourists and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragonces (3 rd District, Laguna), approved the Substitute Bill to the four bills. Rep. Edgar Chatto (1 st District, Bohol), Chair of the technical working group (TWG) that was tasked to craft the Substitute Bill, briefly discussed the salient features of the proposed law, which amends RA 9593 or the Tourism Act of 2009, particularly Section 34 (Tourism Infrastructure Program) and Section 43 (Tourism Assistance). He said that that the proposed law will ensure that tourists in the Philippines will feel safe and protected during their travel and that they will have access to proper information. Baguio City Rep. Mark Go informed the body that the Substitute Bill was already extensively discussed in the TWG.

Continuation... Tourism	HBs 5493, 5985, 6070, 6320 & 7564	Reps. Abueg-Zaldivar, Cabochan, Mercado, Villa, and Aragones	Declaring islands, municipalities, and provinces in certain parts of the country as ecotourism zones, providing for their development, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the 24 bills. Expressing their support to the bills were the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).
	HBs 5613, 5689, 5690, 5779, 5862, 5937, 5940, 5947, 6000, 6001, 6075, 6234, 6353, 6354, 6355, 6356, 6503 & 6504	Reps. Amatong, Agabas, Tambunting, Fortuno, Mercado, Tan (S.A.), Fariñas (R.C.), and Abueg-Zaldivar	Declaring lakes, falls, shrines, zipline, river, caves, coffee plantation, beach, lighthouse, and cove in certain parts of the country as ecotourism zones/tourist destinations, providing for their development and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 5936	Rep. Mercado	Declaring Guinsaugon Eco-Adventure Park in Guinsaugon, St. Bernard, Southern Leyte as the Guinsaugon Eco-Adventure National Park	
Transportation	HBs 7070, 7293 & 8034	Reps. Ferrer (L.), Agarao, and Benitez	Establishing district offices of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in certain areas in the Provinces of Cavite, Laguna, and Negros Occidental, respectively, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1 st District, Western Samar), approved HBs 7070, 7293, and 8034. LTO head, Assistant Secretary Edgar Galvante, manifested his support for the bills. However, Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Budget and Management Bureau A Director Maria Grace de los Santos registered her objection to the bills. She said that there is no need to create new LTO district offices in Cavite, Laguna, and Negros Occidental because there are existing LTO district offices in these areas. De los Santos proposed that instead of creating new LTO district offices, additional positions in the LTO should be created to cope with the increasing volume of vehicle registration. She added that LTO should also fill up their vacant positions nationwide.
	HB 2333	Deputy Speaker Escudero	Prohibiting tricycles to ply along the national highways and providing penalties for violation thereof	
	HBs 2963 & 4212	Reps. Espino and Vargas	Establishing tricycle drivers' training and motorists' awareness programs	
	HBs 3281 & 4005	Reps. Vergara and Agabas	Providing for regulation of tricycles, institutionalizing mechanisms for its implementation	
	HBs 4197 & 4653	Reps. Yap (V.) and Villafuerte	Providing for a Magna Carta for Tricycle Drivers and Operators, institutionalizing mechanisms for its implementation	
	HB 5329	Rep. Panotes	Allowing tricycles to travel beyond the regular route of service as embodied in their franchise in emergency cases as determined by the concerned government authority and providing penalties for any violation thereof	

Continuation... Transportation	HB 5495	Rep. Ty	Providing for alternate roads for tricycles, motorcycles and bicycles as priority program of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and appropriating funds therefor	Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1 st District, Sorsogon), author of HB 2333, said that her bill seeks to ensure the safety of tricycle drivers and their passengers. The Deputy Speaker said that despite existing regulations prohibiting tricycles along national highways, fatal accidents happen on these roads involving tricycle drivers which indicate poor implementation of the regulations. Hence, it is high time to legislate a law that would address this matter, Deputy Speaker Escudero said.
	HR 748	Rep. Salceda	Urging the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to withdraw Memorandum Circular No. 2020-036 which implements the tricycle ban on national highways and reviewing the nationally-imposed policies on local transportation, especially tricycles	Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3 rd District, Nueva Ecija.), author of HB 3281, said that her bill provides a magna carta for tricycle drivers and operators to ensure their safety and protect their rights. The bill establishes a simplified registration system, a one-stop shop for tricycle operators, health care and social benefits, and more concrete and defined role for local government units in the development of the sector. The LTO Chief expressed his support for the bills. The Committee requested all stakeholders to submit their position paper on the bills.
	HBs 1217, 1407, 2091, 3260, 3473 & 6012	Reps. Salceda, Vargas, Abu, Gatchalian, Herrera-Dy, and Deputy Speaker Villanueva	Regulating the sale of motor vehicles in Metro Manila by requiring a proof-of-parking space or garage facility from motor vehicle buyers as a prerequisite for the purchase of a motor vehicle and registration with the LTO	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to further study and consolidate the bills. Rep. Eric Olivarez (1 st District, Parañaque City) was designated as head of the TWG. Expressing support for the proposed law were representatives from the Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Trade and Industry - Bureau of Public Standards (DTI-BPS), Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), and private organization Move as One. Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc. (CAMPI) Chairman Rommel Gutierrez said that CAMPI is one with the Committee in finding solutions to address the perennial traffic problem in the metropolis. He, however, said that the government should take a holistic approach in addressing the matter and also consider the consumers' aspiration to have their own vehicle. Philippine Automotive Dealers Association (PADA) President Willy Tee Ten supported Gutierrez's statements. Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3 rd District, Bukidnon) and Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) said that it is best to have a long-term solution to the traffic problem in Metro Manila through a reliable mass transportation system which will encourage the people to use mass transportation instead of private cars. The Committee requested all stakeholders to submit their respective position papers on the proposed law.

<p>Ways and Means</p>	<p>Draft Substitute Bill to HB 6516</p>	<p>Rep. Salceda</p>	<p>Penalizing bulk cash smuggling into or out of the Philippines</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), agreed to reconstitute the technical working group (TWG) that previously deliberated on the Substitute Bill.</p> <p>The Committee Senior Vice Chair, Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), will again head the TWG.</p> <p>The TWG is tasked to reconcile concerns between eradicating bulk cash smuggling and safeguarding the welfare of overseas Filipino workers who also fall under the category of persons transporting foreign currencies. Likewise, the TWG is expected to formulate mechanisms to deal with cases involving staggering amounts such as the smuggling of more than P80 billion worth of foreign currency into the country last year allegedly by four syndicates.</p> <p>Rep. Salceda, author of HB 6516, said that his bill seeks to solve bulk cash smuggling which, oftentimes, originated from unlawful activities. If this remains unabated, the country faces serious national security risks, aside from the risk of getting delisted from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for being a high risk base for terrorism financing and money laundering, and consequently may affect the country's credit rating. Bulk cash smuggling is so persistent even during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rep. Salceda stressed.</p> <p>The FATF is "the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. The inter-governmental body sets international standards that aim to prevent these illegal activities and the harm they cause to society. As a policy-making body, the FATF works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas." (Source: FATF website)</p> <p>The Committee adopted, among others, the following recommendations of the resource persons present during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include in the declaration form prescribed under Section 5 (Specifications of the Declaration Form) of the Substitute Bill information on the owner or sender of the foreign currency or foreign currency-denominated negotiable instruments, such as the name, permanent address, and occupation or business activity, when the person transporting the currency does not legally and beneficially own them; • To extend the period of investigation of discovered false declarations conducted by the Anti-Money Laundering Council from five working
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Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>days to 15 calendar days, extendible to another 15 calendar days; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To include a provision stating that the non-declaration of foreign currency upon arrival or departure shall be a ground for restraining the undeclared currency.
Youth and Sports Development	HB 1815	Rep. Pacquiao	Institutionalizing the conduct of summer youth camps in the barangay level, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. John Marvin “Yul Servo” Nieto (3rd District, Manila), directed the Secretariat to prepare the substitute bill to HB 1815, incorporating therein the amendments agreed upon during the meeting.</p> <p>Sarangani Rep. Rogelio Pacquiao, author of HB 1815, said that his bill acknowledges the role of the youth in nation building, thus ensuring that the youth in every barangay are given appropriate training to develop their leadership skills and help them identify and develop their talents in sports.</p> <p>Rep. Nieto proposed to include the following modules in the Sports Development and Leadership Course under Section 4 of the bill: mental wellness; digital skills development; entrepreneurship and livelihood skills development; and cultural awareness.</p> <p>Rep. Pacquiao accepted the proposal of the Chair.</p> <p>The National Youth Commission (NYC) expressed its support for the bill.</p>
	HBs 5174 & 7817	Rep. Olivarez and Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Designating the National Music Competitions for Young Artist (NAMCYA) as the national youth development program for music, defining its role and functions, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee directed the Secretariat to prepare the substitute bill to the two bills, incorporating therein the amendments agreed upon during the meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Eric Olivarez (1st District, Parañaque City) and Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), respective authors of HBs 5174 and 7817, underscored the need to strengthen the NAMCYA by institutionalizing its functions and roles and providing funding for its operations. The authors give credit to NAMCYA for being the main agent throughout the years in advancing and fostering the country’s diverse musical heritage and in supporting the government’s youth development programs for music.</p> <p>NAMCYA is a foundation created by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 1173, series of 1973, which declared November 26 to December 2 of every year as National Week for Young Artists in order to encourage Filipinos to appreciate Filipino music and make it part of their cultural life. Since then, the NAMCYA has been a principal instrument in discovering major music talents from all over the country. It conducts annual competitions to discover young Filipino musicians from every region of the country and develops these musicians through their workshops and training programs (<i>Source: NAMCYA website</i>).</p>

<p>Continuation... Youth and Sports Development</p>				<p>Expressing their support for the bills were representatives from NYC, NAMCYA, Department of Education (DepEd), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).</p> <p>On the query of the Chair on the legality of providing a non-government entity like NAMCYA with government funding, Deputy Speaker Rodriguez explained that the NCCA has been extending financial support to NAMCYA, thus his bill will merely institutionalize this practice. Nevertheless, Deputy Speaker Rodriguez proposed to include a provision in the bill stating that NAMCYA shall be attached to the NCCA for budgetary purposes only and that the former shall still operate independently.</p> <p>Rep. Nieto recommended that the NAMCYA should also coordinate or enter into memorandum of agreements with other government agencies that would help bring Philippine music training programs to the grassroots such as the NYC, Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and the Philippine Information Agency (PIA).</p> <p>The authors said that they are amenable to the suggestions of the Chair.</p>
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