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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 7957, 7979, 8014, 8063 and 8099	Reps. Sy-Alvarado, Tambunting, Guico, Speaker Velasco and Rep. Garin (S.)	Extending the availability of appropriations under RA 11494, otherwise known as the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act (Bayanihan 2)	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair Rep. Ruwel Peter Gonzaga (2nd District, Davao de Oro), approved the Substitute Bill to the five measures subject to style. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.</p> <p>Under the proposed law, “the availability of the appropriations under RA 11494, otherwise known as the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act is extended until June 30, 2021 provided that the availability of the appropriations in RA 11465 or the General Appropriations Act of 2020 that were reprogrammed, reallocated or realigned from declared savings and utilized for programs and projects for COVID-19 interventions, including the automatic appropriations of new programs, projects and activities pursuant to Section 4, (rr) of Bayanihan to Recover as One Act are also extended for the same period.”</p> <p>Rep. Paul Ruiz Daza (1st District, Northern Samar) expressed his concern that under the proposed law, the executive department will again be given a blanket authority to realign funds and discontinue the implementation of projects to the detriment of their constituents.</p> <p>Rep. Gonzaga said that the proposed law only provides for the extension of the appropriations under the Bayanihan 2 and does not extend the emergency powers of the President, which was provided under the same law.</p>
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	HB 6646	Rep. Cua	Creating a Bangko Sentral Digital Peso (BSDP) as a medium of exchange or as money for use on all digital means, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, asked the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to report the findings of the BSP’s technical working group on the adoption of a digital currency as provided for in HB 6646.</p> <p>BSP Director for Technology Risk and Innovation Supervision Department Melchor Plabasan informed the body that pursuing a full-scale adoption of digital currency is not yet advisable at this time, given that the regulatory regimes of other jurisdictions have not been fully implemented. Hence, pitfalls and other security risks are still very much present. He said that it is better to wait until the central banks of progressive countries have achieved successful implementation so</p>

Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries	HBs 6652, 6716 & 7130	Rep. Garcia (J.E.), Deputy Speaker Hernandez, and Rep. Delos Santos	Promoting the adoption of electronic money as a medium of exchange for financial transactions of the government and all merchants	<p>that the country can be guided by their best practices.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate HBs 6652, 6716 and 7130.</p> <p>The BSP, which was designated as head of the TWG, was specifically tasked to come up with a consolidated bill which will later be presented to the Committee for its consideration.</p> <p>Plabasan expressed his full support to the adoption of digital payments in both government and private transactions as proposed under the three bills. He said that while the BSP will not yet pursue a full-scale adoption of digital currency, it will continue to implement its Digital Payments Transformation Roadmap which will transition the country from being cash-heavy to becoming “cash-lite” by 2023. He suggested to adopt the term “digital payments” in lieu of “electronic money” in the proposed bills.</p> <p>The BSP Digital Payments Transformation Roadmap 2020-2023 charts the BSP’s current initiatives and strategy in advancing an efficient, inclusive, safe and secure digital payments ecosystem (<i>Source: BSP website</i>).</p> <p>Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2nd District, Bataan), author of HB 6652, informed the body of the amendments he introduced to his bill to align it with SB 1764, its counterpart measure in the Senate filed by Sen. Juan Edgardo “Sonny” Angara. Among these amendments were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow government entities to include in their respective budgets the funds needed to cover transaction fees in connection with the implementation of digital payments, including merchant discount rate, processing fees, cash-out fees, and administration fees; • Create a Digital Payment Technical Support and Maintenance Service within government entities which will ensure the proper transition of their respective agencies’ payments and disbursement procedures and policies to electronic payments; • Direct the BSP and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to facilitate capacity-building measures for the national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), and the local government units (LGUs); and • Mandate the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the
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Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				<p>Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to implement measures to make available better internet connections at a lesser cost to support the government's program on the digitalization of financial transactions.</p> <p>Laban Konsyumer Inc. President Victorio Mario Dimagiba suggested to include in the proposed law a provision on consumer protection in e-commerce.</p>
Labor and Employment	HB 7909	Rep. Brosas	Mandating paid pandemic leaves in the private sector in light of a declared global pandemic	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), approved HB 7909.</p> <p>Rep. Brosas, author of HB 7909, said that her bill seeks to provide paid pandemic leave benefits to workers regardless of employment status. The pandemic leave benefits shall be in the form of a 14-day leave (full pay) for workers who are forced to go on leave to comply with quarantine procedures and a 60-day paid leave (80% of salary) for workers who, despite still being considered employed, have been rendered involuntarily out of work or placed on floating status due to the effects of the pandemic.</p> <p>Rep. Brosas added that it is the duty of the State to protect the health of its workers and should therefore come up with measures to ensure that workers are not made to choose between their health and their wages.</p>
Persons with Disabilities (Special Committee)	HB 7571	Rep. Tutor	Institutionalizing the provision of financial assistance, social pension, and financial protection for persons with disabilities (PWDs)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Arroyo (5th District, Negros Occidental), approved HB 7571 subject to style.</p> <p>HB 7571 seeks to provide a social pension for all PWDs in the amount of P1,000 per month which may be disbursed on a quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis. Likewise, it mandates concerned government agencies to establish a National Persons with Disability Registry that shall be a database on all Filipino PWDs based on a detailed national household inventory.</p> <p>Rep. Kristine Alexie Tutor (3rd District, Bohol), author of HB 7571, mentioned that if a social pension of P1,000 per month to all PWDs will not be feasible, she is amenable to change the amount stated in her bill as long as there is an assurance that the pension, whatever amount it will be, will be funded and granted to the PWDs.</p> <p>Rep. Arroyo said that this matter will be discussed with the Committee on Appropriations.</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Program Management</p>

<p>Continuation... Persons with Disabilities (Special Committee)</p>				<p>Bureau Assistant Director Maricel Deloria manifested her support for the bill. Deloria said that the bill is consistent with the DSWD's programs and policies for PWDs.</p> <p>According to Deloria, the creation of a database for the National Registry for PWDs, alongside with the Philippine Identification System, will make it easier for the DSWD to identify the PWD recipients of the pension fund.</p> <p>Deloria proposed to include in the bill a national standard template that will be used for the registration of PWDs for the database. She said that the template should be cascaded to local government units (LGUs) for the nationwide registration. This, she said, will minimize chokepoints that DSWD experienced during the identification of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) beneficiaries at the height of the pandemic.</p> <p>Department of Health (DOH) Knowledge Management and Information Technology Service Director Enrique Tayag expressed his support for the bill. He suggested that the proposed database for PWDs be merged with the DOH Philippine Registry of PWDs.</p> <p>Commission on Higher Education-Unified Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (CHED-UniFAST) Executive Director Ryan Estevez likewise expressed his support for the bill. He proposed that the national registry should include information on the specific disability of the PWD-registrant to enable CHED to address their need appropriately.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Arroyo, Tayag said that the PWDs can register in the DOH's Philippine Registry of PWDs via online. He added that the registration requires a certification from a medical doctor on the disability of the applicant. For PWDs with sight problems, Tayag said that they can coordinate with National Council on Disability Affairs' (NCDA) provincial offices to register. He added that the DOH has a new technology that can aid the blind in registering online.</p> <p>Also expressing support for the bill were representatives from the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Department of Finance, Department of Justice, Securities and Exchange Commission, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), and the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC).</p>
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Continuation... Persons with Disabilities (Special Committee)				The Committee requested all stakeholders to submit their official position paper on the proposed bill.
	HB 5896	Rep. Chatto	Mandating universal design principles, standards, specifications, and policies for the creation of barrier-free built environment, transportation and tourism facilities to enhance the dignity, independence, mobility, safety, and convenience of PWDs, senior citizens, women and children, and other sectors with special needs for their full inclusion, participation, and non-discrimination, providing for funding and incentives, prescribing penalties, and repealing Batas Pambansa 344 or the Accessibility Law	<p>The Committee approved the bill in principle. A technical working group (TWG) was created to fine-tune the bill.</p> <p>Rep. Tutor was designated as head of the TWG.</p> <p>Rep. Edgar Chatto (1st District, Bohol), author of HB 5896, stressed the need to repeal Batas Pambansa 344 or the Accessibility Law which is an antiquated law. He said that the bill will address the current needs of the PWDs in terms of mobility and accessibility.</p> <p>Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) PWD focal person Don Fradejas informed the body that the MMDA's Metro Manila Accessibility Task Force, composed of the Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Transportation, Department of Tourism, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, NCDA, and various non-government organizations (NGOs) catering to the needs of PWDs, has been active in constructing PWD-assistive devices for the convenience of PWDs.</p> <p>Fradejas reported that the Task Force has conducted accessibility audit of several transportation terminals in Metro Manila. In these audits, it was observed that many of PWD accessibility devices like ramps, walkways, handrails, and toilets are inadequate to address the needs of PWDs and there is an immediate need to modify these devices. He lauded the intention of the bill to come up with a universal design for these PWD-assistive devices to allow for better accessibility.</p> <p>Abner Manlapaz of the NAPC Persons with Disability Sector proposed that PWD accessibility should be considered in the government's implementation of the Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) Modernization Program. He said that the government should give priority to programs allowing PWDs easy access to public transportation.</p> <p>President of Regional Federation of PWDs Teddy Kahil suggested that digital accessibility for the blind be included in the bill.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bill were representatives from the DSWD, NCDA, DOH, NAPC, BSP, and PWD NGOs.</p> <p>The Committee requested all stakeholders to submit their official position paper on the bill.</p>

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Workers with Special Concerns (Labor and Employment)	Substitute Bill on HBs 29, 273, 2025, 2240, 3465, 3688 & 4203	Deputy Speaker Escudero, Reps. Aglipay, Fernandez, Fortun, Villafuerte, Mendoza, and Vargas	Institutionalizing mechanisms for the recognition, integration, and transition of workers, enterprises and organizations in the informal economy to the formal economy and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Subcommittee, presided by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), agreed to report out the substitute bill to the mother Committee and likewise elevate the contentious issues for the latter's discussion and decision.</p> <p>Reps. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) and Macnell Lusotan (Party-List, MARINO) expressed their support for the proposed law.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	HB 4286	Rep. Pimentel	Providing for the administrative reform and reorganization of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), amending certain provisions of RA 9993, otherwise known as the PCG Law of 2009	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Macnell Lusotan (Party-List, MARINO), terminated its deliberation on HBs 4286 and 4287. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the substitute bill to the two bills to be presented to the mother Committee for consideration and approval in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), author of HB 4287, underscored the need to revisit, update, and strengthen the organization of the PCG in order for the latter to be more efficient in fulfilling its mandate such as the protection of the country's territorial waters and to be equipped in responding to emergencies during natural disasters and pandemics. She explained that the proposed law also intends to augment the personnel of the PCG to effectively oversee and protect the country's vast coastlines.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the working document used by the TWG in its discussion was the comparative matrix on the provisions of HBs 4286 and 4287. The TWG was able to tackle all the sections of the two bills and noted the comments and suggestions of the resource persons from the PCG, Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Philippine Navy, Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC).</p> <p>Atty. May Maureen Dizon of MARINA's Legal Service expressed her reservation on Section 6 (b) of HB 4286 which states that the Commandant of the PCG "under the authority and direction of the President, through the Secretary of Transportation, shall be responsible for the development and execution</p>
	HB 4287	Rep. Deloso-Montalla	Strengthening further the PCG, amending certain provisions of RA 9993	

<p>Continuation... Transportation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>of national maritime laws.” She said that this provision would come in conflict with MARINA’s mandate.</p> <p>Among the amendments to the proposed law that were approved during the TWG meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the phrase “development and execution” with “enforcement and implementation” in Section 6 (b) of HB 4286; • Retain the requirement of a bachelor’s degree as among the basic qualifications for uniformed personnel of the PCG as prescribed in RA 9993; • Align the provision on allowing lateral entry of active members of other uniformed services under the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection, and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, with RA 6975 or the Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990; and • Align the provision on the disciplinary authority of the Commandant with CSC’s 2017 Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service. <p>The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has yet to provide its comment on the provisions on the retirement and other benefits of PCG officers and personnel and their derivative beneficiaries.</p> <p>PCG Commandant George Ursabia Jr. expressed his gratitude to the body for considering a measure that will strengthen the organization of the PCG. He said that the PCG has submitted a consolidated version on the two bills for the TWG’s consideration in drafting the substitute bill.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
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