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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Civil Service and Professional Regulation	Substitute Bill to HBs 52, 248, 820, 953, 1081, 2623, 2692, 2809, 3643, 4320, 5582, 5594, 6021 & 6045	Reps. Cabochan, Gaite, Biazon, Salo, Sy-Alvarado, Mendoza, Gasataya, Rodriguez, Cagas, Herrera-Dy, Almario, Nieto, Deputy Speaker Villanueva, and Rep. Vargas	Providing civil service eligibility and permanent appointment to all government casual and contractual employees under job orders, contract of service, memorandum of agreement/memorandum order or understanding and other similar contracts who have rendered at least five years of very satisfactory government service	<p>The Committee, chaired by Iligan City Rep. Frederick Siao, approved the Substitute Bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), who headed the technical working group (TWG) that deliberated on the bills, presented the key features of the substitute bill to the body.</p> <p>Rep. Ferdinand Gaite (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HB 248, suggested the inclusion of a provision that will appropriate funds needed for the regularization of the employees covered under the proposed law.</p> <p>Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Human Resource Policies and Standards Office (HRPSO) Director Rodolfo Encajonado said that the regularization of an employee must be based on the availability of vacant positions in the agency and subject to the existing CSC rules and regulations.</p> <p>The Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PS LINK), Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Confederation of Independent Unions in the Public Sector (CiU), and the Philippine Government Employees Association (PGEA) expressed their support for the proposed law.</p>
	HB 1485	Rep. Chipeco	Regulating the practice of microbiology in the Philippines and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 1485.</p> <p>Rep. Siao said that a bill with similar subject matter, also authored by Calamba City Rep. Joaquin Chipeco Jr., was filed in the previous Congress but was not enacted into law due to lack of material time.</p> <p>Rep. Chipeco said that HB 1485 will help ensure that only competent microbiologists will be allowed to practice the profession in the country. He added that the regulation of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) on the profession will allow the continuous monitoring of the microbiologists' competence and professionalism.</p> <p>The PRC, Philippine Academy of Microbiology (PAM), and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) expressed their support for the bill.</p>

Cooperatives Development	HR 524	Rep. Geron	Inquiry to clarify the provisions and implementation of the Joint Administrative Order No. 1-2019 and its implication to the memorandum circulars issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the memoranda issued by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) to cooperatives in compliance with RA 9520, otherwise known as the Cooperative Code of 2008	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to thresh out the issues and concerns relative to HR 524.</p> <p>Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) Chair Orlando Ravanera voiced out the opposition of the cooperatives to Rule IV of JAO No. 1-2019 saying that the penalty for a cooperative's failure to comply with the reportorial requirements which is revocation of the Certificate of Tax Exemption (CTE), on just the first offense, is too harsh.</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) representative, Atty. Ronelyn Jaectin, said that the Department understands the concerns of the cooperatives, hence it is willing to have a dialogue with the CDA to discuss the matter. She advised the CDA to write a letter to the Finance Secretary to officially request such dialogue.</p> <p>Atty. Winston Garcia, Chair of the Countrywide Financial Institutional Cooperative (CFI), opined that the authority of the BIR to issue a certificate of tax exemption (CTE) was already revoked and superseded by RA 11364 or the law reorganizing and strengthening the CDA. He added that by virtue of this law, the CDA was given the sole authority to implement the provisions of the Cooperative Code of the Philippines including under Articles 60 (Tax Treatment of Cooperative) and 61 (Tax and Other Exemptions).</p>
	HR 523	Rep. Canama	Commending the DCCO Multipurpose Cooperative, Bagong Barrio Multipurpose Cooperative, Kooperatiba Naton Multipurpose Cooperative, San Jose Sico Landfill Multipurpose Cooperative, and Litolet Consumer Cooperative for being the grand winners of the 2019 Ninth Gawad Parangal of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)	The Committee agreed to file five separate resolutions commending each of the five multipurpose cooperatives.
Dangerous Drugs	HBs 68, 368, 742, 896, 1351, 1547, 1548, 2765, 2995, 3755, 4104, 5761 & 5932	Reps. Barbers, Yap (V.), Biazon, Mariño, Castelo, Garbin, Rodriguez, Castro (F.L.), Cabochan, and Belmonte	Amending certain provisions of RA 9165 otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (by strengthening drug abuse prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and control, and other anti-drug operations, restoring plea bargaining and probation laws, and adopting higher prescribed penalties, among others)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss further and consolidate the 13 bills.</p> <p>Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), author of HBs 1547 and 1548, was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>According to Rep. Barbers, a bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The TWG will be composed of representatives from the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Health</p>

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs				(DOH), Public Attorney's Office (PAO), Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), and the Chief Prosecutors Association of the Philippines (CIPROSA).
	HBs 533, 629, 929, 1308, 1549, 1572, 2975, 3208, 3427, 3631, 3726, 5068, 5482, 5545 & 5719	Reps. Paduano, Almario, Cabochan, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Rep. Garbin, Deputy Speaker Abu, Reps. Sagarbarria, Olivarez, Aumentado, Nieto, Tambunting, Fariñas (R.C.), Rodriguez, and Lara	Establishing drug rehabilitation centers in every city/municipality/province/ region and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss further and consolidate the 16 bills.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Joel Mayo Almario (2nd District, Davao Oriental) on the number of Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (DATRCs) operating nationwide, Dr. Clara Fuderanan, training officer of the Dangerous Drugs Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program of the Department of Health (DOH) said that there are 58 residential (in-patient treatment) DATRCs and non-residential (out-patient) DATRCs nationwide. Of the 58 residential DATRCs, 20 are operated by the government and 38 are operated by non-government organizations (NGOs). For the 8 non-residential DATRCs, 6 are operated by the government and 2 by the NGOs.</p> <p>Rep. Almario noted the inadequate number of DATRCs but doubted the capability of the DOH to operate more rehabilitation centers in the face of the growing number of drug dependents.</p> <p>Rep. Almario requested the DOH to submit a proposal to Congress for the establishment of a 50-bed capacity DATRC in every province which will include the costs of infrastructure and program implementation.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD) proposed to amend Section 75 of RA 9165, which mandates the establishment of at least one drug rehabilitation center in each province. He suggested the establishment of one drug rehabilitation center per region instead, which will be more viable and cost efficient for the government.</p>
	HB 5805	Rep. Erice	Institutionalizing a community-based drug rehabilitation program in every municipality and city	
Government Enterprises and Privatization	HB 1155	Rep. Romualdez (Y.M.)	Creating the Eastern Visayas Development Authority (EVDA), defining its powers and functions, providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Eric Olivarez (1st District, Parañaque City), approved HB 1155.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP), sponsored the bill on behalf of the authors.</p> <p>HB 1155 seeks to create the EVDA as an agency mandated to "promote, coordinate and facilitate the active and extensive participation of all sectors to effect the socio-economic development of Eastern Visayas."</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Region VIII and the</p>

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization				Leyte Chamber of Commerce-Philippine Chamber of Commerce Inc. (PCCI) expressed support for the measure.
	HB 147	Deputy Speaker Marcoleta	Excluding the services performed by employees of religious entities from employment services covered by Social Security System Law, amending for the purpose RA 8282, otherwise known as the Social Security Act of 1997	<p>The Committee deferred consideration of HB 147 pending the submission of the official position paper of the Social Security System (SSS).</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Marcoleta said that his bill seeks to exempt people who serve entities organized and being operated exclusively for religious purposes from the coverage of the SSS. He explained that the services of these people are motivated by their deep religious conviction and not for livelihood or economic gain and that the mere allowance they gain from the service rendered does not equate with the salary paid to a regular employee.</p> <p>Joseph Desunia, SSS Department Manager III, said that the thrust of the SSS is to provide universal protection in the private sector especially those workers with employee-employer relationship. Desunia recalled that in the 17th Congress, the SSS also objected to a similar bill seeking the removal of employees of the religious sector from its coverage.</p>
	H/B 2690	Rep. Gasataya	Amending Section 12-B Paragraph C of RA 8282, otherwise known as the Social Security Law (by disallowing the suspension of monthly pension of retired SSS member upon reemployment or self-employment)	<p>The Committee deferred consideration of HB 2690 pending the submission of the official position paper of the SSS.</p> <p>Desunia said the bill effectively sets the age of 60 years as the default retirement age, which would negatively impact on the SSS fund life. Deputy Speaker Marcoleta urged the SSS to not just consider members' contributions as main source of income but also its investments and other assets.</p>
	HB 2791	Rep. Rodriguez	Adding two representatives from the local government units (LGUs) of the Municipalities of Villanueva and Tagoloan in the Province of Misamis Oriental as members of the board of directors of the Philippine Veterans Investment Development Company (PHIVIDEC) Industrial Authority, amending for the purpose PD 538, creating the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority, as amended by EO 1031	<p>The Committee deferred consideration of HB 2791 pending the submission of the official position papers of the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority and the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO).</p> <p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 2791, said that his bill seeks to add two more members in the board of directors of PHIVIDEC to represent the local government units where it is located.</p> <p>PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority Administrator Franklin Quijano said that the establishment of PHIVIDEC in Mindanao has encouraged more investors and locators in Northern Philippines which is an important contribution to the country's goal of becoming an industrialized nation.</p>
	HB 5588	Rep. Noel	Amending RA 8282, otherwise known as the Social Security Law, as amended (by setting 23 years as the maximum age of dependents)	The Committee directed the SSS to submit within 30 days their position paper on HB 5588, together with its latest actuarial study and investments performance.

Labor and Employment	HBs 969 & 3952	Reps. Abaya and Arroyo	Establishing a productivity improvement program, repealing for the purpose RA 6971, otherwise known as the Productivity Incentives Act of 1990	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), approved to consolidate the four bills using HBs 969 and 3952 as the working draft.
	HB 1171	Deputy Speaker Romero	Amending Section 11 of RA 6971, increasing its penalties and sanctions, rationalizing its coverage and benefits	
	HB 2439	Rep. Salceda	Providing productivity improvement programs with fiscal incentives	
	HB 246	Rep. Gaité	Establishing a national minimum wage for private sector workers and imposing stiffer penalties for violations thereof, amending for this purpose the Labor Code of the Philippines	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the five bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HB 246, pointed out the need to re-establish the national minimum wage rate which was abrogated with the passage of RA 6727 or the Wage Rationalization Act of 1989. Rep. Gaité said that his bill sets a uniform minimum daily wage rate of P750 across all regions of the country which is closest to the threshold of P1,000 determined by the IBON Foundation as the current “living wage” and subsistence requirement for a family of five with one income earner.</p> <p>Reps. Michael Edgar Aglipay (Party-List, DIWA), Argel Joseph Cabatbat (Party-List, MAGSASAKA), and Manuel Sagarbarria (2nd District, Negros Oriental), authors of HBs 276, 541 and 2972, respectively, were one in proposing for the abolition of the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB). They said that the Board’s role in setting the minimum wage is no longer effective.</p> <p>RA 6727 created the RTWPB which sets the minimum daily wage rates in each of the regions of the country. The current minimum daily wage rate for the National Capital Region (NCR) is pegged at P537, whereas other regions are at the lowest rate of P282.</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) manifested that structural social injustice persists with the minimum wage variations in the regions outside of Metro Manila.</p> <p>The resource persons present were requested to submit to the Committee their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
	HB 276	Rep. Aglipay	Establishing a standard determination of the regional wage levels through the National Wage and Productivity Commission and imposing a stiffer penalty for violation thereof, amending for the purpose the relevant provisions of PD 442, as amended, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines	
	HBs 541 & 2878	Rep. Cabatbat and Majority Leader Romualdez	Providing for the rationalization of wage levels on a national and industrial basis, amending for this purpose PD 442, as amended	
	HB 2972	Rep. Sagarbarria	Amending Articles 99, 121, and 122 of PD 442 (by considering government employees with Salary Grade 1 as minimum wage earners pursuant to the Labor Code)	
	HBs 271, 1018, 3032, 3184, 3267, 3367, 3381 & 4845	Reps. Aglipay, Castelo, Belmonte, Fortun, Go (M.), Deputy Speaker Villanueva, Reps. Gaité, and Tambunting	Strengthening the security of tenure of workers in the private sector	<p>The Committee listened to the report of Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), chairperson of the Subcommittee on Labor Standards, on the latter’s recommendations to the eight bills referred to it for study.</p> <p>On recommendation of Rep. Mendoza, the Committee agreed to conduct an executive session at a later date to address concerns</p>

Continuation... Labor and Employment				that may be raised later on by the Committee Members.
	HBs 1670, 1904 & 5471	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Rep. Go (M.) and Deputy Speaker Villanueva	Amending Article 83, on "normal hours of work," and related articles of PD 442, as amended, otherwise known as the Labor Code of the Philippines	<p>The Committee agreed to deliberate further on the bills in another meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Mendoza presented the report of the Subcommittee on Labor Standards on the three bills.</p> <p>According to Rep Mendoza, the Subcommittee did not reach any agreement on the bills, which seek the adoption of a compressed work week or alternative work arrangements, mainly due to the strong opposition from the labor sector. He said that the opposition is grounded on the issue as to when overtime hours shall start for purposes of computation – whether such will be computed after 40 hours of work during the work week or beyond eight hours of daily work. Likewise, health risks involved in extended working hours or beyond the eight-hour per day work period was also raised by the labor sector, Rep. Mendoza said.</p> <p>However, Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, author of HB 1904, opined that the measures also present certain advantages which he intends to present during the deliberation of the bills at the mother Committee level.</p>
Transportation	HBs 94 & 6066	Reps. Sarmiento and Mercado	Converting the satellite offices of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) in Calbayog City, Province of Samar and in Maasin City, Province of Southern Leyte into extension offices and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1 st District, Western Samar), approved HBs 94 and 6066.
	HB 4700	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Creating an extension office of the MARINA in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 4700.

COMMITTEE MEETING ON CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Constitutional Amendments	Discussion on the proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution submitted by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Federalism and Constitutional Reform (IATF) and the Constitutional Reform (CoRe) Movement in relation to the Committee Report on the measures amending the Constitution that was approved in December 2019	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), will continue its discussion on the proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution submitted by the IATF and CoRe Movement, in relation to the Committee Report on the measures amending the Constitution that was approved in December 2019.</p> <p>The IATF was created in 2018 through Memorandum Circular No. 52 with the primary duty of integrating, harmonizing, and coordinating ongoing efforts towards federalism and constitutional reform. It is chaired by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), with the Department of Justice (DOJ) as Vice Chair and several agencies as members. On the other hand, the CoRe Movement is the citizen arm of IATF lobbying with Congress to pass a broader package of social, political, and economic reforms in the 1987 Constitution.</p>

<p>Continuation... Constitutional Amendments</p>	<p>In today's meeting, Rep. Rodriguez presented to the Committee the IATF's proposed "surgical" amendments to the 1987 Philippine Constitution incorporating the amendments proposed by the Department of National Defense (DND) on Sections 1 and 2 of Article I (National Territory) of the Constitution.</p> <p>The DND proposed that Section 1 be amended to read as "The Philippines has sovereignty over its territory, consisting of the islands and the waters around, between, and connecting the islands encompassed by its archipelagic baselines, other territories belonging to the Philippines by historic right or legal title, the territorial sea, and the seabed, subsoil, and airspace thereof." Section 1 was rephrased to be more descriptive of the extent of the country's national territory.</p> <p>On the other hand, a new section, which will become Section 2, shall be read as "The Philippines has sovereign rights and jurisdiction over its maritime zones beyond the territorial sea, including the continental shelf, and its citizens shall enjoy exclusive rights as well as other rights to resources within these areas, as provided under international law."</p> <p>Committee Vice Chairs, Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3rd District, Leyte) and Rep. Lorenz Defensor (3rd District, Iloilo), supported the DND's proposed amendments. On the contrary, Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) said that the amendments were unnecessary since the country's claims to its territory are already supported by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Zarate along with Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) expressed their support for the anti-political dynasty provisions under the IATF's proposals. Rep. Zarate warned against the danger of having the same people having control over the country's politics and economy saying this results in a clear conflict of interest. He added that political families who are also into business and whose members have been holding elective positions for a long period of time may influence policies to promote their business interest.</p> <p>On the other hand, several Committee Members expressed their opposition to the anti-political dynasty provision with Rep. Veloso labelling it as "anti-democratic" as this curtails the fundamental right of the people to choose their leaders. Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur) likewise expressed his objection to the anti-dynasty provision, chiding the IATF for not being knowledgeable enough about the actual activities on the ground to formulate provisions concerning political parties and campaign finances.</p> <p>Other key provisions which the Members agreed with are those on anti-political turncoatism and the regionalization of the Senate. (The IATF proposed that every region shall be represented by two Senators elected by the qualified voters in the region.)</p> <p>On the term of office and term limits of Members of Congress, the Committee Members agreed that it is a matter that should be discussed with their Senate counterparts. Committee Vice Chairperson, Rep. Antonio "Tonypet" Albano (1st District, Isabela), was designated to lead the House contingent in discussing the matter with the Senate.</p> <p>After a lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed to recall the Committee Report and the substitute resolution on the proposal to amend the 1987 Philippine Constitution, that was earlier approved by the Committee on December 11, 2019.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 5507	Rep. Roman	Instituting the second phase of agrarian reform program, providing state subsidy in the acquisition and distribution of agricultural lands to agrarian reform beneficiaries and creating the mechanisms for its implementation	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), terminated its discussion on the draft substitute bill. The bill will be presented to the mother Committee in its next meeting.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision in the bill placing unused government-owned lands under the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) should be in consonance with Executive Order No. 75, series of 2019, which directs all departments, bureaus, offices and instrumentalities of the government to identify lands owned by the government devoted or suitable for agriculture for distribution to qualified beneficiaries; and • The Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) will draft the provision on funding and funding source.
Disaster Management (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 3418, 3543 & 3922	Rep. Adiong, Deputy Speaker Hataman, and Rep. Balindong	Providing for monetary compensation for the loss or destruction of residential and commercial properties during the Marawi siege in the City of Marawi, Province of Lanao del Sur, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Dimaporo informed the body that one of the contentious issues discussed in the previous TWG meeting was whether the constitutionality of this proposed law can be challenged on the ground that it caters to a selected few, which are the affected Marawi City residents, thus violating the equal protection clause of the Constitution.</p> <p>The equal protection of the law clause is against undue favor and individual or class privilege, as well as hostile discrimination or the oppression of inequality. It does not demand absolute equality among residents; it merely requires that all persons shall be treated alike, under like circumstances and conditions both as to privileges conferred and liabilities enforced. (<i>Source: Ichong v. Hernandez, GR No. L 7995, May 31, 1957</i>)</p> <p>On the sources of fund for the monetary compensation, the TWG agreed not to tap the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) anymore, and instead adopt HB 3543's funding proposal which is to allocate P30 billion in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the next three years.</p>

Continuation... Disaster Management (Technical Working Group)				<p>Meanwhile, Commission on Human Rights' Center for Crisis Conflict and Humanitarian Rights head Reina Bermudez suggested that the TWG adopt the point system being utilized by the Human Rights Victims' Claims Board (HRVCB) in compensating the Martial Law victims where each violation has a commensurate amount of compensation.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Mujiv Hataman (Basilan), author of HB 3543, agreed to apply the point system of the CHR to the compensation for the loss of or damaged properties in Marawi City during the siege. He said that the expertise of engineers and lawyers will be required in coming up with a damage scale for properties and the corresponding compensation. He also called on the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Office of Civil Defense (OCD), and the Task Force Bangon Marawi to coordinate with each other in order to formulate an appropriate damage classification system based on their assessment of the properties in Marawi City.</p> <p>Department of Finance (DOF) Assistant Secretary Paola Alvarez expressed her reservation on the bill saying that it might lead to double compensation as various types of support have already been extended to the people of Marawi City by the government.</p> <p>The TWG will set another meeting to await and consider the DOF's official position paper and to also invite the OCD and the DPWH as resource persons.</p>
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources (Technical Working Group)	HBs 7, 122, 1542, 2827, 3010, 3240, 3471, 4350, 4480 & 6185	Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Arroyo (J.M.), Garbin, Rodriguez, Tupas, Salimbangon, Villaraza- Suarez, Deputy Speakers Santos-Recto and Romero, and Rep. Salo	Creating the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, providing for its powers and functions, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The joint technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), for the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Batanes Rep. Ciriaco Gato Jr., Vice Chair of the Committee on Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources, will deliberate further on the 10 bills in its next meeting. It was agreed that HB 7 will be used by the TWG as its working draft.</p> <p>National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) Academician Rafael Guerrero expressed his support for the bill. He said that the Philippines, with its vast coastline, needs to have a regulatory agency solely dedicated to fisheries and aquatic resources not only to ensure the country's sustainable development but also the country's food security.</p> <p>Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' (BFAR) Chief of the Office of Special Concerns Benjamin Tabios Jr. also supports the bills, saying that the creation of the proposed Department will provide the much-needed attention to aquaculture, which is a multi-billion industry, and more effectively respond to the needs of the fisherfolk.</p>

Continuation... Government Reorganization jt. w/ Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources (Technical Working Group)				<p>However, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center's (SEAFDEC) Chief for Aquaculture Department Dan Baliao explained that the creation of a new Department goes against the campaign of President Duterte to reduce the size of government bureaucracy. He further said that apart from the additional budget that a new department will require, it might also duplicate the functions of existing agencies and cause confusion among the stakeholders.</p> <p>Rep. Salo emphasized that the contention should not be on the amount of budget that it will require, but on the benefit that the country will gain from enacting this proposed legislation.</p> <p>The joint TWG will invite resource persons from the academe and the non-government organizations in its next meeting.</p>
Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 1886 & 1742	Rep. Vargas and Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Strengthening the primary healthcare system in cultural and indigenous communities (ICC) by institutionalizing the training and employment of indigenous peoples health workers (IPHWs), and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Leonardo Babasa Jr. (2nd District, Zamboanga del Sur), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The members of the TWG thoroughly discussed all the sections of the draft substitute bill and agreed on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IPWH will only assist and not administer immunizations and regular weighing of children; • The details of how IPWH can assist midwives in providing birthing services will be stipulated in the proposed law's implementing rules and regulations; • Sec. 7 (Role of Concerned Government Agencies) will be patterned after the relevant provisions of Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2013-01 issued by the Department of Health (DOH), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG); and • The initial funding for the implementation of the proposed law will be charged against the current appropriation of the DOH. <p>Representatives of the NCIP, Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said they will submit their official position paper within two weeks.</p>
Information and Communications Technology (Technical Working Group)	HB 1188	Deputy Speaker Romero	Amending RA 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, to adopt a more systematic, comprehensive and effective protection program, to foster the imposition of all existing policies and guidelines, increasing its penalties and sanctions	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Navotas City Rep. John Reynald Tiangco, will deliberate further on the two bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Department of Information and Communications Technology</p>

Continuation... Information and Communications Technology (Technical Working Group)	HB 5612	Rep. Yap (V.)	Amending RA 10173 (by addressing data privacy challenges and other cross-border data processing concerns in support of the country's digital transformation towards a knowledge-based economy)	<p>(DICT), National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), and the National Privacy Commission (NPC) expressed their support for the bills.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP) and Globe Telecom, Inc. suggested that the penalty of imprisonment for violating the proposed law be removed but the amount of the fines may be increased instead.</p> <p>It was also recommended that the terms "security incidence" and "individual financial data" be defined in the proposed law.</p> <p>The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), Smart Communications, Inc., IBM Corporations, Google Philippines, Facebook Philippines, and the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center will submit their respective position papers on the bills in the next meeting.</p>
Justice (Technical Working Group)	HBs 5527 & 5584	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte and Rep. Leachon	Further expanding the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Trial Courts (MeTC), Municipal Trial Courts in Cities (MTCC), Municipal Trial Courts (MTC), and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts (MCTC), amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Ruwel Peter Gonzaga (2nd District, Compostela Valley), will deliberate further on HBs 5527 and 5584 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Supreme Court Administrator Jose Midas Marquez said that the proposed law increases the jurisdictional threshold of first level courts to P2 million for civil actions, probate proceedings, and admiralty and maritime actions; and P400,000 for civil actions which involve title to, or possession of, real property, or any interest therein, whether in or outside Metro Manila. These proposed amendments, according to Marquez, will help de-clog the dockets of the Regional Trial Courts (RTCs).</p> <p>Philippine Judges Association (PJA) Executive Vice President Felix Reyes said that the threshold limits, for purposes of valuation provided for under BP 129, are no longer applicable at present. The proposed law, he added, would effectively distribute cases among the courts.</p> <p>Metropolitan and City Judges Association of the Philippines, Inc. (MCJAPI) 2nd Vice President Maria Ella Cecilia Dumlaog-Escalante said that the proposed law will require an increase in the number of court personnel such as legal researchers, drafters, and process servers in the first level courts to address the expected influx of court dockets.</p> <p>Marquez informed the Committee that the Supreme Court-Office of the Court Administrator (SC-OCA) has put in place mechanisms to address case congestion in courts such as the establishment of additional courts and assisting courts and the provision of court decongestion officers. These measures have somehow reduced clogged court dockets to manageable levels which is</p>

Continuation... Justice (Technical Working Group)				<p>500 cases per court. Marquez likewise manifested that the SC is now considering serving summons through the use of internet, email, and private courier.</p> <p>Assisting Courts are assigned courts to temporarily help other courts with clogged dockets pending organization of new or additional courts in certain area.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers and suggestions on the matter for the TWG's consideration.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)	Briefing by the Department of Education (DepEd) on its 2020 plans, programs, and budget for North Luzon	<p>The Committee, chaired by Abra Rep. Joseph Sto. Niño Bernos, listened to the briefing conducted by DepEd on its 2020 plans, programs, and budget for North Luzon.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Bernos said that based on the 2019 Philippine Statistical Yearbook, Regions I & II and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) are among the top 10 regions in the country with the highest net enrolment rate in all grade levels and with high percentage rate reaching the final grade of either elementary or high school for years 2016-2018.</p> <p>In this regard, Rep. Bernos said that the DepEd must ensure that these regions are well-prepared and well-equipped, in terms of adequate school facilities and teachers, to be able to cope with the high number of enrollees.</p> <p>DepEd Education Facilities Division Chief Annabelle Pangan presented that the DepEd's Basic Educational Facilities Fund - School Building Program was given a budget of only P12.93 billion for FY 2020, compared to the proposed budget of P19.9 billion under the 2020 National Expenditure Program. With this budget reduction, the budgets for all regions were subsequently reduced. Thus, for North Luzon, Pangan said only 260 classrooms will be programmed for construction out of the 12,451 total net classroom requirements.</p> <p>With regard to the status of the school building program being implemented by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for the three regions for 2014-2019, Pangan reported that out of the total target of 22,118 school buildings, 19,716 have been completed, 2,375 are ongoing, and 27 have not yet started.</p> <p>Several Members of the Committee asked DepEd to give priority to the implementation of the Last Mile Schools Program. They also requested DepEd regional directors to coordinate with them so that programs and projects for their respective districts will be properly identified based on the needs of their constituents.</p> <p>The Last Mile Schools Program of the DepEd aims to address the gaps in resources and facilities of schools that are located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged and conflict-affected areas. (Source: <i>deped.gov.ph</i>)</p> <p>With regard to the suggestion of the Members of the Committee to build classrooms designed to withstand strong typhoons and other calamities and conducive to learning, Pangan said that the building layout and</p>

<p>Continuation... North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>		<p>design of classrooms are based on DepEd Order No. 64, series of 2017. This Department Order establishes the minimum performance standards and specifications for DepEd school buildings to guide the Department and other stakeholders in the preparation of plans – architectural, structural, electrical, fire protection, and sanitary – to ensure the comfort and safety of the would-be occupants of the school buildings.</p> <p>The DepEd regional directors responded to the queries raised by the Members of the Committee concerning their respective districts.</p>
<p>Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>	<p>Briefing by the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation on the Philippine plan for energy sufficiency and sustainability in relation to the latter's uncollected receivables</p>	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, and Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, after listening to the briefing by PSALM agreed to hold another meeting with PSALM, Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), and Independent Power Producer Administrators (IPPAs) to shed light on the long overdue receivables of PSALM.</p> <p>PSALM President and Chief Executive Officer Irene Joy Besido-Garcia presented the rationale for creating PSALM, its mandate, and the details of its overdue receivables. She said that RA 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (EPIRA Law) restructured the country's power sector by removing monopolies in the power industry and fostering competition in the generation and retail supply subsectors.</p> <p>Besido-Garcia said that before the enactment of the EPIRA Law, the cost of electricity production was obscure because the power rates were subsidized. This caused the government, through the National Power Corporation (NPC), to accumulate P1.24 trillion debt, she said.</p> <p>The EPIRA Law, Besido-Garcia continued, privatized the NPC and dismantled the government's monopoly in the power generation and transmission sectors. This, she added, created an open and retail competition in the distribution sector.</p> <p>In restructuring the power sector, the EPIRA created PSALM Corporation, a wholly-owned and -controlled government entity which is mandated to take over the ownership of all existing generation assets of the NPC, independent power producer (IPP) contracts, real estate, and all other disposable assets including the transmission business of the National Transmission Corporation (Transco). The PSALM is also mandated to manage the orderly sale and privatization of these assets with the objective of liquidating all of NPC's financial obligations in an optimal manner as well as to act as the administrator of the Universal Charge Fund.</p> <p>Universal Charge refers to the charge imposed for the recovery of the stranded debts, stranded contract costs of NPC, and stranded contract costs of eligible contracts of distribution utilities and other mandated purposes. It is a "non-bypassable" charge, which shall be passed on and collected from all end-users on a monthly basis by the distribution utilities. (Source: ERC website)</p> <p>Besido-Garcia said that the PSALM has a 25-year corporate life from the effectivity of EPIRA or until June 2026 unless otherwise extended by law. As provided for by the EPIRA Law, after the end of PSALM's corporate life, all its assets, monies, properties, as well as its outstanding liabilities will revert to and be assumed by the national government.</p> <p>Besido-Garcia disclosed that as of December 2019, the PSALM has overdue receivables amounting to P95.42 billion from delinquent customers in the power sector. The uncollected fees include: power and universal charges (UC), P35.44 billion; IPPAs, P33.62 billion; and those under litigation and reconciliation and adjustments, P26.36 billion. PSALM could not collect the overdue receivables because some are still subject</p>

Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability		<p>of litigation and there are distribution utilities that could not fulfill their financial obligations.</p> <p>The Members called on PSALM to expedite the collection of these receivables, stressing that if it fails to collect these overdue amounts, let these not be passed on to the power consumers or the taxpayers in general.</p>
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	Briefing on the financial performance of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR)	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), will continue its discussion on the financial performance of PAGCOR in its next meeting.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Garin, PAGCOR Slot Director Angelito Reyta said that PAGCOR has no new ventures at the moment but plans to boost its revenue by improving sales efficiency. According to Reyta, the general approach of PAGCOR is for its casinos and other gaming establishments to have equal share in attaining the yearly projected income of 16% of the total gross gaming revenue (GGR). However, this equal sharing scheme is not easily achieved considering the different earning capacities and operations environment of each branch.</p> <p>In 2019, the Corporation's revenue grew by 20%, including the integrated sales from all licensed casinos of PAGCOR, Reyta said.</p> <p>With regard to PAGCOR's income sharing scheme with lessors, Rep. Garin and Rep. Jesus "Bong" Suntay (4th District, Quezon City) asked PAGCOR to explain the varying schemes adopted by the Corporation.</p> <p>PAGCOR Assistant Vice President Sharon Quintanilla and PAGCOR's Senior Manager for Regulatory Division Jessa Mariz Fernandez explained that when PAGCOR leases an establishment for its gaming operations, it usually adopts a 65-35% sharing with the lessor also providing the machines and equipment. However, if the contract is a straight lease, PAGCOR gets 100% of the sales and the property owner only receives the rental fee. As for the operations of Casino Filipino Mimosa in Clark City, PAGCOR gets 75% of the table games' take and 100% in the slot machines, Quintanilla said.</p> <p>Fernandez confirmed that PAGCOR generated an approximate amount of P5.73 billion in 2019 from the 2% regulatory fee it imposes on Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs).</p> <p>Rep. Suntay said that P5.73 billion is a small income for the government considering the social implications of allowing the POGOs to operate which include the displacement of Filipino workers and the prostitution and corruption that results from harboring POGOs in the country.</p> <p>Fernandez clarified that the regulatory fee is actually either 2% of the GGR assessed from POGOs, or the monthly minimum guarantee fee (MGF) of \$150,000 per operator, whichever is higher.</p> <p>Reacting from the suggestion of Rep. Garin to increase the regulatory fee to 5%, Fernandez replied that doing so would force some POGOs to move their business operations abroad or resort to illegal online gaming.</p> <p>Rep. Suntay told PAGCOR that losing some POGOs could turn out to be an advantage because with fewer operators it would be easier for PAGCOR to manage.</p>

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Transportation	Update on the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on the transportation industry	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1 st District, Western Samar), discussed with concerned government agencies and

<p>Continuation... Transportation</p>		<p>the airline industry the effects of COVID-19 on the transportation sector.</p> <p>Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) Executive Director Carmelo Arcilla confirmed that the global spread of the virus has severely affected the aviation sector. He proposed the lifting of the travel ban to Hong Kong and Macau, and the mandatory 14-day quarantine period for airline employees which is reducing the manpower of airline companies consequently contributing to the latter's interrupted operations. He maintained that airlines are currently implementing their own health and safety procedures to stop the spread of the COVID-19.</p> <p>Air Carriers Association of the Philippines (ACAP) Executive Director Roberto Lim reported that in the past two weeks, 21 routes were temporarily suspended with 308 flights cancelled per week. Airlines had flights cancelled to and from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan dislodging 293,000 passengers. But with the lifting of the travel ban on Taiwan last February 13, airlines have resumed their flights to this country. Seeking for a review of the travel ban and quarantine protocols, Lim pointed out that the country will lose 30,000-90,000 jobs and as much as P22.7 billion per month if these policies continue.</p> <p>Representatives from the Philippine Airlines (PAL) and Cebu Pacific likewise reported the losses they are incurring while the travel ban is in effect. They gave the assurance that their respective airlines have measures in place to stop the spread of the disease such as disinfecting the aircraft and supplying their crew with the appropriate protective gears.</p> <p>Department of Health (DOH) Field Epidemiology Training Program Officer Althea de Guzman reported that as of today, there are three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country, who are not Filipino citizens, and that there is no report of local transmission of the COVID-19. She disagreed with the proposal to lift the travel ban and the quarantine of airline employees as these measures will significantly prevent the entry of additional cases. She maintained that constant monitoring and screening should be upheld especially in the country's airports and ports.</p> <p>On the query of Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon on the difference between a person under investigation (PUI) and a person under monitoring (PUM), De Guzman explained that PUIs are those who travelled previously to China, Hong Kong, and Macau and are symptomatic with the virus, while PUMs are those who travelled to other countries affected by COVID-19 or exposed to infected persons.</p> <p>Rep. Alfel Bascug (1st District, Agusan del Sur) asked if a vaccine or medicine is now available in the country to cure COVID-19 patients. De Guzman replied in the negative. However, she informed the body that Filipino local scientists were able to develop a testing kit for confirmatory testing of the said virus.</p> <p>In the meantime that a travel ban is in effect, Rep. Biazon recommended the massive promotion of domestic tourism to compensate for the losses incurred by airline companies. Likewise, Navotas City Rep. John Reynald Tiangco suggested that airline companies may take advantage of this idle time to conduct their respective repair and maintenance.</p> <p>The Committee also asked government agencies in charge of international airports to synchronize their emergency protocols to effectively manage and respond to epidemics such as the COVID-19.</p> <p>Transport groups present in the meeting asked the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to review its</p>
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Continuation... Transportation		<p>policy of imposing a penalty of P5,000 for non-compliance with its directive requiring drivers to wear protective masks as part of precautions against the disease. The LTFRB said it will review this provision in its Memorandum Circular 2020-05.</p> <p>Airline companies will submit to the Committee their respective action plans in response to the COVID-1</p>
	Status of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) audit	<p>The Committee discussed with Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) the status of their preparations for the upcoming EMSA audit.</p> <p>MARINA Administrator Narciso Vingson Jr. and CHED Chairperson Prospero de Vera gave the assurance that the country is ready for the EMSA audit on February 24 to March 13 of this year. Failure to pass the EMSA audit will result in the banning of Filipino seafarers to work in European-flagged vessels.</p> <p>MARINA reported that all the necessary systems are already in place. Vingson said that MARINA has already implemented corrective actions to settle the 42 shortcomings identified in the last EMSA audit in 2017. EO 63 signed by President Rodrigo Duterte last September 2018 helped to further strengthen the authority of the MARINA as the single maritime administration in charge of the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW) for Seafarers; and identified the specific functions of other agencies such as the CHED, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and Department of Health (DOH). MARINA has also upgraded its mechanisms by setting up an information technology (IT) infrastructure system to lessen human intervention in some of its procedures.</p> <p>De Vera reported that CHED and MARINA are closely coordinating with each other in preparation for the EMSA audit. A technical panel composed of representatives from the two agencies has been formed to carefully review all the maritime education programs of MARINA and to ensure that all programs and methodologies are compliant with the STCW Convention.</p> <p>The 1978 STCW Convention was the first to establish the standards and basic requirements on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level. Countries which have signed the convention are obliged to meet these standards if not exceed them. Previously, the standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers were established by individual governments, which resulted to varied standards and procedures. (<i>Source: IMO website</i>).</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Macnell Lusotan (Party-List, MARINO) expressed his concern on the low deployment of seafarers due to their inability to enroll in the required courses or non-completion of courses in view of the lack of training facilities in the country. He said that China has outranked the Philippines as the number one provider of seafarers globally.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento recommended that MARINA improve its facilities as soon as possible in order to prevent further decreases in the deployment of Filipino seafarers.</p> <p>MARINA and CHED were requested to submit pertinent documents in relation to the EMSA audit.</p>