



# Committee Daily Bulletin

18<sup>th</sup> Congress  
First Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 95  
May 21, 2020

## COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
<b>Banks and Financial Intermediaries</b>	HB 6375	Rep. Romualdez (Y. M.)	Consolidating all subsequent amendments to the Charter of the Philippine Veterans Bank (PVB), reenacting for the said purpose the pertinent portions of RA 3518, or the law creating the PVB, as amended, and introducing further amendments thereto	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, will deliberate further on HB 6375 in its next meeting.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Committee focused its discussion on Sections 20 to 24 of the bill.</p> <p>The Committee adopted the revised phraseology of Section 20, as suggested by Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), to clearly state that the right of the PVB to demand additional securities, dispose of the same, advance the maturity of credits in case of loss or decline in the market value of the collaterals shall be subject to the provisions of the General Banking Law of 2000 and other applicable laws.</p> <p>Under Section 22, PVB Chair and CEO Roberto de Ocampo and BSP Managing Director for Financial Supervision Subsector III Arifa Ala agreed to the proposal to increase the penalty for violating the prohibition against the charging of fees from loan borrowers to P100,000 or by imprisonment of not more than five years, or both. Under RA 3518, violation of any provision of the law is punishable with a fine not exceeding P10,000 or imprisonment of not more than five years, or both, upon the discretion of the court.</p> <p>The Committee discussed thoroughly Section 23 of the bill. De Ocampo agreed to the suggestion of the BSP that the PVB should be given flexibility in setting aside a portion of its net profit that shall accrue to its reserve fund and not peg the amount to 20%, as prescribed under RA 3518.</p> <p>Likewise, the PVB agreed to the suggestion that dividends shall be sourced from unrestricted retained earnings and not from its net profits.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) Administrator Ernesto Carolina said that the provision allowing the PVB to allocate funds for the administration and management of the 2.4 hectares currently being occupied by the Board of Trustees of the Veterans of World War II and other properties covered by Proclamation 192, series of 1967, may have some legal implications. He explained that there is an existing presidential proclamation stating that these properties are under the</p>

Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				<p>administration of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP).</p> <p>Rep. Cua directed the resource persons to study and agree among themselves on the more appropriate phraseology of Section 24, which provides for the composition of the Board of Trustees of the Veterans of World War II.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
<b>Higher and Technical Education</b> (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 6449, 1855 & 1936	Reps. Go (M.), Rodriguez, and Deputy Speaker Romero	Strengthening the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), amending for the purpose RA 7722, otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994 and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment. The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Rep. Go, author of the lead bill, HB 6449, presented to the body the amendments made on the substitute bill.</p> <p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 1855, reiterated his proposals on strengthening the oversight functions of CHED and providing independence and fiscal autonomy to the governing boards of state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), and higher education institutions (HEIs).</p> <p>The resource persons from the following agencies expressed their support for the bill and presented their respective recommendations: CHED, Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations, Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities.</p> <p>Most of the discussions centered on the proposed powers and functions of the Commission such as its quasi-judicial power, oversight functions, and regulatory and developmental functions. The term "reasonable supervision" was also extensively discussed, which relates to CHED's supervision over the SUCs, LUCs and HEIs.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1<sup>st</sup> District, Sorsogon) agreed to the proposal to retain the provision in the bill requiring doctorate degree as one of the qualifications for the positions of Chairperson and Commissioners of CHED.</p> <p>The Chair said that the recommendations of the Members and resource persons will be considered in the finalization of the substitute bill.</p>

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Health	<p>Discussion with concerned government agencies and the private sector on the current COVID-19 situation in the Philippines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Department of Health (DOH)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4<sup>th</sup> District, Quezon), discussed with DOH, PhilHealth, DILG, and NTF the COVID-19 situation in the country.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Bataan), was later designated as presiding officer when Rep. Tan had to leave early for another important commitment.</p> <p>Health Secretary Francisco Duque reported that as of May 20, there were 13,221 confirmed COVID-19 cases nationwide, including 2,932 recovered patients and 842 deaths. The National Capital Region (NCR) still has the highest number of COVID-19 cases followed by Regions VII and IV-A.</p> <p>Duque also cited the improvement in the capacity of the country's healthcare system in fighting the disease as the number of COVID-19 testing laboratories increased to 38. He added that 1,897 hospitals are now accepting COVID-19 patients and additional healthcare workers were hired to help in the country's fight against the disease.</p> <p>On budget utilization, Duque said that out of the P45.7 billion allocated to the DOH to implement RA 11469 or the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act," P35.2 billion has been obligated and will be used to procure COVID-19 response equipment and supplies. He added that the remaining P10 billion will be added to the budget for the DOH's expanded targeted testing for COVID-19 wherein the aim is to conduct 30,000 tests daily.</p> <p>Duque said that in support of the global response against the virus, the country participated in the World Health Organization (WHO) "solidarity trial" to test the safety and effectiveness of four possible therapies in treating COVID-19: Chloroquine or Hydroxychloroquine, Remdesivir, Lopinavir with Ritonavir, and Lopinavir with Ritonavir plus Interferon beta-1a. He also said that the Philippines will participate in the coronavirus trial for the flu drug Avigan which the Japanese government has sponsored. Moreover, the DOH is studying the effectiveness of convalescent plasma taken from the people who recovered from COVID-19 in treating the disease.</p> <p>Rep. Micaela Violago (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Nueva Ecija) asked about the basis for the announcement of Duque on May 20 that the country is on its second wave or another surge of COVID-19 cases, but was corrected by Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque a day after.</p> <p>Duque clarified that the country is still in the "first major wave of sustained community transmission." He added that his earlier statement was merely a "casual expression of an epidemiologic fact" considering that there were three cases in January, no reported cases in February, and then followed by a bigger wave, which can now be considered the first major wave of community transmission.</p> <p>Dr. John Wong, an epidemiologist from the Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health and a member of the technical working group on coronavirus created by the government,</p>

<p>Continuation... Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth)</li> <li>Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)</li> </ul>	<p>believes that the COVID-19 curve in the country is starting to flatten. However, he does not discount the possibility that there may be a series of waves to happen until a vaccine has been discovered.</p> <p>Rep. Tan inquired if the government has plans of undertaking COVID-19 mass testing. Duque admitted that instead of mass testing, the DOH is doing an expanded targeted testing with the following groups as the priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patients or healthcare workers with severe or critical symptoms and history of travel or exposure;</li> <li>Patients or healthcare workers with mild symptoms, relevant history of travel or exposure, and considered vulnerable;</li> <li>Patients or healthcare workers who are not considered vulnerable but with mild symptoms and relevant history of travel or exposure; and</li> <li>Those with no symptoms but have relevant history of travel or exposure.</li> </ul> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Marikina City) maintained that conducting mass testing is the best way to prevent the spread of the disease and allay the fears of people as the country reopens the economy and transition to the “new normal.” According to Rep. Quimbo, the cost of P9 billion for mass testing is much lower than the P18 billion economic loss for each day of the lockdown due to COVID-19.</p> <p>DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Singh-Vergeire gave a brief background on the government’s efforts in improving the country’s testing capacity.</p> <p>Meanwhile, PhilHealth President and CEO Ricardo Morales presented the following benefit packages for all Filipinos affected by COVID-19: Inpatient Treatment Packages; Testing Treatment Package; and the Community Isolation Benefit Package.</p> <p>Morales also said that PhilHealth is providing full financial protection to health workers and patients who have contracted COVID-19. He said that all patients and health workers confined due to COVID-19 from February 1 to April 14 shall be eligible for all inpatient benefits with no co-payment whether in public or private health care institutions (HCIs).</p> <p>Morales also said that under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, all frontline health workers, administrative and support personnel, utility and security personnel, and health volunteers in public and private HCIs, and personnel working in government health agencies shall be eligible for all COVID-19 benefit packages.</p> <p>PhilHealth is also looking at the possibility of extending beyond May 31 the moratorium on payment of PhilHealth contributions. Early on, PhilHealth temporarily suspended all its February to April 2020 collections.</p> <p>DILG Undersecretary Ricojudge Janvier Echiverri discussed the DILG’s guidelines in response to the pandemic, the organization and revitalization of the Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams (BHRETS), and the efforts of the local government units (LGUs) in establishing their respective isolation areas or Local Isolation and General Treatment Areas for COVID-19 cases (LIGTAS COVID).</p> <p>To address the challenges of COVID-19, the DILG mandated all LGUs to craft local ordinances on preventive measures against the disease. The Department also mobilized the Philippine</p>
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<p>Continuation... Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Task Force (NTF) for COVID-19</li> </ul>	<p>National Police (PNP) to man various quarantine control checkpoints and strictly implement social distancing and mandatory wearing of face masks, and to ensure unhampered transport of essential services. The PNP has also conducted a series of arrests and filed charges against those engaged in hoarding, profiteering and manipulation of prices. Likewise, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BOF) was deployed to aid in COVID-19 emergency situations such as community disinfections.</p> <p>On the implementation of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), Echiverri said that allegations of corruption in the distribution of the SAP subsidy are already being investigated. He added that the DILG issued show cause orders to concerned local chief executives for their poor performance in the distribution of the cash grant.</p> <p>Likewise, Echiverri said that the DILG is constantly reminding the local chief executives to ensure that their actions and decisions are consistent with the orders and guidelines of the Office of the President as well as the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).</p> <p>Echiverri admitted that the DILG encountered many challenges in the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). He, however, pointed out the advantages of imposing ECQ which did not only slow down the transmission of the disease but also reduced the country's crime rate.</p> <p>Undersecretary Isidro Purisima of the NTF, which is the operational arm of the IATF, discussed the National Action Plan (NAP) – the overall national strategy to deal with the COVID-19 problem and its aftermath. He said that the government's desired end state is that COVID -19 is prevented and contained, its impact on the economy is mitigated, government and private sector operations resumed, and people adapt to the new normal.</p> <p>Purisima said that testing, isolation, and contact tracing of COVID-19 patients are vital to stem the transmission of the disease. He added that four mega swabbing facilities, which are located in the cities of Manila, Taguig, and Pasay, and in the province Bulacan, were established as part of the government's efforts to expand the coverage of COVID-19 swab testing and in preparation for the influx of returning overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who will be required to undergo such test.</p> <p>Purisima said that to date, 31,283 OFWs underwent COVID-19 testing out of which 515 OFWs tested positive.</p> <p>Purisima further reported that the government's efforts to trace and monitor individuals who came in close contact with COVID-19 infected people have improved. Likewise, the number of isolation facilities has increased and the supply and demand of personal protective equipment has stabilized, he added.</p>
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