



Committee Daily Bulletin

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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Southern Tagalog Development (Special Committee)	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elenita Milagros "Eileen" Ermita-Buhain (1st District, Batangas), held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Rules of Procedure for the 18th Congress was adopted.</p> <p>Under the Rules of the House, the Committee has jurisdiction over "all matters directly and principally relating to the development of the Southern Tagalog area inclusive of those affecting agricultural areas, tourism, economic and industrial estates, and processing areas therein."</p>

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Conference Committee	HB 6312 & SB 1086	Rep. Yap (V.) and Sen. Angara	Creating and establishing the Philippine Academy of Sports and providing funds therefor	<p>The Conference Committee, co-chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, Chair of the House Committee on Basic Education and Culture, and Sen. Win Gatchalian, Chair of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, approved the harmonized version of HB 6312 and SB 1086.</p> <p>Other conferees who were present during the conference committee meeting were the following: On the part of the House, Reps. Eric Martinez (2nd District, Valenzuela City), Mark Go (Baguio City), Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac), and France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS); on the part of the Senate, Senators Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara, Pia Cayetano, Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, and Francis "Tol" Tolentino.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agrarian Reform	HB 239	Rep. Zarate	Instituting genuine agrarian reform in the country and creating the mechanism for its implementation	<p>The Committee, chaired by Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao, will deliberate further on HB 239 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HB 239, said that his bill aims to achieve fair, just, and equitable distribution of all agricultural lands to qualified farmers, including certain private and government lands that have not yet been covered by previous agrarian reform programs. He also said that the</p>

Continuation... Agrarian Reform				<p>proposed law will address the loopholes in existing laws on agrarian reform.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bills were representatives of different farmer organizations such as Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura, Federation of Free Farmers, Bantay Bigas, Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon, AMIHAN National Federation of Peasant Women, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA), and Pamalakaya National Federation of Small Fisherfolks. They said that the proposed law will provide free and equal distribution of agricultural lands to farmers, facilitate the free processing of land titles, create more job opportunities, and ensure food security.</p> <p>Rosario Pascual, a member of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council, representing the agricultural landowners, said that the government should also consider the plight of the landowners whose income will be adversely affected with the enactment of the proposed law, adding that the prescribed maximum five-hectare retention of the landholdings is unfair to them.</p> <p>Under Section 12 of HB 239, the government shall acquire and distribute all public and private agricultural lands exceeding five hectares. A maximum of five hectares shall remain to the landowner and the excess shall be subject to expropriation.</p> <p>Rep. Chungalao said that the proposed law should be within the bounds of the Constitution's equal protection clause, taking into consideration the interests of all stakeholders.</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. (Source: <i>Ichong v. Hernandez</i>, GR No. L 7995, May 31, 1957)</p> <p>The Committee will ask the following agencies for their opinions, comments, and recommendations on the proposed law: Supreme Court, Department of Justice, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Land Bank of the Philippines, Commission on Higher Education, and Department of National Defense, among others.</p>
Agriculture and Food	Substitute Bill to HBs 869, 1290, 2656, 3599, 4483, 5336,	Deputy Speakers Estrella and Villafuerte, Reps. Dy (I.P.),	Strengthening the implementation of the National Organic Agriculture Program, amending for the purpose RA 10068 or the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1 st District, Quezon), approved the Substitute Bill to the eight bills subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Agriculture and Food	5641 & 5864	Garin (S.), Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Cullamat, Mariano-Hernandez, and Ramirez-Sato		
Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Local Government	House Joint Resolution (HJR) 25	Rep. Yap (V.)	Mandating the provision of guidelines on the eradication and prevention of outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) and other potential transboundary animal diseases in the country	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1st District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and Food, and Rep. Noel Villanueva (3rd District, Tarlac), Chair of the Committee on Local Government, will deliberate further on the issues raised relative to the seven measures in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Enverga said that the meeting was called to determine what caused the proliferation of ASF in the country and the mechanisms that need to be put in place to address the matter.</p> <p>Likewise, Rep. Rico Geron (Party-List, AGAP), author of HRs 192 and 193, said that an inquiry is necessary to know the strategies being undertaken by the government to control, if not totally eradicate, ASF in the country.</p> <p>Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary William Dar reported that as of March 2, 2020, a total of 237,406 pigs have been culled because of the ASF disease. He went on to say that the ASF entered the country primarily because of illegal trade, smuggling, and misdeclaration of pork products which evaded government meat inspection and food safety protocols. Dar likewise said that the local government units' poor monitoring of backyard and commercial farms as well as the lack of available veterinary service in rural areas contributed to the proliferation of ASF in some parts of the country.</p> <p>Nevertheless, Dar said that the DA is taking necessary steps to prevent the disease from spreading throughout the country, which include the implementing of strict biosecurity measures and protocol in ASF-affected areas and enhanced monitoring and surveillance through accreditation of ASF laboratories from the private sector and state universities and colleges (SUCs), in partnership with hog raisers. Dar also said that Administrative Order No. 22, series of 2020, was issued by the President directing all government agencies and LGUs to strictly implement and comply with the National Zoning and Movement Plan for the prevention and control of ASF, as contained in DA Administrative Circular No. 12, series of 2019.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary for Operations Ariel Cayanan said that ASF will be easily contained as long as hog traders follow the guidelines set by the Department in preventing the spread of the ASF.</p>
	HRs 192 & 336	Reps. Geron and Cabatbat	Investigation into the status of proliferation of imported canned pork meats and processed pork products in the Philippines from the countries affected by ASF	
	HR 193	Rep. Geron	Inquiry into the preparedness of the Government of the Philippines and agencies concerned against ASF	
	HR 383	Rep. Zarate	Investigation into the spread of ASF in the Philippines and its possible disastrous effects on the local hog industry	
	HR 506	Rep. Cabatbat	Investigation into the possible imposition of stricter import requirements and guidelines and other enforceable measures on fresh, frozen, processed pork products, and by-products to contain the ASF virus in the country	
	HR 705	Rep. Unabia	Inquiry into the implementation of quarantine procedures by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the inspection of cold storage warehouses and container vans which are possible sources of the outbreak of the ASF in the country	

<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food jt. w/ Local Government</p>				<p>He disclosed that some backyard farmers opt to hide their swine and sell them backdoor hoping that they could recover their costs instead of turning them in to the DA for culling.</p> <p>Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS) said that backyard farmers will not opt to sell backdoor if government will compensate them at once for the pigs culled at a price equal to the current market value of their hogs. Cayanan replied that financial assistance amounting to P5,000 per pig is being given to backyard raisers whose hogs were culled.</p> <p>Rep. Antonio "Tonypet" Albano (1st District, Isabela) suggested that stiffer penalties, including apprehension and filing of appropriate cases, should be imposed on hog raisers and traders caught selling, buying, or transporting ASF-infected live hogs and pork meat, and slaughtering infected pigs.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Conrado Estrella III (Party-List, ABONO) opined that the entry of ASF in the country can be attributed to the lack of equipment to inspect and ensure the safety of meat products in ports and airports before they are released for public consumption.</p> <p>Cayanan admitted that the Department of Budget and Management has not released yet the budget for the procurement of the facilities needed for thorough inspection of meat products.</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program National Program Management Office (SLP-PMO) Director Restituto Macuto said that as of February 2020, the DSWD has granted financial assistance to 194 out of the 462 associations involved in swine livelihood projects. Macuto said that the beneficiaries were advised to consider alternate livelihood programs aside from hog fattening until such time that the country is free from ASF.</p> <p>Rep. Villanueva suggested that funds lodged in the DSWD for assistance to the affected hog raisers be downloaded to the DA to facilitate the immediate distribution of assistance to qualified beneficiaries.</p> <p>Representatives from the hog raising industry appealed to the government to strengthen measures to fully eradicate ASF in the country, adding that the P260-billion hog raising industry has already lost P80 billion because of the disease.</p> <p>The Joint Committee agreed to issue subpoena duces tecum and ad testificandum to the Department of the Interior and Local Government to compel its officials to attend the Committee's next hearing.</p>
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Banks and Financial Intermediaries	<i>Motu proprio</i> inquiry		On the alleged entry to the Philippines of \$370 million "dirty money"	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, will continue its investigation into the alleged entry of "dirty money" into the Philippines amounting to about \$370 million.</p> <p>Rep. Cua said that an investigation is necessary to find out if this huge amount of money is being used to fund unlawful activities in the country.</p> <p>Bureau of Customs (BOC) Commissioner Rey Leonardo Guerrero disclosed that the investigation on the influx of foreign currencies started in 2018 which led to the apprehension of three individuals for illegally bringing in foreign currencies way beyond the limits set under the law. One of whom was a Korean national who brought in 3.8 million Hong Kong dollars in cash in 2018. The other two individuals were Filipinos who brought in cash amounting to \$700,000 and \$649,000, respectively, in 2019. Cases of misdeclaration and non-declaration of foreign currency have already been filed in courts against these individuals.</p> <p>Guerrero also confirmed that last January, the BOC seized an approximate amount of \$370 million from two groups which carried \$200 million and \$168 million, respectively, upon arrival in the country.</p> <p>However, Guerrero explained that if a person carrying a huge amount of cash is able to present proper documentation including duly accomplished Foreign Currency Declaration Form, and there are no other questionable circumstances regarding the same, the BOC allows the person along with the money to pass through customs. These cases, though, shall be reported to the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>AMLC Secretariat Executive Director Mel Georgie Racela cited the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' Circular No. 308 series of 2001 issued in accordance with RA 7653 (New Central Bank Act), which states that "any person who brings into or out of the Philippines foreign currency in excess of US\$10,000 or its equivalent is required to declare the same in writing and to furnish information on the source and purpose of the transport of such currency."</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon emphasized that individuals or entities who come to the country with huge amounts of cash should be monitored to verify the nature of their businesses and ensure the legitimacy of their transactions.</p> <p>On the allegation that the two groups each carrying millions of dollars in cash were escorted by personnel from the military and the police, Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) Officer-in-Charge for Intelligence and Investigation Division Roque Alcantara denied this.</p>
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Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				<p>Guerrero said that the BOC is requesting the MIAA a copy of the CCTV footage last January when the alleged incident occurred.</p> <p>Rep. Cua requested the BOC to submit its legislative proposal to properly regulate and monitor the entry of foreign currency into the country to ensure that such monies are being utilized for legitimate purposes.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to conduct an executive session in order for the BOC to discuss with the Members sensitive information that are vital to the investigation.</p>
Natural Resources	HBs 107 & 4518	Reps. Fortun and Cabochan	Establishing marine protected areas in all coastal municipalities and cities	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. (4th District, Cavite), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate HBs 107 and 4518.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO), author of HB 4518, said that his bill mandates every coastal municipality to establish, maintain and manage marine protected areas (MPAs) in at least 15% of their municipal waters, and preserve MPAs that were previously set up.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers for the TWG's reference in its deliberations on the bills.</p> <p>A bill with similar subject matter was passed on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17th Congress.</p>
	HB 1686	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Establishing the National Council for the Preservation of Mangrove Forests	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to come up with a substitute bill.
	HB 4052	Rep. Fortun	Providing for the preservation, reforestation, afforestation, and sustainable development of mangrove forests in the Philippines, providing penalties for violation thereof	<p>Committee Secretary Raul Terso was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), author of HB 4052, explained that the creation of the National Council for the Preservation of Mangrove Forests and its local counterparts will introduce and implement a comprehensive program for the preservation, reforestation, afforestation and sustainable development of mangrove forests and provide stiffer penalties for its violation.</p>
	HB 3460	Rep. Hataman	Establishing a national wetland policy, providing mechanisms for its institutionalization, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN), co-author of HB 3460, said that the bill seeks to guide the national and local governments in adjusting their sectoral or local policies, plans and programs to be consistent with wetland conservation.</p> <p>The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Wetlands International, and Haribon Foundation expressed their support for the bills.</p>

Continuation... Natural Resources				<p>Meanwhile, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said that the bills may result in duplication of functions considering that a National Wetland Action Plan already exists and is being implemented by the DENR.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers for the TWG's reference in drafting the substitute bill.</p>
Public Accounts jt. w/ Health	HR 686	Rep. Defensor	Inquiry into the facilities, capacity, capabilities, and performance report of all provincial, district, regional, and specialty hospitals and come up with a nationwide database in order to encourage the efficient use of government resources and delivery of basic medical services	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, and Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), Chair of the Committee on Health, will continue its inquiry relative to the issues raised in HR 686.</p> <p>Rep. Tan stated that the inquiry is called to look into the inequitable distribution of health resources in the country. She said that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the right to health of all Filipinos as enshrined in Article 2 Sec. 15 of the Constitution. She also cited a World Health Organization (WHO) study that described the Philippine health system as fragmented and that a large gap in the quality and quantity of health services between the poor and the rich exists.</p> <p>Rep. Defensor, author of HR 686, said that the Department of Health (DOH) should focus on strengthening its regional and provincial hospitals to be at par with private hospitals as this would encourage a healthy competition that would lead to the lowering of costs for medical services.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Sol Aragones (3rd District, Laguna) whether the DOH's budget for 2019 was underutilized, DOH Director for Health Facilities Enhancement Program Management Office Leonita Gorgolon admitted that the disbursement of DOH's 2019 budget of P15 billion for its regional and provincial hospitals suffered delays. Gorgolon explained that the main reason was the delay in the release of funds, which only started last September 2019 and were downloaded to respective regional and provincial hospitals and health facilities by October 2019.</p> <p>Rep. Defensor and Rep. Tan said that with the supplemental budget that Congress will be giving to DOH to deal with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Department may use part of the funds to enhance the capabilities of its health facilities and workers who are on the frontline of containing the disease.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) recommended that residents in areas with confirmed cases of the virus should undergo a mandatory testing in order to immediately treat and isolate those who are infected, thus preventing the further spread of the virus.</p>

Continuation... Public Accounts jt. w/ Health				<p>Replying to the query of Rep. Anthony Peter "Onyx" Crisologo (1st District, Quezon City) on the list of hospitals authorized to handle COVID-19-infected patients, DOH Director for Knowledge Management and Information Technology Service Enrique Tayag enumerated the following hospitals: Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTi), San Lazaro Hospital, and the Lung Center of the Philippines.</p> <p>NKTi's Head of Cardiovascular Laboratory Joseph Michael Jaro said that the cost of treating a patient infected with COVID-19 is very expensive and suggested that more efforts should be done on prevention to avoid incurring huge costs on the part of the government.</p> <p>Rep. Defensor requested the DOH to present in the next meeting the status of all DOH hospitals in the country to determine which hospitals would need additional funding from the government to improve their health service delivery. He also enjoined the DOH to come up with an official protocol on how to handle COVID-19 cases.</p> <p>The DOH was also requested to submit its COVID-19 action plan as well as the cost of treating a patient with this disease.</p> <p>On another matter, the Committee agreed to come up with a resolution directing the immediate turnover of the South Cotabato Regional Hospital in Region XII to the DOH.</p>
Trade and Industry	<p>Substitute Bill to HBs 386, 450, 506, 1037, 2125, 2214, 2923, 3215, 3262, 3540, 3559, 4335, 4621, 4776, 5354, 5355, 6079, 6104 & 6207</p>	<p>Reps. Zamora (M.), Lopez (M.L.), Barbers, Tambunting, Deputy Speaker Marcoleta, Reps. Reyes, Castelo, Herrera-Dy, Gatchalian, Violago, Pancho, Nieto, Peña, Deputy Speaker Escudero, Reps. Taturan, Andaya, and Delos Santos</p>	<p>Regulating the operations and imposition of fees for the use of parking spaces and parking facilities in various establishments such as but not limited to accommodation, commercial services, food services, health services, retail services, educational institutions, including independent parking enterprises, and prescribing penalties for violation thereof</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City), approved the Substitute Bill to the 19 bills as amended, subject to style.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report for the Committee's consideration and approval in its next meeting.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair Rep. Jesus "Bong" Suntay (4th District, Quezon City), Chair of the technical working group (TWG) which was tasked to consolidate the proposed measures, said that thorough discussions were held on the establishments that will be covered under the law and their corresponding parking fee rates. He asserted that with the present high rates of fees being collected by parking operators, it is high time that parking operations and fees are regulated to ensure that the interest and welfare of the consumers are protected.</p> <p>Rep. Rowena Niña Taturan (Party-List, ACT-CIS), author of HB 6079, maintained that operators, owners, and managers of parking facilities must be obliged to ensure the safety and security of parked vehicles and that they should be held liable in case of loss of property or damage to parked vehicles. She opined that</p>

Continuation... Trade and Industry				parking rates be rationalized to lessen the burden on consumers without jeopardizing the viability of parking facilities.
	HB 3366	Rep. Herrera-Dy	Strengthening and modernizing the Warehouse Receipts Law of the Philippines in order to provide a legal framework in the Philippines that shall facilitate trade and commerce	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to harmonize the provisions of HBs 3366 and 4413. Rep. Braeden John Biron (4 th District, Iloilo) was designated as TWG chair, with Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo and Rep. Manuel Sagarbarria (2 nd District, Negros Oriental) as co-chairpersons.
	HB 4413	Rep. Romualdo	Providing for the revised Warehouse Receipts Law of the Philippines	The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers for the TWG's reference in its deliberations on the bills.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources (Technical Working Group)	HBs 7, 122, 1542, 2827, 3010, 3240, 3471, 4350, 4480, 6185, 6226 & 6433	Speaker Cayetano, Reps. Arroyo (J.M.), Garbin, Rodriguez, Tupas, Salimbangon, Villaraza-Suarez, Deputy Speakers Santos-Recto and Romero, Reps. Salo, Cabatbat, and Bañas-Nogralles	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 12 bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>Majority of the resource persons agreed to expand the mandate of the proposed Department, in addition to those stated in the bills, to include the sustainable management of the country's archipelagic waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone, and all the sectors of the blue economy (pertaining to ocean and coastal ecosystems).</p> <p>Recommendations on how to further develop the fisheries and aquaculture sector and improve the welfare of the workers in this sector were also discussed during the meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills for consideration by the TWG.</p>
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	HB 883	Rep. Cabochan	Consolidating the laws granting rewards to informers of violations of internal revenue and customs laws, repealing for this purpose Section 282 of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997 and Section 3513 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Kristine Singson-Meehan (2nd District, Ilocos Sur), terminated its deliberation on HB 883. The bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>The TWG agreed on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The informer's reward cap shall be increased from the existing P1 million to P10 million or 10% of the revenues, surcharges or fees actually recovered and/or fine actually collected, whichever is lower; and The relatives within the sixth degree of consanguinity and affinity of the incumbent or retired internal revenue

Continuation... Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)				or customs officials or employees or any public official or employee shall not qualify as tax informer.
Welfare of Children (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 2203, 2517, 5307, 5407 & 5542, and HR 342	Reps. Sy- Alvarado, Yu, Deputy Speaker Fernandez, Reps. Biazon, Robes, and Deputy Speaker Marcoleta	Providing safe internet for children and providing penalties for violations thereof	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez (1st District, Laguna), will deliberate further on the six measures in its next meeting.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Fernandez recognizes the vital role that internet plays in the lives of children as a source of valuable information and entertainment. He, however, noted that it can also be a source of pernicious and corrupt materials on sex, violence, addictive gaming, and cyber-bullying. Thus, the Deputy Speaker emphasized that internet platforms and service providers must exercise prudence and genuine concern for the well-being of children in the course of their business operations.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) suggested that, for clarity, the title of the bill be amended by inserting the word "use" such that the first part of the title will now read as "An Act Providing Safe Internet Use for Children." She described the internet as a double-edged sword and that internet addiction is considered as one of the most troubling mental health conditions among the youth nowadays.</p> <p>Elizabeth Angsioco of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines (DSWP) proposed to change the term "children" as used in the bill to "minors," explaining that the bill actually covers even adolescents up to 18 years of age.</p> <p>However, Ramil Villafranca from the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) recommended to retain the term "children" citing Republic Act 7610 or the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, which defines children as those below 18 years of age.</p> <p>Atty. Michelle Muñoz of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) proposed that the Convention on the Rights of Children be mentioned and used as reference in the bill's Declaration of Policy (Section 2).</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers for the TWG's consideration.</p> <p>On the part of Facebook Philippines, its Public Policy head Claire Amador informed the Committee that FB has invested heavily in programs and technology to ensure that its platform is safe and secure and provides positive experience to all its users.</p> <p>FB Public Policy Manager Chris Kuzhuppily mentioned the following policies adopted by</p>

Continuation... Welfare of Children (Technical Working Group)				<p>Facebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy on authentic identity and against impersonation; • Policy against nudity; • Policy against child exploitation imagery; • Policy against non-consensual images and human exploitation; and • Policy against bullying and harassment. <p>Kuzhuppily said that FB Philippines tapped the expertise of and gathered feedbacks from government organizations and civic society groups in crafting the right policies and in improving safety features. Highlighting FB's policy against child exploitation imagery, Kuzhuppily stressed that FB does not allow the posting of materials that sexualize minors or depict them in any sexual activity.</p> <p>In relation to removing harmful contents in the platform, Kuzhuppily disclosed that FB uses artificial intelligence and machine learning technology to make sure that they are deleted before more FB users can view them.</p>
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OVERSIGHT MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Persons with Disabilities (Special Committee)	<p>Discussion with concerned government agencies of programs they are currently implementing benefitting persons with disability (PWDs) in compliance with existing laws, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BP 344 – Accessibility Law • RA 7277 – Magna Carta for Disabled Persons • RA 10524 – Employment of PWDs in government offices • RA 11228 – PhilHealth coverage for PWDs • RA 10754 – Expanded benefits and privileges of PWDs • RA 9442- Benefits and protection of PWDs • RA 10070 – Creation of Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Arroyo (5th District, Negros Occidental), discussed with concerned government agencies the implementation of programs in compliance with various laws aimed at protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of PWDs.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Arroyo said that despite the passage of laws guaranteeing the rights of PWDs and ensuring their welfare and well-being, PWDs still find themselves in the same difficult situations and discriminated upon especially on matters pertaining to accessibility, employment, education, and health benefits.</p> <p>Rep. Arroyo cited as an example Batas Pambansa 344 or the law enhancing the mobility of disabled persons by requiring certain buildings, institutions, establishments and public utilities to install facilities and other devices designed for PWDs. She pointed out that even government buildings are not yet fully compliant with BP 344 which makes transacting business with some government offices difficult for PWDs.</p> <p>Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Programming Division Engineer Emma Banatao said that the DPWH monitors the compliance of establishments with BP 344 and issues notices to establishment owners once their buildings are found to be non-compliant. Banatao further said that DPWH regional and district offices should not issue permits to buildings that do not follow the provisions of BP 344.</p> <p>Department of Transportation (DOTr) Communications Development Officer Arthur Cacdac said that the DOTr initiated the creation of a task force on accessibility with the goal of having state of the art transport facilities exclusively designed for PWDs. For 2020, the task force's action plan includes the conduct of a series of workshops which will be participated in by the stakeholders. The output of the workshops will be</p>

<p>Continuation... Persons with Disabilities (Special Committee)</p>		<p>submitted to the National Council on Disability Affairs for its comments and concurrence.</p> <p>National Anti-Poverty Commission's (NAPC) PWD Sector representative Maureen Ava Mata said that NAPC, with the concurrence of concerned agencies like the DOTr, prepared a draft executive order (EO) requiring all public transports nationwide to be PWD-friendly. The draft EO was already submitted to the Office of the President for approval and signature.</p> <p>Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Assistant Secretary Roosque Calacat said that pursuant to RA 10070, local government units are mandated to organize and establish their respective Persons with Disability Affairs Offices (PDAOs) to ensure the implementation of programs and services for PWDs. However, in consideration of budget constraints, local chief executives of 4th, 5th, and 6th class municipalities may, in lieu of the creation of a PDAO, designate a focal person who shall perform the functions of the PDAO. Calacat said that currently, there are 555 PDAOs established nationwide with 338 plantilla and 431 non-plantilla positions.</p> <p>Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) Social Insurance Officer Glenn David presented the corporation's programs in compliance with RA 11228, or the law providing for the mandatory PhilHealth coverage for all PWDs. PhilHealth is mandated to develop exclusive packages for PWDs that will address their specific health and development needs.</p> <p>David said the PhilHealth Z Benefit Packages for PWDs as well as the Z benefits for children with disabilities include services addressing mobility impairment, developmental disabilities, and visual and hearing impairments.</p> <p>Representatives from the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, Office of the Solicitor General, and the Department of Justice informed the Committee that they are compliant with the laws promoting the rights and welfare of the PWDs.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Rural Development	Briefing by the National Electrification Administration (NEA) on sustainable rural development through rural electrification	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elisa "Olga" Kho (2nd District, Masbate), listened to the briefing by NEA on its initiatives towards a sustainable rural development through rural electrification.</p> <p>Rep. Kho recognized NEA's role in improving the quality of life in the countryside and helping accelerate socio-economic growth and development in rural areas by striving to provide electricity in all areas nationwide.</p> <p>NEA Administrator Edgardo Masongsong highlighted the important role of rural electrification in stimulating sustainable social and economic growth in far-flung areas. According to him, stable access to electricity in rural areas raises productivity, provides access to information, and improves access to social services such as healthcare and education. Masongsong believes these, along with the strengthened cooperation between the government and private entities and institutions, are crucial in laying the groundwork for progress.</p> <p>Masongsong apprised the Committee of NEA's achievements in 2019 which include full compliance with all the good governance conditions and receipt of an "unmodified opinion" from the Commission on Audit</p>

<p>Continuation... Rural Development</p>		<p>attesting to the agency's conformity to the generally-accepted accounting principles.</p> <p>Reporting on the status of its electrification program, Masongsong said that as of 2019, all the 78 provinces in the country have been energized, 99% of the barangays have already been reached, and 84% of the sitios are already connected to the grid. He said that while NEA has already been servicing 95% of the target consumers nationwide, he promised to double its efforts to bring electricity to the remaining 1.81 million consumers.</p> <p>Masongsong said a 100% accomplishment of NEA's total electrification program is being hampered by various challenges such as: difficulty in accessing far-flung areas; peace and order problems; resistance from the landowners who are unwilling to give up their land for the project's right of way; and the occurrence of calamities.</p> <p>As for its legislative agenda for the 18th Congress, NEA is pushing for the passage of the following legislations: conversion of the agency into an authority; establishment of a Lineman Training Academy; and amendments to RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) of 2001.</p> <p>Committee Members present as well as resource persons from various electric cooperatives expressed their full support for the plans and programs of NEA.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) asked NEA to conduct studies that will quantify the impact and contribution of electrification to the development of rural areas.</p> <p>Rep. Godofredo Guya (Party-List, RECOBODA) proposed the consolidation of all government programs pertaining to rural development to ensure a consistent and uniform approach towards this goal. Meanwhile, Rep. Lorenz Defensor (3rd District, Iloilo) called on his fellow lawmakers to support NEA's 2021 budget proposal in the upcoming congressional budget deliberations to help the agency fulfil its mandate of achieving total electrification of the country.</p>
<p>Southern Tagalog (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Briefing by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) on its development plans and programs for CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon) and updates on the rehabilitation, reconstruction, and recovery programs in Batangas, Cavite, and other areas affected by Taal Volcano eruption</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Elenita Milagros "Eileen" Ermita-Buhain (1st District, Batangas), listened to the briefing conducted by the NEDA on its development plans and programs for CALABARZON and on the status of government's rehabilitation, reconstruction, and recovery programs in areas affected by the recent eruption of Taal Volcano.</p> <p>NEDA Assistant Secretary for Regional Development Mercedita Sombilla presented the development plans and programs for CALABARZON under the public investment program for 2017 to 2022. The program includes the construction of roads and bridges for the most part by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the rest by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). According to Sombilla, the goal is to provide high-standard highways and expressways for faster and safer transportation of goods and people, thus improving the economic development of CALABARZON.</p> <p>Meanwhile, NEDA Assistant Regional Director for CALABARZON Gina Gacusan informed the body that the budgetary requirement to implement CALABARZON's regional development plan is P350 million. She also reported on the gross domestic product (GDP) of each province and the dominant industries that are instrumental to the economic development of the region.</p> <p>On the rehabilitation and recovery program for areas affected by the Taal volcano eruption, Gacusan briefly discussed NEDA's strategic framework for post-disaster rehabilitation and recovery which will serve</p>

Continuation... Southern Tagalog (Special Committee)		<p>as basis for NEDA's monitoring mechanism in the implementation of the government's rehabilitation and recovery programs. The goal of the framework is to fully restore the economic and social conditions in the affected areas.</p> <p>An initial funding of P18.2 billion is required for the recovery and rehabilitation program covering the areas affected by the Taal eruption. The bulk of the budget will be used to fund permanent housing projects, farm-to-market road projects, and the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF), which provides credit to farmers and fisherfolk to help increase their productivity, Gacusan said.</p> <p>Several Members urged the resource persons to look into possible immediate measures that could be implemented at the moment to temporarily relieve the difficult conditions of victims in the evacuation centers.</p> <p>Similarly, Rep. Ma. Theresa Collantes (3rd District, Batangas) requested NEDA to facilitate the implementation of housing and resettlement projects as victims that have been displaced have nowhere to go due to the declaration of a "no build zone" in some areas. She said that her district incurred the most damage during the Taal Volcano eruption and her constituents are still waiting for the much-needed support and assistance that were promised to them by the President.</p> <p>Rep. Ermita-Buhain directed the NEDA to regularly update the Committee on the status of implementation of government rehabilitation and recovery projects so that the representatives of the districts affected by the eruption would be able to relay these to their constituents as well.</p> <p>The NEDA was requested to submit documents relative to its briefing.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ways and Means	Status of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office's (PCSO) non-tax revenues	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), terminated its discussion on the status of the PCSO's non-tax revenues.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), chairperson of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Non-Tax Revenues specifically on PCSO taxation and administration, reported that PCSO's ticket sales have decreased by 31% or by P15.5 billion. She said that the TWG discussed and examined the reasons for such decrease and later came up with the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the Documentary Stamp Tax (DST) from P0.20 to P0.10 on Lotto and Keno ticket sales; • Set the tax on winnings at a uniform rate of 10%; • Strict enforcement of the law against illegal number games; • Exempt PCSO from RA 7656 or the Dividends Law in view of PCSO's arrearages to the Department of Finance (DOF) totaling to P8 billion in dividends covering the period 1994-2016 and revert such amount to Charity and Prize Funds; • Limit the allocation of Charity Funds to health-related programs by removing from its list of beneficiaries the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP), and Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP); and • Increase the cost allocation for the printing of tickets from 2% to 5%.

Continuation... Ways and Means		<p>PCSO General Manager Regina Garma informed the Committee that the Office of the President (OP) has already approved the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations on STL.</p> <p>On the TWG's recommendation of increasing PCSO's printing costs, Rep. Jose "Bonito" Singson Jr. (Party-List, PROBINSYANO AKO) said that it will lead to a decrease in PCSO's Prize Fund and consequently a decrease in ticket sales.</p>
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FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Women and Gender Equality	Forum on "Understanding What Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE) Means and Why It Matters"	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1st District, Bukidnon), in partnership with the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation, Inc. (PLCPD), conducted a forum entitled: "Understanding What SOGIE Means and Why It Matters" on March 9 at the House of Representatives.</p> <p>In her welcome remarks, Rep. Acosta-Alba said that the purpose of the forum is to raise awareness among legislators and staff on SOGIE-related aspirations, particularly equality of rights and anti-discrimination. Rep. Acosta-Alba added that the forum also hopes to drum up support for the passage of HB 134 or the "Anti-discrimination Based on SOGIE," referred to the Committee on Women.</p> <p>University of the Philippines Center for Women's and Gender Studies (UPCWGS) Director Nathalie Africa-Verceles explained the distinction between SOGIE and SOGIE sex characteristic (SOGIESC) and how these are often perceived to be not aligned with society's standard of appropriateness resulting in discrimination.</p> <p>Babaylanes Inc. President Percival Cendeña discussed why the country needs an anti-discrimination bill. He explained the different forms of discrimination, enforcement of the prohibition measures, and social protection programs that will bring about diversity, inclusion, and equality that will be beneficial to all.</p> <p>Committee on Women and Gender Equality Vice Chair, Rep. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), underscored the need to continue advocating social justice for the marginalized sectors including the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) community.</p> <p>An open forum followed after the presentations of the resource speakers.</p>