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COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability	HB 6694	Rep. Rodriguez	Granting ABS-CBN Corporation (formerly ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation) a franchise to construct, install, operate and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations in the Philippines	The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1 st District, Palawan), Chair of the Committee on Legislative Franchises, and Rep. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1 st District, Bulacan), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, will deliberate further on the 15 measures in its next meeting.
	HBs 676, 3521, 3713, 3947, 4305, 5608, 5705, 5753, 6052, 6138 & 6293	Rep. Violago, Deputy Speaker Arenas, Reps. Tambunting, Aragones, Deputy Speakers Santos-Recto and Gonzales (A.), Reps. Rodriguez, Ramirez-Sato, Zarate, Go (M.), and Deputy Speaker Legarda	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to ABS-CBN Corporation under RA 7966	The Secretariat was directed to consolidate the bills and come up with a substitute bill. At the outset, Rep. Alvarez said that a legislative franchise is a privilege granted to private corporations to conduct business using government resources. Hence, as the Joint Committee discusses the proposals to grant or renew the legislative franchise of ABS-CBN Corporation, it is important to look at the business practices of the company, including its payment of taxes and labor relations with its employees.
	HR 639	Rep. Lagman	Urging the Committee on Legislative Franchises to report out without further delay for plenary action a consolidated version of eight pending bills proposing for the renewal for another 25 years of the legislative franchise of ABS-CBN Corporation	Rep. Alvarez added that for truth to come out, all sides will be heard and in doing so, the joint body will be guided by the principles of fairness, impartiality, and justice.
	HR 846	Rep. Defensor	Calling on the appropriate House committees to investigate and file criminal cases as warranted against the Commissioners and officers of the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the Solicitor General and such other officials and individuals for perjury and for violation of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees and the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and other applicable laws	Rep. Sy-Alvarado denounced NTC's issuance of a cease and desist order against ABS-CBN while the House of Representatives is still deliberating on the franchise application of the company and despite its commitment to grant a provisional authority to ABS-CBN to continue operating even after the expiration of its franchise on May 4. (NTC made this commitment, under oath, to the Committee on Legislative Franchises during the latter's March 10 meeting.) According to Rep. Sy-Alvarado, such action by the NTC, which was allegedly under pressure from the Solicitor General, was a total disregard of the exclusive power of the House to act and decide on franchise applications. With NTC's failure to comply with its commitment, the Committee on Legislative Franchises has issued a show cause order to the NTC requiring it to explain why it should not be held in contempt.
	HR 853	Deputy Speaker Duterte	Inquiry into the probable violations of ABS-CBN Corporation of its legislative franchise under RA 7966	In his opening statement, Speaker Alan Peter "Compañero" Cayetano (1 st District,
			Show cause order issued by the Committee on Legislative Franchises to the NTC to explain why it should not be held in contempt	

<p>Continuation... Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>Taguig City-Pateros) explained that other more urgent matters had to be given priority by the House over the deliberation of the ABS-CBN franchise, particularly the life-changing events brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Now that the House has resumed its hearing on the matter, the Speaker gave the assurance that the institution will decide on what is right through a fair, impartial, comprehensive, and transparent hearing. He asked his colleagues to decide on what is best for the next generation of Filipinos, based on facts, and not because of a popular outcry.</p> <p>Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte) cited the two-pronged objectives of the hearing: to ascertain whether or not ABS-CBN merits the grant of a legislative franchise and to know the truth about accusations that it violated the terms of its franchise, the Constitution, and other existing laws. He also mentioned that the House will continue working on the priority bills, especially those that respond to the pandemic, even during the coming recess. He said he will make a manifestation in the plenary session later in the afternoon authorizing the conduct of Committee meetings during the Congressional break from June 6 to July 26.</p> <p>Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL), presented the rules of procedure to be observed to ensure an orderly conduct of the hearing.</p> <p>ABS-CBN President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Carlo Katigbak lamented the shutting down of the network as it banked on the assurance that it would be allowed to continue operating while the franchise application is being heard by Congress. Katigbak spoke of the difficulties currently being faced by the network's more than 11,000 employees/workers, the increasing losses incurred by the company, and the people's loss of primary source of information and even entertainment, especially those in far flung areas which only the network could reach. Katigbak said that ABS-CBN would like to do everything it can to provide jobs to its employees, however, in the coming weeks, it might start laying-off employees as it continues to lose significant amount of money because of the closure.</p> <p>On the allegations hurled against ABS-CBN, Katigbak denied these citing statements from pertinent government agencies backing the network's claim. Under the law, he said, ABS-CBN should be considered "innocent unless proven guilty."</p> <p>Katigbak appealed to Congress to allow ABS-CBN to resume its operations and</p>
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<p>Continuation... Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>renew its franchise, as he promised that his company will improve itself to be of better service to the public.</p> <p>In opposing the grant of franchise to ABS-CBN, Deputy Speaker Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP) emphasized that the company has “deliberately and with impunity” violated the Constitution and other existing laws including the law granting the company a franchise to operate, to the “prejudice of the greater good.”</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Marcoleta claimed that the company operated for 63 years since 1957 in violation of the 50-year limitation on the use of airwaves set under the Constitution. Likewise, ABS-CBN violated the Constitutional provision that requires 100% Filipino ownership and management of mass media on two grounds – when Eugenio “Gabby” Lopez III took over the company in 1996 while holding an American citizenship and when it issued Philippine depository receipts (PDRs) to foreign investors. He also asked whether the Lopez family paid the government when they took back in 1986 the frequency now being used by ABS-CBN.</p> <p>The Deputy Speaker rejected the claim of ABS-CBN that it has more than 11,000 workers, saying that of this number, only 2,661 are regular workers, while 8,550 are only project-based, seasonal, and independent workers with no government-mandated benefits.</p> <p>Other violations allegedly committed by the ABS-CBN mentioned by Deputy Speaker Marcoleta were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political bias or favoring particular candidates in the previous elections; • Operation of multiple channels in one franchise and offering additional products such as TV Plus Box and Kapamilya Box Office (KBO) which are not covered by its franchise; and • Tax avoidance specifically in 2018 and 2019. <p>On the absence of the Solicitor General in the hearing, Speaker Cayetano asked that he be given enough time to prepare his statement and be invited again in the next meeting. However, the Speaker also asserted that the reasons acceptable to the Committee for not appearing in the hearing can only be due to ailment or being out of the country, not reasons such as the <i>sub judice</i> rule, right against self-incrimination, or right to privacy.</p> <p>Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. (4th District, Cavite), noting the conflicting claims of both sides,</p>
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Continuation... Legislative Franchises jt. w/ Good Government and Public Accountability				<p>said that an exhaustive hearing should be conducted to shed light on the issues.</p> <p>Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN) inquired whether the bills seeking to renew the franchise of ABS-CBN will still be tackled considering that its franchise already expired. Majority Leader Romualdez and Rep. Alvarez said that the 11 bills on the renewal of franchise will be consolidated with HB 6694, filed by Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), granting a new franchise to ABS-CBN.</p> <p>Rep. Rodriguez said that his bill seeks for a 25-year new franchise to ABS-CBN, saying that the renewal of its franchise is no longer applicable when it expired on May 4.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), co-author of HB 6052, when the sponsorship of the bills will be, Rep. Alvarez said it will be done in the next hearing.</p> <p>Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga) manifested that a decision has to be done by the NTC whether it should put the available frequency, as a result of the closure of ABS-CBN, up for grabs.</p> <p>The next hearing of the Joint Committee will be on Monday, June 1, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.</p>
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DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC COMMITTEE (DCC) MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee	Substitute Bill to HBs 6606, 6612, 6613, 6614, 6617, 6649, 6619, 6621, 6683 & 6693	Reps. Quimbo, Rodriguez, Castelo, Salceda, Herrera-Dy, Tambunting, and Lagman	Philippine Economic Stimulus Act (PESA)	<p>The Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee (DCC), presided by Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to the 10 bills.</p> <p>At the outset, Majority Leader Romualdez thanked his fellow legislators who have worked hard to craft pieces of legislations that aim to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that these legislative measures are intended to ease the sufferings of Filipinos, ensure the availability of jobs, continue business operations, strengthen the financial sector, and protect the frontliners amidst the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>The DCC, with House Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” Cayetano (1st District, Taguig City-Pateros) as chairperson and the Majority Leader as co-chairperson, was created on March 23 to monitor and coordinate government response to the pandemic and to craft legislations to address its effects on the people, economy, labor and industry.</p>

Continuation... Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee				<p>Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), Chairperson of the Economic Stimulus Response Package Cluster of the DCC which endorsed the bill, said that the proposed law, with a budgetary requirement of P1.3 trillion, is an immediate response to jumpstart the economy by providing four interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional - immediate response to businesses to avoid lay-offs and business closure. This includes the provision of wage subsidies, cash for work through the Department of Labor and Employment's <i>Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers</i>, and assistance to students, among others; • Financial - ensure business liquidity through access to credit facilities; • Sectoral - provision of targeted assistance to critically impacted industries such as the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), as well as the tourism and transportation industries; and • Structural - includes reforms for sustainable and strong economic growth. <p>The proposed law also includes the conduct of mass testing to remove "fear factor" among the people. Rep. Garin stressed that "without testing, workers will not go to work, consumers won't go out and businesses won't open."</p> <p>Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte) suggested that "mass testing" be clearly defined in the bill.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HB 6622	Rep. Cua	Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer (FIST) Act	<p>The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 6622.</p> <p>Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, Chairperson of the House Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries which endorsed the bill, said that the proposed law is a proactive response to cushion expected adverse effects of the pandemic to the banking industry. It specifically lays down the mechanisms and the legal framework to enable banking institutions to dispose of their nonperforming assets (NPAs) through special purpose vehicles (SPVs) or entities incorporated primarily to invest in or acquire the NPAs of financial institutions.</p> <p>Rep. Cua added that this measure will complement the proposed Economic Stimulus Law.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HB 6676	Rep. Belmonte	Prohibiting discrimination against persons declared as confirmed, suspect, probable and recovered cases of COVID-	<p>The Committee approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 6676 with amendment.</p>

Continuation... Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee			19, repatriated Filipinos, healthcare workers, responders, and service workers and providing penalties for violation thereof	<p>Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1st District, Masbate) said that the bill seeks to provide full and inviolable protection against prejudice and discrimination to persons who were infected or recovered from COVID-19, as well as those providing medical care, and logistical and service support during the pandemic.</p> <p>The bill was endorsed by the Peace and Order Cluster of the DCC which is co-chaired by Rep. Bravo.</p> <p>Under the bill, failure to give assistance to persons who have confirmed, suspect, probable, recovered cases of COVID-19; harassment, assault or stigmatization against these persons; and refusal to honor valid or existing contracts on the basis of COVID-19 shall be penalized with imprisonment of six months to five years or a fine of P50,000 to P 500,000, or both at the discretion of the court.</p> <p>Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City) suggested that the penalty for harassment or assault should be higher than the other violations because these are direct acts against the people being protected under the bill. Subsequently, the Committee agreed that for harassment or assault, the penalty shall be imprisonment of five to 10 years or a fine of P500,000 to P1 million, or both.</p>
Social Amelioration Cluster	HB 6709	Speaker Cayetano	Establishing a COVID-19 unemployment reduction economic stimulus (CURES) fund and instituting mechanisms for the implementation thereof and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Cluster, presided by Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez (4th District, Leyte), approved HB 6709 with amendments. The Secretariat was directed to come up with a substitute bill incorporating therein the proposed amendments of the Members and the resource persons.</p> <p>The substitute bill will be submitted to the Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee (DCC) for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>The Social Amelioration Cluster is one of the smaller bodies under the DCC – an advisory and coordinating committee created by the House of Representatives through the initiative of Speaker Alan Peter "Compañero" Cayetano (1st District, Taguig City-Pateros) with the objective of harmonizing and streamlining government efforts to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).</p> <p>Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte), co-chairperson of the DCC and one of the authors of HB 6709, said that the establishment of the CURES Fund is necessary given the projected shrinking of the Philippine economy and the large displacement of workers as a result of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and its modifications.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur),</p>

<p>Continuation...</p> <p>Social Amelioration Cluster</p>				<p>also a co-author of the bill and co-chairperson of the Cluster, discussed the salient features of the bill. He said that the proposed law aims to stimulate the economy and generate more jobs through increased public infrastructure spending with the following priority sector beneficiaries: Health, Education, Agriculture, Local roads/infrastructure, and Livelihood (HEALS).</p> <p>According to the Deputy Speaker, some countries had resorted to increased public infrastructure spending in response to crises in the past. He also said that while the Social Amelioration Program of the government is laudable, giving dole-outs for a longer period will not be sustained by the government and will hurt the country's economy.</p> <p>He explained that the proposed P1.5 trillion CURES Fund will be allocated annually for three fiscal years, or P500 billion each year, from the approval of this proposed law. He added that the fund will be spent mostly for local infrastructure projects to increase local employment in support of the <i>Balik Probinsya</i> Program, and to further enhance the Build, Build, Build Program of the government.</p> <p>Government agencies present in the meeting expressed full support to the bills, namely: the Departments of Budget and Management (DBM), Finance (DOF), Health (DOH), Education (DepEd), Agriculture (DA), Interior and Local Government (DILG), Trade and Industry (DTI), and Labor and Employment (DOLE), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.</p> <p>DBM Director Cristina Clasara asked about the source of the CURES Fund and the meaning of "automatically released" as proposed in the bill.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Villafuerte replied that the provision on the automatic release of funds to the implementing unit is meant to speed up the process because of the urgency of the situation. He added that it is the DOF which shall identify the source of funds and not the DBM.</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) inquired if public-private partnerships will be encouraged as well in the implementation of the proposed law. Deputy Speaker Villafuerte answered that the main purpose of the bill is to primarily boost public spending.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill not later than tomorrow.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
New Normal Cluster (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HB 6623	Speaker Cayetano	Establishing policies and regulations for the better normal for the workplace, communities and public spaces and instituting penalties for violations thereof	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda (Antique), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 6623. The substitute bill will be submitted to the New Normal Cluster of the Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee (DCC) for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Legarda, one of the authors of HB 6623, informed the body that the substitute bill has been thoroughly discussed by the TWG and that the recommendations of stakeholders were duly considered in the crafting of the substitute bill.</p> <p>The bill, principally authored by Speaker Alan Peter "Compañero" Cayetano (1st District, Taguig City-Pateros), is also referred to as "The Better Normal for the Workplace, Communities, and Public Spaces Act of 2020."</p>
	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	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, will deliberate further on the bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Romualdo said that the TWG is tasked to draft a substitute bill using HB 4413 as the lead bill.</p> <p>HB 4413 seeks to establish a central online registry for all warehouse receipts to be made readily available online. Thus, a party can simply deposit one's goods and products in the warehouse and get an electronic warehouse receipt which can be easily traded, bartered, or sold in order to obtain credit.</p> <p>Senior Financial Sector Specialist Griselda Gay Santos of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) underscored the importance of the proposed law in addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic especially in the agricultural sector and the micro, small and medium enterprises. She said that through the proposed law, farmers who have stored their crops in a warehouse will have access to credit facilities using warehouse receipts as collaterals for their bank loans.</p> <p>The IFC is a sister organization of the World Bank and member of the World Bank Group, the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in developing countries.</p> <p>Santos also presented the distinguishing features of the proposed law as compared with the Warehouse Receipts Law of 1912. These</p>
Trade and Industry (Technical Working Group)	HB 4413	Rep. Romualdo	Providing for the revised Warehouse Receipts Law of the Philippines	

Continuation... Trade and Industry (Technical Working Group)				<p>are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a simplified, unified and modern framework for storage of goods and crops in warehouses; • Professionalization of the warehouse industry with the creation of a Warehousing Accreditation Council headed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to implement and oversee accreditation of warehouses and warehousemen; • Creation of a uniform registry system for electronic warehouse receipts and registration of accredited warehousemen; and • Definition of duties and accountabilities of the warehousemen including requiring them to post a bond to answer for liabilities. <p>Atty. Anthony Abad of the Ateneo De Manila University School of Law commented that the establishment of an online registry system for warehouse receipts, as proposed in the bills, will allow a non-contact transaction which is necessary in this time of crisis.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bukidnon) suggested to include a provision that will guarantee the public that the goods stored in the warehouses are secured and protected.</p> <p>The resource persons were asked to submit their position paper and recommendations on the bills.</p>
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