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ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
East ASEAN Growth Area (Special Committee)	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Sarangani Rep. Rogelio Pacquiao, 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 social, political, and economic policies affecting the countries in the EAGA and the promotion of trade and investment among these countries.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources	HBs 872, 4443, 4939 & 5027	Reps. Tiangco, Acosta, and Amatong	Providing for the establishment, improvement, rehabilitation, and modernization of fish ports in various parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Leo Rafael Cueva (2 nd District, Negros Occidental), approved the Committee Reports on the four bills.
	HBs 1119, 1120, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1125 & 1126	Rep. Tupas	Establishing multi-species marine hatcheries in the municipalities of the Province of Iloilo and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the seven bills subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 1132, 1133 & 1134	Rep. Cabredo	Establishing multi-species marine hatcheries in the Municipalities of Pioduran, Oas and Libon, Province of Albay, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the three bills subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 1727, 1931 & 1932	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Establishing multi-species marine hatcheries in the Municipalities of San Fernando, Minalabac and Pasacao, Province of Camarines Sur and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the three bills subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 2162, 3890, 4442, 4627, 4882 & 5302	Reps. Dimaporo (A.), Benitez, Acosta, Roman Amatong, and Cari	Establishing multi-species marine hatcheries in various parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the six bills.
	HBs 3264, 4787, 5416 & 5499	Reps. Veloso, Dalipe, Babasa, and Ecleo	Establishing multi-species marine hatcheries in various parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the four bills subject to style and amendment.
	HB 4557	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Establishing an aquatic research and experimental breeding station for lakes, rivers, bays, ponds, and other inland fishes at the University of Northern Philippines in the City of Vigan, Province of Ilocos Sur and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 4557 subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources	HB 2255	Rep. Vargas-Alfonso	Establishing a fisheries research center in the Municipality of Abulug in the Second District of Cagayan and appropriating funds thereof	The Committee formally tabled HB 2255 because its objective was already met with the signing into law of RA 11400 (Establishing a fisheries research center in the Municipality of Abulug, Province of Cagayan and appropriating funds therefor) last August 22, 2019.
	HB 1728	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Establishing a multi-species marine hatchery in the Municipality of Libmanan, Province of Camarines Sur and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred approval of HB 1728 pending the submission of requirements set by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).
	HB 2407	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Establishing an aquatic research and experimental breeding station for lake, river, and other inland fishes in the First District of the Province of Nueva Ecija, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred its consideration of HB 2407 to provide the author the opportunity to discuss the merits of the bill in the next meeting.
	HB 2408	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Establishing multipurpose fish and shrimp hatcheries in all suitable areas in the First District of the Province of Nueva Ecija, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred approval of HB 2408, awaiting further site validation by the BFAR.
	HB 3234	Rep. Sarmiento	Establishing a multi-species marine hatchery in the Municipality of Sta. Margarita, Province of Samar and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred its consideration of HB 3234 to provide the author the opportunity to discuss the merits of the bill in the next meeting.
	HBs 4883 & 5413	Rep. Amatong	Establishing multi-species marine hatcheries in the Municipalities of Siocon and Sibuco, Province of Zamboanga del Norte and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred approval of HBs 4883 and 5413, awaiting further site validation by the BFAR.
Basic Education and Culture	Substitute Bill to HBs 54, 285, 614, 758, 1312, 1400, 1915, 2136, 3311, 4099, 4116, 4127, 4214, 4399 & 4667	Reps. Cabochan, Suansing (E.), Vargas, Biazon, Gatchalian, Olivarez, Castelo, Villar, Fortun, Villarica, Guico, Tambunting, and Dy (F.)	Instituting services for learners with disabilities in support of inclusive education, establishing inclusive learning resource centers in all school districts, providing for standards, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report subject to style and amendment. The bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for consideration of its funding provision.
	HB 821	Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.)	Requiring the establishment of a permanent clinic for every public and private school and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 821. The bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for consideration of its funding provision.
	HB 4590	Rep. Fariñas (R.C.)	Providing young women's kit to female students in all public academic institutions in the Philippines	The Committee approved HB 4590. The bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for consideration of its funding provision.
	HBs 202 & 4861	Reps. Garcia (J.E.) and Rodriguez	Mandating the establishment of at least one high school for the arts in every region nationwide and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to come up with a substitute bill.
	HB 2163 & 5982	Reps. Dimaporo (A.) and Romulo	Establishing the Philippine High School for the Arts System	Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2 nd District, Bataan) was designated as head of the TWG.

Continuation... Basic Education and Culture	HB 2117	Rep. Garcia (J.E.)	Mandating the inclusion of visits to historical and cultural heritage sites as part of the off-campus activities of public and private schools, amending for the purpose RA 10066, otherwise known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 2117.</p> <p>The National Museum (NM), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) were asked to submit their comments and suggestions to the bill.</p>
	HB 5313	Rep. Siao	Recognizing and promoting the cultural heritage of the Filipino ethnolinguistic groups through the adoption of ethnolinguistic community flags and use of local languages in street signages and other informational signages in public buildings and facilities	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 5313.</p> <p>The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWP) were asked to submit their comments and suggestions to the bill.</p>
Cooperatives Development	HB 5494	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Amending Article 36 of RA 9520, otherwise known as the Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008 (by allowing proxy voting in certain primary cooperatives)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), will deliberate further on HB 5494 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Rico Geron (Party-List, AGAP) sponsored HB 5494 in behalf of the author, Deputy Speaker Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), and manifested that the explanatory note attached to the bill be considered as the author's sponsorship speech.</p> <p>HB 5494 seeks to amend Article 36 of the Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008 by allowing voting by proxy for primary cooperatives whose membership is widely dispersed or primary cooperatives whose majority of the members are: persons with disabilities (PWDs); overseas Filipino workers (OFWs); members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and other sectors as may be determined by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).</p> <p>Rep. Canama said that the Committee will hold consultations with cooperatives around the country to get their insights on the proposed amendments to RA 9520.</p>
	HR 524	Rep. Lacson	Inquiry to clarify the provisions and implementation of the Joint Administrative Order (JAO) No. 1-2019 and its implication to the issued Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) memorandum circulars 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 will continue its inquiry relative to HR 524 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Canama discussed the following contentious issues in relation to JAO 1-2019: the restrictive requirements that registered cooperatives need to fulfill with regard to the filing of tax returns and payment of tax liabilities; submission of annual tax incentives report; and the prohibitive penalties for non-submission of reportorial requirements which include, as a first offense, the revocation of the Certificate of Tax Exemption (CTE) and the cooperative's ineligibility to avail of the tax exemption for a period of one year.</p> <p>BIR Assistant Chief for Assessment Performance Monitoring Division Monserrat</p>

Continuation... Cooperatives Development				<p>Venus Axalan informed the body that the BIR and the Department of Finance (DOF) are currently in the process of reviewing JAO 1-2019. Consultation between the DOF and the CDA will also be conducted to further discuss the issues raised.</p> <p>Rep. Canama instructed the BIR to relay to the Committee the results of this consultation.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	HB 223	Rep. Castro	Batas na nagtatakda ng hindi bababa sa siyam na yunit ng asignaturang Filipino at tatlong yunit ng asignaturang Panitikan sa kurikulum ng kolehiyo	<p>The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss HB 223 further.</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS), author of HB 223, said that she filed the bill in consonance with Section 6, Article XIV of the Constitution which states that "the Government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system."</p> <p>University of the Philippines Professor Dr. Vladimeir Gonzales expressed support for the bill, saying that the removal of the Filipino and Panitikan subjects from the college curriculum may be detrimental to the preservation of the Filipino culture and identity.</p> <p>Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Director for Programs and Standards Dr. Cherrie Melanie Ancheta-Diego said that the CHED will submit its official position paper on the proposed law.</p> <p>Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA) lawyer Joseph Noel Estrada said that CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) 20 excluded the study of Filipino, Panitikan and Philippine Constitution as core subjects in college because they are already included in the senior high school curriculum as provided for under RA 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. He further said that the Supreme Court decision lifting the temporary restraining order (TRO) on CMO 20 in 2018 upholds the constitutionality of the memorandum.</p> <p>Rep. Go advised that the TWG weigh the costs and benefits of the proposed additional nine units of Filipino and Panitikan subjects not only on the part of government but also on the students and their parents.</p>
	HB 3748	Rep. Rodriguez	Establishing the Mindanao Institute of Good Governance, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss HB 3748 further.</p> <p>University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTSP) Chancellor, Atty. Dionel Albina, expressed support for the bill saying that it will be favorable to the people of Mindanao, such as local officials and regional officers, who do not have to go to Manila to pursue higher learning.</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				The bill seeks to establish the Mindanao Institute of Good Governance which will be based in the USTSP and attached to the CHED for budgetary purposes. The proposed Institute shall provide graduate and post-graduate degree courses and non-degree certificate and diploma courses, and short-term training in management and good governance to local chief executives and government officials in Mindanao.
	HBs 5203 & 5652	Reps. Noel and Nograles (J.F.F.)	Providing for a national framework for interns' rights, benefits, and welfare	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to further discuss the bills and come up with a substitute bill.
	HB 5791	Rep. Romulo	Mandating the instruction of World War II in the Philippines in higher education institutions	The Committee will deliberate further on HB 5791.
	HR 182	Rep. Fernando	Inquiry into the status of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority's (TESDA) Philippine Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Competency Assessment and Certification System (PTCACS)	The Committee will continue its deliberation on the issues raised in HR 182.
Local Government	HB 336	Rep. Nograles (J.F.F.)	Reapportioning the Second District of Rizal into three legislative districts	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Noel Villanueva (3 rd District, Tarlac), approved HB 336.
	HBs 2397, 3146, 3881 & 4289	Reps. Fortun, Romulo, Bautista-Bandigan, and Ortega	Declaring special nonworking holidays in certain parts of the country to commemorate special events	The Committee approved the four bills.
	HBs 5799, 5800, 5801 & 5802	Rep. Alvarez (P.)	Creating Barangays Libuton, Datu Balong, Dacudao, and Pinamuno, respectively, in the Municipality of San Isidro, Province of Davao del Norte	The Committee approved the four bills.
	HB 3405	Rep. Mangudadatu	Creating the Province of Maguindanao North	The Committee deferred its consideration of the bills. Rep. Villanueva opined that, while the two bills share the same objectives, there are some minor differences that need to be harmonized.
	HB 4840	Rep. Sinsuat	Creating the Province of Western Maguindanao	
	HBs 4295 & 4386	Reps. Babasa and Yu	Declaring September 17 of every year as a special nonworking public holiday in the Province of Zamboanga del Sur	<p>The Committee deferred its consideration of the two bills.</p> <p>Reps. Leonardo Babasa Jr. (2nd District, Zamboanga del Sur) and Divina Grace Yu (1st District, Zamboanga del Sur), authors of HBs 4295 and 4386, respectively, agreed to study the comments and recommendations of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) on the two bills.</p> <p>In a letter it sent to the Committee, NHCP explained that based on RA 711, the Province of Zamboanga del Sur was established on June 6 and not on September 17 as stated in the bills. Thus, the NHCP recommends that the province's foundation be celebrated on June 6.</p>

Continuation... Local Government				RA 711, which divided the former Province of Zamboanga into its northern and southern portions, was passed into law on June 6, 1952 and was rendered effective on the same date, without any provision stating that it shall only become effective at a later date, or when certain conditions regarding the organization of the new provincial government were met.
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development	HBs 1070, 2121, 2771, 2842, 3991, 4512 & 5055	Rep. Limkaichong, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Salceda, Rodriguez, Agabas, Nograles (J.J.), and Noel	Further promoting entrepreneurship by strengthening, empowering, and enhancing the financing programs for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), amending for the purpose RA 6977, as amended, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for MSMEs	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), will deliberate further on the 10 bills in its next meeting. At the outset, Rep. Lacson highlighted the importance of the MSMEs to the Philippine economy, saying that the sector employs 63.19% of the country's total labor force and contributes about 35.7% to the gross domestic product (GDP). MSMEs account for 99.52% of the total number of business establishments in the country.
	HBs 4174 & 4352	Rep. Haresco and Deputy Speaker Santos-Recto	Expanding the coverage of micro enterprises as beneficiaries of the Magna Carta for MSMEs, amending for the purpose RA 6977, as amended	
	HB 1068	Rep. Limkaichong	Strengthening RA 9501, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (by allocating at least 10% of the total selling area in malls and supermarkets, free of charge, to qualified MSMEs)	Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA), author of HB 4512, said that his bill is similar to the bill that was approved on Third Reading during the 17 th Congress. Rep. Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong (1 st District, Negros Oriental), author of HBs 1070 and 1068, said that the growth of the country's economy and the continued improvement of the Filipinos' quality of life are explicitly tied with the development of MSMEs. She explained that she filed HB 1070 to ensure that adequate financial support, coordinated protection mechanism, and participative administration measures are made readily available for MSMEs. On the other hand, she said that HB 1068 seeks to provide qualified MSMEs with adequate visibility and access to market by allocating 10% of the total selling area in malls and supermarkets, free of charge, to qualified MSMEs. Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) Bureau of Domestic Trade Promotion Director Marievic Bonoan expressed support for HB 1068 but advised that it should be studied further. She also suggested that airports be included within the purview of HB 1068, in addition to malls, department stores and supermarkets, as channels for MSMEs product promotion. Rep. Lacson, in turn, recommended that seaports be likewise covered. Meanwhile, representatives of the Philippine Retailers Association (PRA) and the Philippine Amalgamated Supermarkets Association (PAGASA) expressed reservation on the proposal to require a 10% mall space allocation for free to MSMEs. They said this

Continuation... Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development				requirement is tantamount to the taking of private property for public use without the payment of just compensation. Instead, they suggested that voluntary cooperation of malls may be encouraged by offering them incentives.
Public Order and Safety	HB 928	Rep. Cabochan	Prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling, use of chemical weapons, and providing for their destruction, and providing penalties for violation thereof	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1st District, Masbate), agreed to come up with a substitute bill pending the submission of the final proposal from the Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC).</p> <p>The ATC, through its secretariat, the ATC Program Management Center (ATC-PMC), will be conducting a meeting with concerned agencies to finalize its proposal.</p> <p>During the meeting, the following agencies were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill: Department of the Interior and Local Government's Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP-DILG), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Transportation's Office for Transportation Security (OTS-DOTr), Department of National Defense's Office of Civil Defense (OCD-DND), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).</p>
Revision of Laws	HB 3727	Rep. Tambunting	Declaring February 23 of every year as National Rotary Day and a regular working day	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2 nd District, Zambales), approved HB 3727.
	HB 5244	Rep. Cullamat	Declaring January 22 of every year as a special working holiday to be known as National Farmer's Day	The Committee approved HB 5244.
	HBs 1227 & 1476	Reps. Pineda and Barbers	Amending RA 4200 or the law prohibiting and penalizing wiretapping and other related violations of the privacy of communication (by increasing the penalties for violation of privacy and widening the scope of criminal acts where wiretapping may be allowed, among others)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and fine-tune HBs 1227, 1476, and 3553.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bills were representatives from the Department of Justice (DOJ), National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), PLDT, Inc., Smart Communications, Inc., and Globe Telecom, Inc.</p>
	HB 3553	Rep. Romulo	Expanding the scope and coverage of RA 4200	
	HB 2778	Rep. Rodriguez	Declaring the Chinese New Year a special nonworking public holiday in the Philippines	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 2778 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) Supervising Labor and Employment Officer Emilia de Guzman supports HB 2778 considering that the President of the Philippines annually declares, through an executive order, the Chinese New Year as a special nonworking holiday.</p>

Continuation... Revision of Laws				On the other hand, Employers Confederation of the Philippines' (ECOP) Advocacy and Research Specialist Marianne Rosas expressed reservations on the proposed law because of its business implications. Rosas said that the country already observes a lot of regular and special nonworking holidays that affect market productivity and attractiveness. She added that it will also lessen the work days of wage earners resulting in lesser income because of the principle of "no work, no pay."
	HB 3927	Rep. Vargas	Declaring January 9 of every year as a special nonworking holiday in the entire country to commemorate the Feast of the Black Nazarene	The Committee will deliberate further on HB 3927 in its next meeting. Both De Guzman and Rosas expressed reservations on the bill, explaining that only the City of Manila and not the entire country holds a huge celebration of the Feast of the Black Nazarene.
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	Substitute Bill to HBs 1318, 1479, 3731, 3838, 4091, 4191 & 5187	Reps. Fortuno, Chipeco, Agabas, Deputy Speaker Oaminal, Reps. Silverio, Villanueva (N.), and Deputy Speaker Pimentel	Increasing the amount of authorized election campaign expenses of candidates and political parties, amending for the purpose Section 13 of RA 7166 or the law providing for synchronized national and local elections and for electoral reforms, authorizing appropriations therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Juliet Marie Ferrer (4 th District, Negros Occidental), approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HB 3090	Deputy Speaker Garcia (P.J.)	Making election expense and contribution limits more reasonable by adjusting them periodically based on inflation rate and the consumer price index	The Committee approved the Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	HB 5254	Rep. Quimbo	Amending Section 9 of RA 10366, or the law authorizing the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to establish precincts assigned to accessible polling places exclusively for persons with disabilities and senior citizens (by designating an accessible polling place within the premises of the municipal or city hall exclusively for PWDs and senior citizens)	The Committee approved HB 5254 subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 286, 519, 1488, 1489, 1490, 2839 & 4565	Reps. Suansing, (E.), Aglipay, Tan (A.), Rodriguez, and Alvarez (P.)	Providing for early voting for qualified senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), lawyers, and workers required to work on national and local elections	The Committee directed the Secretariat to come up with a substitute bill. Director Teopisto Elnas of the Election and Barangay Affairs Department of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) said that the proposed law would reduce the long lines of voters during election day and would provide convenience to senior citizens and PWDs who would be voting ahead of the mass of voters. Expressing support for the bills were representatives from the COMELEC, National Anti-Poverty Commission – Persons with Disability (NAPC-PWD), National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), Office of Senior Citizen Affairs (OSCA) in Taguig City and

Continuation... Suffrage and Electoral Reforms				Alfonso, Cavite, Consortium on Electoral Reform (CER), Legal Network for Truthful Elections (LENTE), Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FESCAP), and Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV).
Trade and Industry jt. w/ Health	HBs 40, 500, 1508, 1510, 1703, 2277, 2862, 2929, 3049, 3083, 4816, 5072, 5099, 5310, 5510, 5561, 5630, 5702, 5752 & 5873	Reps. Biazon, Barbers, Garbin, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Garcia (J.E.), Salo, Hipolito Castelo, Tan (A.), Olivarez, Singson-Meehan, Roman, Garin (S.), Herrera-Dy, Alonte, Minority Leader Abante, Reps. Rodriguez, Deloso- Montala, and Bagatsing	Regulating the manufacture, importation, packaging, use sale, distribution, and advertisements of electronic nicotine delivery systems and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENDS/ENNDS) and heated tobacco products (HTPs)	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City), Chair of the Committee on Trade and Industry, and Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2nd District, Bataan), Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Health, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the 20 bills.</p> <p>The TWG will also be co-chaired by Reps. Gatchalian and Garcia.</p> <p>Rep. Gatchalian underscored the importance of establishing a regulatory framework for ENDS/ ENNDS and HTPs. He also said that these bills are aligned with RA 11467 which seeks to increase the excise tax imposed on alcohol, heated tobacco, and vape products to generate funds for the government's Universal Health Care Program.</p> <p>Several Members of the Committee were divided on which agency should implement the law. On one hand, some recommended that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should be the one to regulate the use, sale, and distribution of e-liquids and e-juices used in ENDS products. On the other hand, others said that the National Tobacco Administration (NTA) should have jurisdiction over tobacco, e-cigarettes, and vapors.</p> <p>Under the proposed law, the FDA is tasked to regulate all these products.</p> <p>Kenneth Bishop, president of JUUL Asia Pacific Lab, and Peter Paul Dator, president of Vapers Philippines, manifested that the tax imposed on heated tobacco products should be different from the ENDS/ ENNDS products, claiming that the latter are less harmful than the traditional tobacco products. They also agreed that e-cigarettes should be regulated because they are not totally risk-free.</p>
Veterans Affairs and Welfare	HB 937	Rep. Cabochan	Establishing and mandating an Office of Veterans Affairs in the Philippine Embassy in the United States of America, prescribing its functions, providing funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), approved HB 937.</p> <p>The bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for consideration and approval of its funding provision.</p>
	HB 936	Rep. Cabochan	Giving juridical personality to the present Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC)	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 936 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO), author of HB 936, said that his bill seeks to transform the VMMC into a</p>

Continuation... Veterans Affairs and Welfare				<p>corporate body to strengthen its financial operations and reinforce its status as a first rate and prestigious medical institution. This is in recognition of the important role of the VMMC in providing health services to veterans and their families.</p> <p>Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Budget and Management Bureau D OIC Assistant Director Beverly Galmesa expressed reservations on HB 936. According to Galmesa, one of the requirements for attaining a government owned and controlled company (GOCC) status is to be financially viable, which the VMMC may not be able to fulfill because it provides its services for free.</p> <p>VMMC Director Dominador Chiong Jr. said that a similar bill was filed during the 17th Congress but failed to get Congress' nod for the same reason, that the VMMC is not an income generating hospital thus converting it to a corporation would not be feasible. Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) Administrator Ernesto Carolina suggested that the Committee consider the modernization of the VMMC instead.</p> <p>Rep. Cabochan agreed and promised to study Carolina's suggestion.</p>
Ways and Means	HR 227	Rep. Suansing (E.)	Inquiry into the implementation of Section 150-B of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended by RA 10963, otherwise known as the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN)	<p>The Committee, presided by its Senior Vice Chair, Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 227 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing, author of HR 227, maintained that there is a need to ascertain if concerned government agencies, particularly the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), are performing their respective duties and responsibilities in accordance with Section 150-B of the TRAIN Law and if the law is being properly implemented.</p> <p>Section 150-B mandates the imposition of excise tax on sweetened beverages effective January 1, 2018. The tax imposed on sweetened beverages using purely caloric sweeteners and purely non-caloric sweeteners is lower at P6.00 per liter, compared to sweetened beverages using purely high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) which is P12.00 per liter.</p> <p>Resource persons from the FDA, Department of Finance (DOF), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Bureau of Customs (BOC), Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) discussed the tax revenues on sweetened beverages; the industry's claim of reformulation and non-use of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS); effects of the TRAIN Law on the local sugarcane farmers; and the budgetary allocations for the social mitigating</p>

Continuation... Ways and Means				<p>measures under the TRAIN Law, among others.</p> <p>Expressing the sentiment of the Committee, Reps. Joseph Stephen Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD) and Michael Gorriceta (2nd District, Iloilo) urged stakeholders present to fully disclose all information that will aid in the effective and efficient implementation of the law.</p> <p>The Committee asked the stakeholders to submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their respective action plans in addressing the concerns and issues raised; • For the FDA to submit information regarding the number of cases of misdeclarations of registered sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) through its online portal; • For the BOC and SRA to reconcile their conflicting data on the importation of HFCS and regular sugar; and • For the SRA to provide data on the production of local refined sugar, sugar production shortage for the periods 2015 to 2019, and projections for the year 2020. <p>The Committee also agreed to conduct an ocular inspection of the FDA laboratory facility on February 5, to check on the methodology and equipment used in analyzing the type of sweetener or sugar used in SSBs.</p>
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Constitutional Amendments	Proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution submitted by the Constitutional Reform (CoRe) Movement and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) through the Inter-agency Task Force on Federalism and Constitutional Reform (IATF)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), discussed the proposed amendments to the 1987 Constitution submitted by the CoRe Movement and the DILG, through the IATF.</p> <p>The IATF was created by the Office of the President through Memorandum Circular No. 52 series of 2018. It is chaired by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), with the Department of Justice (DOJ) as Vice Chair and the following agencies as members: Office of the Cabinet Secretary; Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO); Office of the Presidential Spokesperson; Presidential Legislative Liaison Office (PLLO); Commission on Higher Education (CHED); Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP); and the University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center.</p> <p>At present, the IATF created eight clusters representing the key areas of focus in revising the Constitution. These key areas are: structure of federal government; structure of regional and local governments; accountability of public officers; constitutional commissions; rights and obligations; national territory and security; transitory provisions; and national economy and financial administration. Each area will be led by the following agencies, respectively: DOJ, DILG, Ombudsman,</p>

Continuation... Constitutional Amendments		<p>Civil Service Commission (CSC), CHED, Department of National Defense (DND), DAP, and the Department of Finance (DOF).</p> <p>Committee Secretary Aline Ruth Villaluz apprised the Committee of the IATF's proposed priority amendments to the 1987 Constitution, as follows: fiscal strengthening of the local government units (LGUs), creation of the Regional Development Authority (RDA) in each region, political and electoral reforms, and the liberalization of the economic provisions of the 1987 Constitution.</p> <p>Several Members commented that the creation of an RDA would only add another layer in the bureaucracy, which would complicate and duplicate the functions of existing agencies. As proposed, the RDA will be composed of provincial governors, city mayors, presidents of the league of municipalities in each province, and regional heads of the departments and other national government offices within the region. It will be tasked to formulate, implement, and monitor development plans and programs in accordance with the interests of the region.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur) recommended that the RDA Chairperson should be elected by its members instead of being appointed by the President, to avoid any unfair treatment or discrimination against areas whose leaders are from the opposition.</p> <p>On political and electoral reforms, one of the proposed amendments which a number of Congressmen questioned was the prohibition on political dynasties. Rep. Antonio "Tonyet" Albano (1st District, Isabela), for one, stressed that the so-called political dynasties are democratically elected. He added that prohibiting an individual to run for public office on the mere account of one's family name is undemocratic.</p> <p>Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN) asked if the IATF proposals under political and electoral reforms include the abolition of the party-list system. Villaluz replied in the negative.</p> <p>The Committee Secretary informed the Committee of the request of the IATF to be given the opportunity to present its proposal to all House Members possibly on February 4. The Committee welcomed this initiative of the IATF.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Energy (Technical Working Group)	HB 2099	Rep. Velasco	Strengthening the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) by expanding and streamlining its bureaucracy, upgrading employee skills, augmenting benefits, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Sergio Dagooc (Party-List, APEC), terminated its discussion on HBs 2099 and 2427. The Secretariat was directed to draft a substitute bill which will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Among the agreements reached during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The membership of the ERC, including the Chairperson, shall be maintained to five; • The members of the ERC must be at least 40 years of age and of recognized competence and
	HB 2427	Rep. Vargas	Enhancing the governance structure of the ERC	

Continuation... Energy (Technical Working Group)				<p>experience in their respective fields of expertise;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ERC shall utilize 30% of its revenues generated from the collection of fees, fines, penalties, and other charges in the following manner: 30%, personnel services (PS); 60%, maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE); and 10%, capital outlay (CO); and • The Office of the People's Counsel, which will be under the administrative supervision of the Chief of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO), will be tasked to represent and appear for the public before the ERC in every case involving consumer interests.
Science and Technology (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HB 3372	Rep. Garin (S.)	Promoting safe and responsible use of modern biotechnology establishing the Biotechnology Authority of the Philippines for this purpose, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Joseph "Jojo" Lara (3rd District, Cagayan), terminated its deliberation on the substitute bill. The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Former Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano suggested making the bill more comprehensive by including other breeding techniques apart from the genetically modified (GM) technology. According to Serrano, there are non-GM technologies that are able to accelerate the traditional processes of crossing and hybridization that should be explored.</p> <p>Moreover, he recommended the creation of a body under the proposed Biotechnology Authority that would have several autonomous branches focusing on specific areas such as industry development, science promotion, policy and standards regulation, and enforcement. He explained that vesting both policy formulation and regulation functions to one body will be a "fundamental conflict."</p> <p>Representatives from the DA-Biotechnology Program Office (DA-BPO) agreed with the suggestions of Serrano and recommended their inclusion in the substitute bill.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HBs 5964, 5567, 127, 2241, 4389, 4605, 4963, 5578, 5635 & 4184	Reps. Aumentado, Flores, Deputy Speaker Fernandez, Reps. Salceda, Go (E.), Tutor, Yu, Lara, and Balindong	Strengthening the governance and management of the Philippine Science High School (PSHS) System	<p>The technical working group (TWG) terminated its deliberation on the substitute bill. The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Department of Science and Technology (DOST) - PSHS System Deputy Executive Director Rod Allan de Lara, PSHS Main Campus Director Lawrence Madriaga, and PSHS CALABARZON Region Campus Director Jose Andaya, expressed their support for the bill.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
East ASEAN Growth Area (Special Committee)	Briefing by the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) on the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) Vision 2025	<p>The Committee, chaired by Sarangani Rep. Rogelio Pacquiao, listened to the briefing of MinDA Deputy Executive Director Romeo Montenegro about the BIMP-EAGA Vision 2025 (BEV 2025) which was formulated to ensure that member-countries are attuned to regional and global development trends, opportunities, and challenges that would influence the future of economic cooperation.</p> <p>The BEV 2025 is "Resilient, Inclusive, Sustainable and Economically competitive (R.I.S.E.) BIMP-EAGA to narrow development gap." BIMP-EAGA aspires to achieve a level of resilience in its development that would cushion the subregion from the impact of external shocks and hasten recovery. It intends to foster inclusivity by narrowing development gaps within each country, and between the subregion and ASEAN.</p> <p>The BIMP-EAGA development path to 2025 is anchored on five strategic pillars: enhancing connectivity within and outside BIMP-EAGA; establishing the subregion as a food basket in ASEAN and the rest of Asia; promoting BIMP-EAGA as a premier tourism destination; ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources; and promoting people-to-people connectivity through socio-cultural understanding and knowledge exchange.</p> <p>Toward this end, 72 priority infrastructure projects (PIPs) were identified to ensure interconnectivity within the subregion. These PIPs, which involve air, land and sea linkages, is estimated to cost US\$23.27 billion and is seen as an advantage to attract prospective investors into the subregion, Montenegro added.</p> <p>Also during the meeting, Rep. Pacquiao reported the details of the 23rd Ministerial Meeting of the BIMP-EAGA held in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia, on November 21-24, 2019.</p>
Mindanao Affairs	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies on the status of the various development projects in Mindanao:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte), listened to the briefing of NEDA and DPWH on the status of various development projects in Mindanao.</p> <p>NEDA's Assistant Director of the Public Investment Staff Martha Flores informed the Committee that NEDA approved the single-track, diesel-run railway system for the Mindanao railway project instead of the two-track, electric-run railway system proposed by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) as it was able to meet NEDA's project criteria on viability, financial and economic returns, and low cost option.</p> <p>The 102-km Mindanao railway project will have a total of eight stations and will reduce travel time between Tagum City, Davao del Norte and Digos, Davao del Sur from 3.5 hours to 1.3 hours. The P81.7-billion project, which is funded by the China Official Development Assistance, will start construction in the first quarter of 2020 and is expected to become fully operational by the fourth quarter of 2022.</p> <p>The Committee requested the NEDA Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) to submit documents pertaining to the approval of the single-track railway system and the feasibility study on the Mindanao Railway Project.</p> <p>With regard to the proposed airport in Zamboanga, Rep. Dimaporo inquired about the status of the construction work. NEDA Region IX OIC Assistant Director Susan Valero said that the construction of a new Zamboanga International Airport located outside the city is ongoing.</p> <p>For the CARAGA Region, NEDA Region XIII Director Bonifacio Uy reported that in addition to the Mindanao Railway System project, there</p>

<p>Continuation... Mindanao Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) 	<p>are currently five inter-regional road projects being implemented in Mindanao interconnecting the CARAGA Region to the other regions in Mindanao. Uy added that the Butuan City airport will be upgraded to include the expansion of the airport ramp, improvement of parking area, and construction of concrete fence and drainage system.</p> <p>NEDA Director for Region XI Maria Lourdes Lim said that NEDA has also approved the construction of a bridge that will connect Samal Island and Davao City bypass roads, and the expansion and improvement of the Davao International Airport in Davao City.</p> <p>DPWH Undersecretary for Regional Operations in Mindanao Dimas Soguilon outlined the following projects as part of the government's "Build, Build, Build Program:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road network development project in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao; Reconstruction and development plan for Greater Marawi; Improvement of roads along the growth corridors in Mindanao; and Establishment of Mindanao Logistics Infrastructure Network. <p>Rep. Jose "Pingping" Tejada (3rd District, North Cotabato) requested the DPWH to give priority to the funding of the rehabilitation of school buildings that were damaged during the earthquakes that hit Cotabato and Davao in the latter part of 2019.</p> <p>Soguilon said that the DPWH is coordinating with the Department of Education (DepEd) to get a validated report on the number of school buildings that need to be repaired or constructed.</p> <p>Rep. Rogelio Neil Roque (4th District, Bukidnon) inquired on the DPWH's process of expropriating lands that will be affected by the implementation of DPWH projects. Soguilon said that an appraisal committee evaluates the market value of the affected lands and submits its recommendation to DPWH for payment.</p>
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Cooperatives Development	Discussion of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 11364 or the CDA Charter of 2019	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), will continue its discussion on the IRR of RA 11364 in its next meeting.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Canama if the IRR is already approved and ready for dissemination to the public, CDA Chairman Orlando Ravanera said it is already approved. However, he said that the CDA is still awaiting the final comment of Secretary Ramon Lopez of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).</p> <p>The Philippine Cooperative Center and various cooperatives present during the meeting asked the CDA if the comments and suggestions of various cooperatives were considered during the crafting of the IRR. Ravanera answered that some of those recommendations were included in the IRR.</p> <p>The cooperatives were requested to submit their additional comments and suggestions relative to the IRR.</p>