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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 6166 & 6177	Reps. Tan (A.) and Salceda	Appropriating the sum of P1.6 billion as supplemental appropriations for FY 2020	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Eric Go Yap (Party-List, ACT-CIS), approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment and thereafter approved the corresponding Committee Report subject to style.</p> <p>The Committee approved the supplemental appropriations of P1.6 billion for FY 2020 in response to the worsening public health situation brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.</p> <p>Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary for Administration and Financial Management Team Roger Tong-an earlier said that the Department actually projects a budget requirement of P3.1 billion to effectively respond to the threat of COVID-19. The amount, Tong-an continued, would be used to procure personal protective equipment, for quarantine measures being implemented by the Bureau of Quarantine, and for tests being conducted by the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).</p> <p>In response to the query of Quirino Rep. Junie Cua regarding the availability of funds, Deputy Treasurer Sharon Almanza said that the amount of P1.645 billion is available at the National Treasury.</p> <p>DOH Secretary Francisco Duque III assured the Committee that the DOH has the necessary infrastructure in place and sufficient medical personnel in anticipation of a wider spread of the virus. Duque added that the DOH has convened an inter-agency task force from the national down to the barangay level that will monitor the situation on the ground.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HBs 56, 1869, 3352, 3854, 4813 & 6002	Reps. Cabochan, Rodriguez, Almario, Agabas, Go (M.), and Deputy Speaker Villanueva	Requiring all graduating senior high school and college students to plant two trees each as a civic duty for environment protection and preservation and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 371, 464, 1340 & 3733	Reps. Olivarez, Kho, Go (M.), and Agabas	Requiring parents to plant two trees for every child born to them	The Committee approved the substitute bill.

<i>Continuation...</i> Appropriations	Substitute Bill to HBs 688 and 2037	Reps. Aglipay and Sy-Alvarado	Requiring government agencies to indicate the blood type of individuals in the identification cards, certificates, and licenses and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HB 700	Rep. Biazon	Rationalizing the disability pension of veterans, amending for the purpose RA 6948, or the law standardizing and upgrading the benefits for military veterans and their beneficiaries, as amended	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 917, 1586, 3992, 4392, 5145 & 5309	Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Romualdez (Y.M.), Agabas, Robes, Fortun, and Lara	Institutionalizing the alternative learning system (ALS) in the basic education for out-of-school children, youth, and adults and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 931, 1166, 2469, 2546, 3102, 3275, 3404, 3498, 4707 & 4887	Rep. Cabochan, Deputy Speaker Romero, Rep. Almario, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Romualdez (Y.M.), Salceda, Sy-Alvarado, Tambunting, and Tan (A.S.)	Strengthening and modernizing the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the substitute bill with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 6162 & 6292	Reps. Garin (S.) and Rodriguez	Reorganizing and converting the Insurance Commission into a collegial body, amending Sections 437, 438 and 439 of RA 10607, otherwise known as the Insurance Code, as amended	The Committee approved the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HB 3124	Rep. Tejada	Creating two additional branches of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) in the Twelfth Judicial Region to be stationed in the Municipality of Mlang, Province of Cotabato, and appropriating funds therefor, amending for the purpose Section 14(M) of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, as amended	The Committee approved the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HB 4609	Rep. Flores	Creating one additional branch of the Municipal Trial Court (MTC) to be stationed in the City of Malaybalay, Province of Bukidnon, and appropriating funds therefor, amending for the purpose Section 29 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended	The Committee approved the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 5532 & 5914	Rep. Mariano-Hernandez	Creating six additional branches of the RTC in the Fourth Judicial Region and one additional branch of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities (MTCC) to be stationed in	The Committee approved the substitute bill.

Continuation... Appropriations			the City of Cabuyao, Province of Laguna, and appropriating funds therefor, amending for the purpose Sections 14(E) and 29 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended	
	HB 638	Deputy Speaker Legarda	Institutionalizing Philippine participation in the international exhibitions of the Venice Biennale	The Committee approved HB 638 with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HB 200	Rep. Garcia (J.E.)	Establishing a special defense economic zone (SpeDEZ) inside the Government Arsenal Defense Industrial Estate located in Camp Gen. Antonio Luna, Lamao, Municipality of Limay, Province of Bataan, creating for this purpose the Special Defense Economic Zone Authority (SpeDEZA) and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee deferred its deliberation on the substitute bill.
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	Substitute Bill to HBs 6143, 5976 & 6299	Reps. Cua, Salceda, and Deputy Speaker Hernandez	Providing for the protection of financial consumers	The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 6143, 5976, and 6299, subject to style and amendment.
Energy	Substitute Bill to HBs 2099 & 2427	Reps. Velasco and Vargas	Strengthening the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) by expanding and streamlining its bureaucracy, upgrading employee skills, augmenting benefits, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>During the discussion of Sections 1 to 12 of the substitute bill, the Committee introduced amendments to some provisions.</p> <p>With regard to Section 13, which details the adjusted compensation structure and other emoluments for ERC personnel, the Committee agreed to wait for the computation of the ERC on the matter. It was also agreed upon by the Committee that the chairperson and the members of the ERC shall be entitled to the same salaries, allowances and benefits as those of the Presiding Justice and Associate Justices of the Court of Appeals.</p> <p>The other sections of the substitute bill will be discussed by the Committee in another meeting.</p>
Human Rights	Substitute Bill to HBs 486, 1532, 4649 & 5279	Reps. Deloso-Montalla, Nograles (J.J.), Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, and Rep. Belmonte	Providing a framework for the right to adequate food, and providing penalties for violation thereof	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus "Bong" Suntay (4 th District, Quezon City), approved the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 55, 487, 522, 1579 & 4586	Reps. Cabochan, Deloso-Montalla, Aglipay, Hataman, and Belmonte	Protecting and promoting the rights to equality and non-discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, and religion	<p>The Committee agreed to refer back the substitute bill to the technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and harmonize it with the other nine bills on anti-discrimination.</p> <p>Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN), co-author of HB 1579, said that several deliberations were conducted by the TWG to polish the substitute bill, adding that its</p>

Continuation... Human Rights	HBs 136, 4216, 4587, 4647, 4684, 5356, 5969, 6024 & 6098	Reps. Roman, Vargas, Abellanosa, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Majority Leader Romualdez, Rep. Castelo, Minority Leader Abante, Deputy Speakers Villanueva and Hernandez	Prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief or activity, political inclination or conviction, social class, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expressions, marital or relationship status, disability, HIV status, health status or medical history, language, physical features, and other forms of discrimination, and providing penalties for violation thereof	<p>passage will help prevent discrimination against Muslim communities.</p> <p>Reps. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan) and Precious Hipolito Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), respective authors of HBs 136 and 5356, and Rep. Domingo Rivera (Party-List, CIBAC), co-author of HB 6024, manifested that the explanatory note of their bill be considered as their sponsorship speech.</p> <p>Representatives from the Philippine Council of Evangelical Church and Bible Mode expressed support for the bills.</p>
	HBs 683, 2502, 2801 & 6393	Reps. Aglipay, Belmonte, Rodriguez, and Deloso-Montalla	Establishing the National Committee for the Prevention of Torture (NCPT), the national preventive mechanism against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment in the Philippines, providing a framework for implementing obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the bills in its next meeting. The Secretariat was directed to consolidate and harmonize the bills.</p> <p>Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), author of HB 2502, manifested that the explanatory note attached to his bill be considered as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) expressed support for the proposed law, adding that it is consistent with the mandate of the Commission.</p> <p>Representatives from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) all expressed support for the bills. However, they suggested that the visits by the proposed NCPT in prison or detention facilities should be undertaken with prior coordination with the authorities for security purposes.</p> <p>Under the proposed measure, the NCPT shall carry out regular, unannounced visits to detention facilities and to undertake preventive monitoring visits to examine and assess policies, procedures and practices in these places.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their position papers on the proposed law.</p>
	HBs 709, 1040, 6309 & 6392	Reps. Belmonte, Tambunting, Rodriguez, and Deloso-Montalla	Protecting the rights of internally displaced persons and penalizing the act of arbitrary internal displacement	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on the bills in its next meeting. The Secretariat was directed to consolidate the bills using HB 6392 as the reference bill.</p> <p>Rep. Belmonte, author of HB 709, manifested that the explanatory note of his bill be considered as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>Representatives from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) expressed support for the bills. UNCHR's Assistant Protection Officer, Atty. Alpha Carole Pontanal, said the UNHCR is</p>

Continuation... Human Rights				<p>willing to provide assistance in enhancing the proposed law.</p> <p>All concerned agencies were requested to submit their position papers on the bills.</p>
Labor and Employment	HB 2476	Rep. Taduran	Providing enhanced protection, security, and benefits for media workers	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), will deliberate further on HB 2476 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Niña Taduran (Party-List, ACT-CIS), author of HB 2476, said that it is about time to give media workers their economic due and added protection considering the danger that their job entails. This, she said, is in consonance with Section 18, Article II of the Constitution which provides for the protection and promotion of workers' rights and welfare.</p> <p>National Press Club (NPC) President Rolando Gonzalo expressed support for the bill. He lamented that despite the danger involved in the exercise of their profession such as media-killings and threats to their lives, most workers in the industry are overworked yet underpaid.</p> <p>On the other hand, Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) Executive Director Rey Hulong opined that the proposed creation of the Commission on Press Freedom and Media Security (CPFMS) may curtail the exercise of press freedom. He stressed that the existing practice of self-regulation among media practitioners should rather be strengthened and maintained.</p> <p>Based on the bill, the proposed CPFMS will serve as media workers' shield from all forms of attacks and as a development center for journalism. It will be under the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO).</p> <p>Other resource persons present during the meeting were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	<i>Motu Proprio Inquiry</i>		Inquiry into the labor issues raised by disgruntled security guard, Mr. Archie Paray, during the hostage-taking of at least 30 people at V-Mall in Greenhills, San Juan City on March 2, 2020	<p>The Committee will continue its investigation into the labor issues aired by security guard Archie Paray which apparently pushed him to take hostage at least 30 people in Greenhills, San Juan City last March 2.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda said that Paray's grievances, which reflect those of his fellow security guards, deserve the attention of the Committee.</p> <p>Among the issues alleged by Paray were the relentless humiliation he suffered from his immediate superiors and the constant threat of work termination without due cause. Rep. Pineda added that Paray also alleged that a mall tenant paid his superiors the amount of P5,000 for him to be removed from his post at the mall's main entrance. This was after he confronted the tenant for failure to present an</p>

Continuation... Labor and Employment				<p>identification card upon entry to the mall premises.</p> <p>San Juan City Legal Officer Glenn Abellon stated that Paray's sole demand during the hostage-taking incident was a media coverage when he would air his grievances. Abellon added that Safeguard Amor Security Corporation (SASCOR) – the employer of Paray – offered Paray P1 million to stop the hostage-taking, but which Paray did not accept.</p> <p>Abellon was sent by San Juan City Mayor Francisco Javier Zamora, who led the negotiating team during the hostage-taking incident, to represent him in the meeting.</p> <p>When asked to explain why the hostage crisis took several hours before it was neutralized, San Juan City police chief P/Col. Jaime Santos explained that the Philippine National Police's elite Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team had to make sure of the location of the four grenade explosives claimed to have been brought in by Paray. The police, however, later found only one grenade in the area, Santos said.</p> <p>Atty. Mary Grace Riguer of the Department of Labor and Employment-National Capital Region (DOLE-NCR) reported that initial findings show that Paray went AWOL (absent without official leave) since December 10, 2019, after he was told by his superiors that he would be transferred from the V-Mall's main entrance gate to the Mall's roving security team. Riguer clarified that the security agency did not terminate Paray's services, but its violation consists of non-payment of Paray's rest-day premium pay.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to issue a subpoena to the following persons to compel their attendance in the Committee's next meeting: Paray; Mark Padilla, owner of SASCOR; and Paray's immediate supervisors against whom he had grievances. The Committee will determine later others who will be asked to be present during the next meeting.</p>
Legislative Franchises	HBs 676, 3521, 3713, 3947, 4305, 5608, 5705, 5753, 6052, 6138 & 6293	Rep. Violago, Deputy Speaker Arenas, Reps. Tambunting and Aragonas, Deputy Speakers Santos-Recto and Gonzales (A.), Reps. Rodriguez, Ramirez-Sato, Zarate, and Go (M.) and	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to ABS-CBN Corporation under RA 7966	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1st District, Palawan), will deliberate further on the 11 bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, the Committee adopted additional general rules to supplement its current Internal Rules of Procedure.</p> <p>Upon the motion of Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato, the Committee adopted the position of Speaker Alan Peter "Compañero" Cayetano (1st District, Taguig City-Pateros), stated in his letter to the National Telecommunications Commission</p>

Continuation... Legislative Franchises		Deputy Speaker Legarda		<p>(NTC), as the official stand of the Committee. In his letter, the Speaker asked the NTC to grant a provisional authority to ABS-CBN and its subsidiaries (ABS-CBN Convergence, Inc., Sky Cable Corporation, and Amcara Broadcasting Network, Inc.) to continue their operations past the expiration of ABS-CBN's franchise on May 4.</p> <p>NTC Commissioner Gamaliel Cordoba agreed to issue the provisional authority. He said that this was also the advice of the Department of Justice, to allow ABS-CBN and its subsidiaries to continue their broadcasting operations while Congress tackles the franchise renewal application.</p> <p>Rep. Alvarez said that the authors of the bills will deliver their respective sponsorship speeches in the Committee's next meeting.</p> <p>The stakeholders were requested to submit their respective position papers on or before April 15.</p>
Local Government	HBs 2218, 3077, 3306 & 4595	Reps. Barba, Espino, Matugas, and Fariñas (R.C.)	Declaring special nonworking holidays in certain parts of the country to commemorate special events	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Noel Villanueva (3 rd District, Tarlac), approved the four bills.
	HB 5077	Rep. Ermita-Buhain	Converting the Municipality of Calaca in the Province of Batangas into a component city to be known as the City of Calaca	The Committee approved HB 5077.
	HBs 5599 & 5699	Rep. Chungalao	Creating Barangay Dengao and Barangay Cocoy, respectively, in the Municipality of Tinoc, Province of Ifugao and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HBs 5599 and 5699.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Reports.</p>
	HB 5866	Rep. Silverio	Reapportioning the Province of Bulacan into seven regular districts	The Committee approved HB 5866 with amendments.
	HBs 397, 1667 & 5217	Reps. Erice, Salceda, and Rodriguez	Providing compensation to Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) officials, further amending RA 10742 or the SK Reform Act of 2015	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and harmonize the provisions of the three bills.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN).</p>
	HB 4671	Rep. Tallado	Declaring February 1 of every year as a special nonworking holiday in the Province of Camarines Norte, repealing for the purpose RA 9090	The Committee deferred consideration of HB 4671.
	HB 5024	Rep. Tan (S.A.)	Declaring August 11 of every year as a special nonworking holiday in the Province of Samar to commemorate its foundation anniversary to be known as the Samar Day	The Committee deferred consideration of HB 5024.
Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development	Substitute Bill to HBs 60, 404, 562, 1069, 2215,	Rep. Yap (V.), Deputy Speaker Villafuerte,	Providing a socialized microfinancing program for micro enterprises through the Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso (P3) program thereby promoting	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), approved the substitute bill subject to style and amendment.

Continuation... Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development	3699, 4072 & 4792	Reps. Abellanosa, Limkaichong, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Castelo, Delos Santos, and Bolilia	entrepreneurship, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The substitute bill will be referred to the Committee on Appropriations for review of its funding provision.</p> <p>Rep. Lacson said that the proposed law seeks to institutionalize the P3 Program which would provide micro enterprises access to collateral-free credit at an interest rate lower than those offered by informal lenders.</p> <p>Rep. Lacson said that a similar bill was passed on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17th Congress.</p> <p>Presenting the merits of their bills were Deputy Speaker Michael Romero Ph.D.(Party-List, 1-PACMAN), Reps. Rodrigo Abellanosa (2nd District, Cebu City), Precious Hipolito Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), and Alfred delos Santos (Party-List, ANG PROBINSYANO), respective authors of HBs 2215, 562, 3699, and 4072.</p> <p>Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Acting Deputy Director Concepcion Garcia pointed out the need to have adequate control measures to ensure the efficient collection of the loans, since the P3 Program has no collateral requirement. She also suggested that conduit financial institutions be afforded reasonable compensation, to be taken from interest proceeds, for the purpose of recovering manpower and operational costs.</p> <p>Small Business Corporation's Executive Vice President Melvin Abanto commented that the 12% interest rate being contemplated in the law is reasonable, with not too much profit motive. He added that putting a cap on the interest rate will differentiate the P3 Program from the other financing facilities.</p>
	HB 331	Deputy Speaker Arenas	Facilitating the global employment of Filipinos	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), will deliberate further on HB 331 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 833	Rep. Bordado	Creating the Office of Philippine Overseas Labor Arbiter for the protection of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 833 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 1028	Rep. Salceda	Enhancing the financial literacy of OFWs	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 1028 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>

Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs	HB 1541	Rep. Tulfo	Creating the Philippine Overseas Legal Action Center, identifying its duties, providing funds therefor and updating the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) minimum employment contract for OFWs	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 1541 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 6147	Rep. Olivarez	Strengthening further the pre-departure orientation program for OFWs to include financial and entrepreneurial education, amending for the purpose RA 8042, as amended, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6147 in its next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
Public Order and Safety	Substitute Bill to HB 1197	Deputy Speaker Oaminal	Providing for the revitalization and capability enhancement of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1st District, Masbate), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 1197 subject to amendments.</p> <p>Rep. Samier Tan (1st District, Sulu), chair of the Subcommittee on Police Administration which studied and came up with the substitute bill, presented the salient features of the proposed law. She said that the bill seeks to provide the necessary support for the modernization of the facilities and equipment of the Philippine National Police (PNP) with the goal of improving its readiness and capacity to respond to peace and order problems.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Henry Oaminal (2nd District, Misamis Occidental), author of HB 1197, was amenable to the proposed amendments.</p>
	HB 1373	Deputy Speaker Oaminal	Providing for the reorganization of the Philippine National Police and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to refer HBs 1373 and 1930 to the Subcommittee on Police Administration.
	HB 1930	Deputy Speaker Oaminal	Conferring the cadets of the Philippine National Police Academy the status of a government employee and granting them with Civil Service Eligibility and benefits and privileges	Deputy Speaker Oaminal, author of the two bills, manifested that his explanatory note attached to the bills serve as his sponsorship speech.
Public Order and Safety jt. w/ National Defense and Security	Consolidated Bill on HBs 551, 2082, 2847, 3103, 3413 and 5710	Reps. Biazon, Nograles (J.J.), Deputy Speakers Villafuerte and Romero, Reps. Tulfo and Bolilia	Defining, preventing, and penalizing terrorist acts, repealing for the purpose RA 9372, otherwise known as the Human Security Act of 2007, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1st District, Masbate), Chair of the Committee on Public Order and Safety, and Rep. Raul "Boboy" Tupas (5th District, Iloilo), Chair of the Committee on National Defense and Security, will deliberate further on the consolidated bill.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Committee discussed Section 17 (Surveillance of Suspects and Interception and Recording of Communications) up to Section 57 (Effectivity). The less contentious sections of the consolidated bill were discussed first while the contentious provisions were set aside for further deliberation in the Committee's next meeting.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Mujiv Hataman (Basilan) requested that representatives from the</p>

<i>Continuation...</i> Public Order and Safety jt. w/ National Defense and Security				<p>following offices be invited to attend the Committee's next meeting: Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Grand Mosque of the Autonomous Region, National Commission on Muslim Filipino (NCMF), and University of the Philippines. The Deputy Speaker said that their views and recommendations are important inputs to the joint body's deliberations considering that most terrorist organizations in the country are being linked to Muslim extremists.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, author of HB 551, clarified that the bill is an anti-terrorism bill and does not single out Muslim extremists.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) sought the deletion of Section 33 (Restriction on the Right to Travel) for being unconstitutional. However, Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte) objected to it. This led to the division of the house – whether the Members are in favor or against the removal of Section 33 from the bill – resulting in 6 votes in favor and 4 against. The motion of the Deputy Speaker was carried.</p> <p>Rep. Jericho Jonas Nograles (Party-List, PBA) opposed the labeling and tagging of individuals or groups as terrorists without proscription from the court of law. He said that he will introduce a provision in the bill which will penalize such act.</p>
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	HB 91	Rep. Sarmiento	Amending Section 69 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 881, also known as the Omnibus Election Code, imposing a fine upon a nuisance candidate and/or person in conspiracy with such candidate for the malicious filing of a certificate of candidacy	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Juliet Marie Ferrer (4 th District, Negros Occidental), approved HB 91 subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 511, 1669, 4853, 4985, 5190, 5270, 5305, 5524 & 5563	Rep. Castro (F.L.), Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Dy (F.), Agabas, Deloso-Montalla, Deputy Speaker Hernandez, Reps. Hataman, Dalipe, and Bagatsing	Reorganizing the offices of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to draft a substitute bill.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur) was designated as TWG chair.</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>
	HB 5649	Rep. Hofer	Strengthening the COMELEC by enhancing its fiscal autonomy, reorganizing its offices, upgrading employee skills and augmenting their compensation, allowances and benefits, and appropriating funds therefor	

<i>Continuation...</i> Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	HB 2761	Rep. Rodriguez	Rationalizing the proceedings in and resolution of electoral protests	The Committee deferred discussion on HB 2761.
Ways and Means	Substitute Bill to HBs 1622, 478, 507, 1939, 2538, 2661, 3088, 3513, 3533, 3703, 3902, 3911, 4040, 4242, 4782, 4971, 5059, 5497, 5708, 5819 & 6051	Reps. Fortun, Brosas, Barbers, Pineda, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Sy-Alvarado, Villaraza-Suarez, Aragonese, Castelo, Deputy Speakers Fernandez, Legarda, and Hernandez, Reps. Abaya, Guico, Nieto, Agabas, Delos Santos, Pacquiao, Vargas, and Deputy Speaker Villafuerte	Granting additional benefits to solo parents, amending for the purpose RA 8972, otherwise known as the Solo Parents Act of 2000	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2 nd District, Albay), approved the tax provisions of the substitute bill.
	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	The Committee approved HB 883 subject to style and amendment.
	HB 1043	Rep. Singson-Meehan	Granting incentives to qualified taxpayers by exempting them from audit and investigation if they pay at least 20% more of income tax, VAT, excise and percentage taxes paid during the previous taxable year	The Committee approved HB 1043 subject to style and amendment.
	HBs 191 & 3671	Reps. Suansing (E.) and Garin (S.)	Enhancing revenue administration and collection by granting amnesty on all unpaid impositions levied by government for taxable year 2017 and prior years	The Committee instructed the Committee Secretariat to consolidate the two measures using HB 191 as the lead bill.

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)	HBs 533, 629, 929, 1308, 1549, 1572, 2975, 3208, 3427, 3631, 3726,	Reps. Paduano, Almario, Cabochan, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Rep. Garbin, Deputy	Establishing drug rehabilitation centers in various parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO), agreed to deliberate further on the 16 bills in its next meeting, using HB 533 as its working draft.

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)	5068, 5482, 5545, 5719 & 5805	Speaker Abu, Reps. Sagarbarria, Olivarez, Aumentado, Nieto, Tambunting, Fariñas (R.C.), Rodriguez, Lara, and Erice		<p>Rep. Edgar Erice (2nd District, Caloocan City), author of HB 5805, emphasized that drug dependence is a health issue and should therefore involve medical interventions and not be treated as a law enforcement concern. He suggested consulting health experts to get their views on the bills' provisions particularly on the objectives and functions of drug rehabilitation centers.</p> <p>Medical Specialist Jose Bienvenido Leabris of the Department of Health's Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DOH-TRC) proposed the creation of a new bureau within the DOH that will focus on the implementation of its Dangerous Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program. He said that while the bills aim to improve access to such facilities, it is equally important that an effective treatment program is in place.</p> <p>Dangerous Drug Board's Chief of Legal Affairs Division Philip Josef Vera Cruz pointed out the need for continuous and adequate funding of the TRCs to sustain their operations.</p> <p>The Department of Social Welfare and Development, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and health experts in the country will be invited to attend in the Committee's next meeting.</p>
Higher and Technical Education jt. w/ Basic Education and Culture (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 2695, 2660 3230, 553, 1783, 3762, 1788, 2537, 3642, 3712, 4145, 4155, 4262, 4543, 5449, 606, 1118, 1192, 1241, 1309, 2087, 2447, 2559, 2613, 2685, 3181, 3337, 3376, 3497, 3835, 4345 & 5242	Reps. Ungab, Albano, Umali (A.), Biazon, Espino, Rodriguez, Gullas, Deputy Speaker Gonzales (A.), Reps. Cagas, Aumentado, Barba, Haresco, Deputy Speakers Savellano and Santos-Recto, Reps. Abaya, Acop, Tupas, Velasco, Torres-Gomez, Gatchalian, Deputy Speakers Abu and Villafuerte, Reps. Violago, Nograles (J.J.), Chipeco, Tolentino, Deputy Speaker Romero, Reps. Salceda, Sy-Alvarado, Paduano, Tambunting, and Olivarez	Instituting the Citizens Service Training Course, establishing the Citizens Service Corps and creating the Citizens Service Mobilization Commission for the purpose, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The joint technical working group (TWG), co-chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, Chair of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education, and Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, Chair of the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, agreed to report out the substitute bill to the mother Committee to elevate the discussion of contentious issues at its level.</p> <p>The proposed law aims to inculcate in the youth the values of patriotism, nationalism, and respect for human rights and to encourage the youth's involvement in public and civic affairs. The bill seeks to require all students enrolled in baccalaureate degree courses or technical vocational courses to undergo basic Citizens Service Training Course (CSTC) in all public and private colleges, universities, and similar learning institutions.</p> <p>Under the CSTC, the youth will be trained, equipped, and organized within the current framework of national and territorial defense, law enforcement and peace and order, and national disaster risk reduction and management. The objective is to prepare the youth for rapid mobilization to address national or local contingencies in the event that additional manpower beyond the capabilities of existing national government agencies or local government units will be required.</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i></p> <p>Higher and Technical Education jt. w/ Basic Education and Culture (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Among the contentious issues that were discussed during the meeting were the following: the implementation of the basic CSTC in senior high school or in the tertiary level; exemption of female students from the CSTC; and the lead implementing agency of the proposed law.</p> <p>The Philippine National Police, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), UP Vanguard, Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges, Association of Local Colleges and Universities, and the Student's Transformation and Enrichment for Truth-Values Integration and Promotion (STET-VIP), expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>Both the IBP and STET-VIP recommended the implementation of the basic CSTC in the tertiary level covering both male and female students with no exemption to be given to varsity players.</p> <p>IBP Chair Domingo Cayosa added that the trainings to be conducted for students should be age-appropriate and at par with international standards.</p> <p>Expressing their objection to the bills and recommending instead to strengthen RA 9163 or the National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act of 2001 were the following: Commission on Human Rights, Council for the Welfare of Children, Philippine Society of NSTP Educators and Implementers, Inc., National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), Child Rights Network, Rise for Education Alliance, and the Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to prepare the TWG report on the substitute bill.</p>
<p>Revision of Laws jt. w/ Welfare of Children (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>HBs 210, 1689, 2707, 3735, 4160, 5795 & 6073</p> <p>HB 4449</p> <p>HB 480</p>	<p>Deputy Speakers Puno and Villafuerte, Reps. Cuaresma, Zubiri, Romualdez, Benitez, and Lim</p> <p>Rep. Castelo</p> <p>Rep. Brosas</p>	<p>Increasing the age for determining statutory rape and other acts of sexual abuse and exploitation to provide stronger protection for children, amending for this purpose Act No. 3815, as amended, also known as the Revised Penal Code, RA 7610, otherwise known as the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discriminatory Act, and RA 8353, also known as the Anti-Rape Law of 1997</p> <p>Increasing the age of sexual consent for stronger protection of children, amending for the purpose Article 266-A (D) of Act No. 3815</p> <p>Amending Chapter 3 of RA 8353 (by providing for specific and clear instances when and how rape is committed and when lack of consent is presumed, among others)</p>	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), will continue its deliberation on the 10 bills in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG agreed to consolidate the proposed measures using HBs 3735, 4160 and 6215 as main references. The three bills are respectively authored by Reps. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma (Isabela), Manuel Zubiri (3rd District, Bukidnon), and Maria Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1st District, Bukidnon).</p> <p>All 10 bills basically seek to increase the age for determining statutory rape and other acts of sexual abuse and exploitation.</p> <p>Among the agreements made during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include "grooming and luring" as acts constituting rape and define the term

Continuation... Revision of Laws jt. w/ Welfare of Children (Technical Working Group)	HB 6215	Rep. Acosta-Alba	Providing stronger protection for children against sexual abuse	<p>as well;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the age of determining statutory rape from 12 to 16; • Impose the penalty of <i>reclusion perpetua</i> in its maximum period for the crimes of rape and statutory rape; • Delete the provision on the “effect of forgiveness and subsequent valid marriage;” (Under the Revised Penal Code, as amended, forgiveness – between spouses – or subsequent valid marriage between the offender and the offended party shall extinguish the criminal action or the penalty imposed.); and • Remove the provision on presumptions of resistance against the act of rape. <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), author of HB 480, reiterated her proposal that the age to determine statutory rape should be under 18 years of age which is consistent with the definition of “child” under RA 9775 or the Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Flagship Programs and Projects (Special Committee)	Briefing by the Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs and Projects on the status of the country's flagship programs and projects in the Visayas being implemented by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation (DOTr), and National Irrigation Administration (NIA)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Carlos Cojuangco (1st District, Tarlac), listened to the briefing conducted by the Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs and Projects, Secretary Vince Dizon, on the status of the country's flagship programs and projects in the Visayas under the “Build, Build, Build” Program of the Duterte administration.</p> <p>For flagship projects being implemented in the Visayas by the DPWH, Dizon described them as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panglao-Tagbilaran City Offshore Connector Bridge – a 1,167.2 meter, 4-lane bridge connecting Bohol to the island-municipalities of Dauis and Panglao, with project cost of P4.4 billion funded through the Official Development Assistance (ODA) from China; target completion is by 2023; • Metro Cebu Expressway – a 67.52-km road from Naga City to Danao City, with project cost of P26.62 billion and target completion by 2022; • Bacolod-Negros Occidental Economic Highway – improvement/widening of 46.6-km roads, with a project cost of P7.34 billion and target completion by December 2024; • Boracay Circumferential Road – concreting and improvement/widening of a 21.64-km road with project cost of P1.66 billion, with target completion by December 2021; • Samar Pacific Coastal Road Project – a 11.607-km road with a project cost of P1.13 billion funded through ODA from Korea, with target completion by November 2020; • Cebu-Mactan Bridge and Coastal Road Construction Project – a 3.3-km and a 4.9-km four-lane road, respectively, funded through ODA-Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), with project cost of P76.41

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Flagship Programs and Projects (Special Committee)</p>		<p>billion, and target completion by 2027; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panay-Guimaras-Negros Bridge – a 32.47 km bridge with funding from ODA-China amounting to P189.53 billion, target completion by 2028. <p>For the flagship projects for the Visayas implemented by the DOTr, Dizon highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Dumaguete (Bacong) Airport – with project cost of P6.94 billion through ODA and target completion by 2027; • Cebu Bus Rapid Transit – a 12.9-km transit lane, with project cost amounting is P16.31 billion through ODA-World Bank (WB); with partial operability by October 2021, and full operation by March 2022; • New Cebu International Container Port – with project cost of P9.96 billion funded through ODA-Korea, and target completion is in 2023; • Bacolod-Silay International Airport – with project cost of P19.24 billion and target completion by 2025; • Iloilo International Airport – with a project cost of P4.97 billion and target completion by 2025; • New Bohol (Panglao) International Airport – with a project cost of P3.79 billion and target completion by 2025; • Kalibo International Airport – with project cost of P4.78 billion and target completion by 2022; and • Cebu Monorail System – a 17.7-km Cebu Central Line and a 9.3 km Cebu Airport Line, with a project cost of P78.89 billion and target completion by 2023. <p>Dizon also outlined the flagship projects implemented by NIA for the Visayas, which include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bohol Northeast Basin Multipurpose Dam Project - with a project cost of P4.13 billion and target completion by 2027; and • Panay River Basin Integrated Development Project – with a project cost of P19.54 billion funded through ODA-China, and target completion is by 2027. <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go inquired if the government has a roadmap for settling its financial obligations 10 to 15 years from now. He noted that the P400 billion allocation under the 2020 General Appropriations Act (GAA) is intended only for the payment of interests for loans incurred by the government.</p> <p>Dizon explained that loans incurred by government to address the lack of infrastructure are paid over a long period of time. He, however, said that the Philippines' external debt ratios remain at prudent levels even if external debts have increased.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Adriano Ebcas (Party-List, AKO PADAYON) on the source of funds for the payment of loans and interests incurred by government, Dizon replied that payments are sourced from government revenues such as proceeds from taxes and customs duties.</p> <p>Rep. Cojuangco requested the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) to submit a position paper on how to streamline the process of settling road right-of-way (RROW) cases to avoid delays in the implementation of infrastructure projects.</p>
<p>Mindanao Affairs</p>	<p>Briefing by the following government agencies on their respective budget and plans and programs for Mindanao:</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte), listened to the briefing conducted by government agencies on their respective budget and plans and programs for Mindanao.</p>

<p>Continuation...</p> <p>Mindanao Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Department of Agriculture (DA) National Irrigation Administration (NIA) Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) 	<p>DSWD Undersecretary Aimee Neri reported that the Department's budget for 2020 for Mindanao amounts to P40.53 billion or 25.01% of the total P162.08 billion budget of the DSWD.</p> <p>Neri highlighted the 2019 accomplishments as well as the 2020 targets of some of the programs of the DSWD for Mindanao, which include the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Laban sa Kahirapan Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services-National Community Driven Development Program (Kalahi CIDD-NCDDP), PAYapa at MASaganang PamayaNAn (PAMANA), and Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP).</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Henry Oaminal (2nd District, Misamis Occidental) requested the official list of the beneficiaries based on the <i>Listahanan</i> of the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) of the DSWD. Neri promised to submit to the Committee the list requested by the Deputy Speaker. The <i>Listahanan</i> provides data that serves as basis in identifying the beneficiaries of the anti-poverty programs of the national government. (Source: www.dswd.gov.ph)</p> <p>DA regional directors reported on their respective plans and programs for Mindanao.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Oaminal chided the DA for its failure to consult the farmers on their actual needs before extending them any assistance. According to the Deputy Speaker, the DA had released farm equipment that the farmers did not even request. He emphasized that government money should have been spent on programs that will be beneficial to the farmers.</p> <p>Responding to the query of Deputy Speaker Oaminal, DA Regional Director Roy Abaya explained that the Department gives P5,000 financial assistance under the Rice Farmers Financial Assistance Program (RFFAP) to rice farmers from 33 rice producing provinces affected by the low buying price of palay as a result of the implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law.</p> <p>Rep. Amihilda Sangcopan (Party-List, AMIN) suggested to intensify the DA's information and communication drive with regard to its plans and programs in order to ensure clear dissemination of information to farmers. Rep. Sangcopan requested the DA to submit data on the number of farmers in Mindanao who are living below, middle, and above the poverty line.</p> <p>For his part, Rep. Dimaporo asked DA to inform the House Members of its plans and programs concerning their respective districts so that they would be able to ascertain whether such would be beneficial to their farmers.</p> <p>NIA Operations Department Manager Delsy Revellame apprised the Committee of NIA's budget and major irrigation projects in the Mindanao regions.</p> <p>Revellame disclosed that the FY 2020 irrigation budget of the NIA for Mindanao is pegged at P6.67 billion, which is a little lower than its FY 2019 budget of P6.99 billion.</p> <p>In response to the query of Rep. Sangcopan, Revellame explained that the funding for projects intended for 2019 has already been obligated and on their completion stages.</p> <p>BARMM Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD) representative Raissa Jajurie reported on MSSD's programs and targets for 2020 for Mindanao.</p>
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Continuation... Mindanao Affairs		<p>Jajurie lauded the increase in the budget intended for MSSD which rose to P2.03 billion from the former DSWD-ARMM budget of P146 million, as well as the expansion of regular plantilla positions, geographic coverage, and programs and activities.</p> <p>Jajurie highlighted the new programs and projects of MSSD-BARMM, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional beneficiaries for cash grants, livelihood support, and educational assistance; • Re-training of child development center workers; • Interventions to address child and early or forced marriages; and • Reactivation and training of members of local inter-agency councils involved in the fight against trafficking and violence against women.
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Overseas Workers Affairs	<p>Continuation of the discussion on the following issues affecting the rights and welfare of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current situation of OFWs deployed in countries affected by the outbreak of coronavirus 2019 or COVID-19 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), continued its discussion on issues affecting the rights and welfare of OFWs.</p> <p>Rep. Mendoza informed the body of a resolution that he filed directing the Committee on Labor and Employment and other relevant committees of the House of Representatives to conduct an inquiry into the effect of COVID-19 to employment and industries, and on the corresponding action plans of concerned government agencies to mitigate its effect on health and employment.</p> <p>Department of Health's (DOH) Chief Health Program Officer Joel Buenaventura said that the DOH is using three category codes in referring to patients who tested positive for COVID-19, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PN – foreign nationals who tested positive abroad but with history of travel in the Philippines; • PH - Filipinos or foreign nationals who tested positive in the Philippines; and • OF – Filipinos who tested positive overseas. <p>Buenaventura also disclosed that 95 OFWs have contracted the virus, 80 of whom were from the M/V Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Yokohama, Japan. Based on latest reports, 62 out of the 80 OFWs have already recovered, 39 of whom have been repatriated to the Philippines.</p> <p>Of the more than 500 Filipinos aboard the M/V Grand Princess cruise ship currently docked and quarantined in San Francisco, California, Buenaventura reported that six Filipinos have tested positive of COVID-19.</p> <p>Buenaventura also said that the first case of local transmission of the virus prompted the DOH to declare a "Code Red – Sub Level One" alert status. Elevation to Sub Level 2 will be done if community transmission of the virus will be sustained.</p> <p>With the signing of Proclamation No. 922 on March 8 by President Rodrigo Duterte, formally declaring a state of public health emergency throughout the Philippines, government agencies and local government units (LGUs) will be allowed to immediately utilize resources to implement urgent and critical measures to contain or prevent the spread of COVID-19. The proclamation</p>

<p>Continuation...</p> <p>Overseas Workers Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case of OFW Jeanelyn Villavende • Case of Jerson Enriquez and his companions who were deployed to Saudi Arabia without any work awaiting them in their workplace 	<p>would also implement mandatory reporting, intensify government response and measures, and enforce quarantine and disease control prevention measures, Buenaventura said.</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs' Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Sarah Lou Arriola informed the Committee that three major repatriations of OFWs have already been conducted in countries such as China, Macau, and Japan, and more will be repatriated from the M/V Diamond Princess in Japan.</p> <p>According to Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) Administrator Bernard Olalia, the POEA has also issued advisories mandating concerned government agencies to continuously get in touch with deployed OFWs, monitor their health condition, and advise them to maintain good hygiene to avoid being infected by the COVID-19.</p> <p>The DFA reported that the formal hearing on the case of Jeanelyn Villavende is scheduled on March 24 in Kuwait. Arriola said that the father of Villavende will attend the proceedings if the travel ban to Kuwait will be lifted. On the issue that the family of Villavende was offered "blood money," Arriola strongly denied the allegation.</p> <p>With regard to the lifting of the deployment ban of OFWs to Kuwait, Olalia said that this is due to the signing of an agreement between Kuwait and Philippine officials on the proposed harmonized Standard Employment Contract for Filipino household service workers (HSWs) deployed to Kuwait.</p> <p>Finally repatriated to the Philippines on March 4, Jenson Enriquez and his companions namely, Emerson Mendoza, Ernie Soguion and Ronaldo Zamora attended the meeting and narrated what they have gone through in Saudi Arabia. Aside from not having been given the jobs as promised, the group also experienced poor living conditions and were forced to clean and rehabilitate the living quarters assigned to them.</p> <p>Olalia said that five other OFWs remained in Saudi Arabia to pursue the lawsuits filed against their supposed employers.</p>
<p>Visayas Development</p>	<p>Discussion with concerned government agencies, particularly their regional offices in the Visayas Region, on their budget proposals for FY 2021</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vincent Franco "Duke" Frasco (5th District, Cebu), discussed with the regional directors in the Visayas Region their respective agencies' budget proposals for the region for FY 2021.</p> <p>Rep. Frasco said that the meeting was called to determine the FY 2021 budget proposed to be allocated for the Visayas Region, particularly Regions 6, 7, and 8, especially now that these regions are experiencing rapid development.</p> <p>The regional directors of the Departments of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Education (DepEd), Budget and Management (DBM), Tourism (DOT), and Agriculture (DA), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) briefed the Committee on their budget proposals and the challenges that they are encountering in pursuing their mandates.</p> <p>Rep. Manuel Sagarbarria (2nd District, Negros Oriental) noted that 80-90% of the program-activity-projects (PAPs) in the regions are identified and approved by the central office of the agency concerned.</p> <p>DPWH-7 Planning and Design Chief, Engr. Nonato Paylado, concurred with Rep. Sagarbarria saying that the proposed PAPs submitted by the regional offices to the central office are changed</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Visayas Development</p>		<p>without consulting the regional directors and that the final list of PAPs are transmitted by the central office straight to the DBM.</p> <p>Rep. Janette Garin (1st District, Iloilo), along with other House Members, pointed out that oftentimes, the PAPs presented during the congressional budget hearings are different from those reflected after the finalization of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) or upon implementation.</p> <p>DBM-7 Regional Director Imelda Laceras underscored the importance of continuous consultation between the regional and central offices in the process of budget preparation, and that the central office should guide its regional offices in setting priorities.</p> <p>The Members also maintained that they should be consulted during the budget preparation process because they know more about the needs of their constituents and the projects that need to be given priority in their respective districts.</p> <p>Other concerns raised were on the budget allocations for farm-to-market roads, scholarship grants, and other forms of educational assistance.</p>
<p>Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)</p>	<p>Discussion on the drafting of the anti-bulk cash smuggling law</p>	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), discussed with government agencies measures to further strengthen and expand the coverage of RA 9160 or the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001, to prevent the smuggling of bulk cash into the country.</p> <p>Representatives from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), Bureau of Customs (BOC), and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) gave their respective recommendations.</p> <p>The BOC proposed that the Customs Baggage Declaration Form and the Foreign Currency and Other Foreign Exchange-Denominated Bearer Monetary Instruments Declaration Form should be accomplished by all arriving travelers which will be submitted to the assigned Customs Officer at the BOC desk at the arrival area. All arriving passengers are required to declare all goods carried/brought, indicating the quantity and value.</p> <p>Other issues that were raised during the meeting were the following: the amount of money to bring in and out of the Philippines by the traveler; the lead agency that will implement the proposed law; and the timeframe for conducting verification procedure on the written declaration submitted by the traveler.</p>