



Committee Daily Bulletin

18th Congress
First Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 83
March 11, 2020

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	HB 6174	Rep. Cua	Further strengthening the Anti-Money Laundering Law, amending for the purpose RA 9160, otherwise known as the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001, as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, concluded its deliberations on HB 6174. The Secretariat was directed to come up with a substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report for consideration and approval in the Committee's next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Cua, author of HB 6174, underscored the need to strengthen the Anti-Money Laundering Law to comply with the requirements of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and avoid sanctions.</p> <p>The FATF is the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. It is an inter-governmental body that sets international standards to ensure a coordinated global response against organized crime, corruption and terrorism. It also works to stop funding for weapons of mass destruction (<i>Source: FATF website</i>).</p> <p>Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) recommended a more "generic" language for the bill's "Declaration of Policy" so as not to limit the basis of the policy to the United Nations' Security Council resolutions. He explained that the country has other international commitments related to the campaign against money laundering and terrorism.</p> <p>The Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) interposed no objection to the proposal of Rep. Gaité.</p> <p>Rep. Macnell Lusotan (Party-List, MARINO) suggested the exemption of real estate developers from the list of covered persons or institutions under Sec. 2 of the bill, which compel real estate brokers and developers to report all single cash transactions in excess of P1 million to the AMLC. Rep. Lusotan expressed his concern that this requirement entails costs which might just be passed on to the buyers.</p> <p>AMLC Secretariat's Executive Director Mel Georgie Racela objected to the proposal of Rep. Lusotan saying that the cost of this requirement is very minimal as it can be done online.</p> <p>Rep. Cua assured the resource persons that in the course of deliberating the provisions of the</p>

Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				bill, the Committee will make sure that the proposed law will serve the interest of the people.
Bases Conversion (Special Committee)	HB 63	Rep. Yap (V.)	Amending Section 15 of RA 7227, as amended, otherwise known as the Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992 (by amending the allocation of income from taxes within the Clark Special Economic Zone)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Francis Gerald Aguinaldo Abaya (1 st District, Cavite), directed the Secretariat to prepare the substitute bill to the four bills.
	HBs 138 & 4473	Reps. Roman and Abaya	Revitalizing the bases conversion and development, amending for the purpose RA 7227, as amended	
	HB 2876	Deputy Speaker Hernandez	Rationalizing the powers of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA), amending for the purpose RA 7227, as amended	
Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Public Accounts	HR 695	Rep. Defensor (M.)	Inquiry into the Philippine plan for energy sufficiency and sustainability in relation to the uncollected receivables of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Reps. "Kuya" Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado (1st District, Bulacan), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN), Chair of the Committee on Public Accounts, will deliberate further on HR 695 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Sy-Alvarado said that the inquiry is meant to gather information that would be helpful in amending certain provisions of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) of 2001 to plug the loopholes in the law. He also clarified that the inquiry does not intend to affect the determination of the cases filed in the courts by some power industry players against PSALM and vice versa regarding the outstanding balances due to PSALM.</p> <p>Rep. Sy-Alvarado mentioned that as a result of the first two meetings of the Joint Committee, industry players including Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), North Luzon Renewable Energy Corp., First Gen Corporation, and FDC Power and FDC Utilities, Inc. have committed to remit to the government an aggregate amount of about P23 billion as settlement with PSALM. The Joint Committee sees this as a good gesture from the industry players whose payments will be a big help to the government in funding various programs.</p> <p>PSALM has overdue receivables amounting to about P95.42 billion from the independent power producers (IPPs), electricity distribution companies, and electric cooperatives. Some of these receivables were contested and are pending for litigation in the courts.</p> <p>Rep. Defensor, who is also the author of HR 695, raised the issue of conflicting interpretations of the independent power producer administrator (IPPA) contract between the government, through PSALM, and South Premier Power Corporation (SPPC),</p>

Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Public Accounts				<p>which involved the administration of the Ilijan power plant. The ball of contention revolves around whether the computation of generation charges payable to PSALM should be based on the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) rate or the current market rate set by Meralco and approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) during the IPPA agreement signing.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "Lray" Villafuerte Jr. (2nd District, Camarines Sur) manifested that SPPC, through its mother company San Miguel Corporation, has expressed its intention to advance its monthly payments due to PSALM covering the period March 2020 until the IPPA contract ends in June 2022, which amounts to P22.6 billion. This amount does not cover the settlement of PSALM's receivables from generation charges imposed on SPPC which is still under litigation, he said.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Villafuerte asked whether or not SPPC has secured a certificate of compliance with the ERC. SPPC's Chief Financial Officer Paul Causon explained that the SPPC is not a player in the power generation sector, hence is not required to secure a certificate of compliance from the ERC.</p> <p>The Deputy Speaker asserted that the SPPC is a power generation company and is under the jurisdiction of the ERC. He added that contracts with generation companies without the required certificate of compliance may be cancelled or terminated by the ERC.</p> <p>Under RA 9136 or the EPIRA, any new generation company shall, before it operates, secure from the ERC a certificate of compliance pursuant to the standards set forth in the law.</p> <p>Members from both committees were divided in their views on the issue of the IPPA agreement with SPPC but sought to resolve the matter in the next meeting.</p>
Government Reorganization jt. w/ Science and Technology and Energy	HBs 652, 1031, 2785 & 4267	Reps. Abaya, Salceda, Rodriguez, and Deputy Speaker Romero	Providing for a comprehensive nuclear regulation, creating for the purpose the Philippine Nuclear Regulatory Commission and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas), Chair of the Committee on Government Reorganization, Rep. Erico Aristotle Aumentado (2nd District, Bohol), Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology, and Rep. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), Vice Chair of the Committee on Energy, agreed to consolidate the bills using HB 663 as the lead bill.</p> <p>Several authors manifested that a bill with a similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the 16th and 17th Congresses. They therefore sought the immediate approval of the proposed measure, invoking Section 48, Rule 10 of the House Rules.</p>
	HBs 663, 2535, 4694 & 6316	Reps. Salo, Aumentado, Lacson, and Olivarez	Providing for a comprehensive atomic regulatory framework, creating for the purpose the Philippine Atomic Regulatory Commission and appropriating funds therefor	
	HBs 2738 & 5005	Reps. Rodriguez and Sy-Alvarado	Creating the National Nuclear Radiation Safety Board and defining its scope, functions, and powers	

Continuation... Government Reorganization jt. w/ Science and Technology and Energy	HB 4558	Deputy Speaker Romero	Providing for a strategic and integrated chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) resiliency approach, to foster safety and security of the Filipino people, providing funds therefor	Section 48 states that measures identified as priority by the House and which were approved on Third Reading in the previous Congress "may be disposed of as matters already reported out upon the approval of the majority of the Members of the Committee present."
Health	HB 6159	Deputy Speaker Estrella	Establishing the Eastern Pangasinan Regional Medical and Trauma Center in the Municipality of Rosales, Pangasinan and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4 th District, Quezon), approved HB 6159 subject to style and amendment and the submission of the requirements set by the DOH.
	HB 6171	Rep. Yap (E.)	Re-nationalizing the Benguet General Hospital located in the Municipality of La Trinidad, Province of Benguet, placing it under the direct supervision and control of the Department of Health (DOH), increasing its bed capacity to 400 beds, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 6171 subject to style and amendment and the submission of the requirements set by the DOH.
Housing and Urban Development	HBs 157, 2417, 3035 & 4280	Reps. Belmonte, Castelo, Nieto, and Deputy Speaker Pimentel	Establishing a rental subsidy program for informal settler families (ISFs) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Strike Revilla (2nd District, Cavite), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to refine the bills.</p> <p>Navotas City Rep. John Reynald Tiangco was designated as chair of the TWG.</p> <p>Reps. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City) and Precious Hipolito Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), respective authors of HBs 157 and 2417, presented the merits of their bills.</p> <p>According to Rep. Belmonte, the rental housing subsidy program is a simple and modern solution to the increasing number of ISFs in the country. The assistance is in the form of a rent subsidy to be given to relocatees, particularly those living in danger areas and those affected by the government's infrastructure programs, for a period of time or until permanent shelters are made available.</p> <p>Department of Transportation Undersecretary for Railways Timothy John Batan informed the body that the Department's North-South Commuter Railway project (Clark-Calamba Railway), which is co-financed by the Asian Development Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, is already implementing a rental subsidy scheme for the affected ISFs.</p> <p>The National Housing Authority and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority suggested that the bill should clearly indicate that it is the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) which shall implement the law. The DHSUD is the primary national agency mandated to formulate policies and coordinate the housing programs of the government.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bills were the following: DHSUD, Social Housing Finance</p>

Continuation... Housing and Urban Development				Corporation, Home Development Mutual Fund or Pag-IBIG Fund, Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP), and the Pantawid UPA Organization. The DHSUD and PCUP were requested to submit data and documents relative to the rental subsidy program.
Metro Manila Development	Substitute Resolution to HRs 563 & 597 and Privilege Speech 31	Reps. Castelo and Fernando	Calling on the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to revive and strictly implement the organized bus route (OBR) system in Metro Manila to at least its operational status in 2009	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (1 st District, Manila), adopted the substitute resolution and thereafter approved the corresponding Committee Report.
Reforestation (Special Committee)	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, chaired by Apayao Rep. Elias Bulut Jr., approved the Committee Report on 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 Committee Report on the substitute bill.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 528, 685, 1356 & 3855	Reps. Paduano, Aglipay, Castelo, and Agabas	Requiring the planting of trees for any construction of residential, commercial, industrial, and public buildings	The Committee approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report subject to style.
	HBs 3977 & 3979	Rep. Dimaporo (M.K.)	Establishing arboretums in the Municipalities of Kolambugan and Tagoloan, Province of Lanao del Norte, to be known as the Kolambugan Arboretum and Mighty Cave Park Arboretum, respectively, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Committee Reports on the two bills.
	HB 4434	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Amending certain provisions of RA 10176 or the Arbor Day Act of 2012 by authorizing the local government units the responsibilities for celebrating the day for tree planting as an annual event	The Committee approved HB 4434 and the corresponding Committee Report subject to style.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Subcommittee on Labor Standards (Labor and Employment)	Substitute Bill to HBs 81, 181, 1019, 1766, 4875, 5596, 6157 & 6549	Rep. Ong, Deputy Speaker Romero, Rep. Castelo, Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Rodriguez,	Instituting policies for the protection and promotion of the welfare of workers in the audio-visual industry	The Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), approved the Substitute Bill to the eight bills subject to style. Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HB 6549, presented the importance of the bill to the workers in the

Continuation... Subcommittee on Labor Standards (Labor and Employment)		Nieto, De Venecia, and Gaite		<p>audio-visual industry, as it will assure them of decent employment and income, and protection from abuse, harassment, hazardous work conditions, and economic exploitation.</p> <p>The Subcommittee agreed, among others, on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The remuneration of the worker will be specified in the employment contract; • The normal work hours shall be 8 hours a day which can be extended to 14 hours in any 24-hour period or should not be more than 60 hours a week; • There should be medical personnel and ambulance crew on standby at the filming or shooting location; and • An audio-visual entertainment industry tripartite council should be established.
---	--	------------------------------	--	---

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Cooperatives Development (Technical Working Group)	HR 524	Rep. Geron	Inquiry into the provisions and implementation of the Joint Administrative Order No. 1-2019 (JAO 1-2019) and its implication to the memorandum circulars issued by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the memoranda issued by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) to cooperatives for its compliance with RA 9520, otherwise known as the Cooperative Code of 2008	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), terminated its inquiry relative to the issues raised in HR 524. The recommendations of the TWG will be reported to the mother Committee in its next meeting.</p> <p>Among the recommendations made by the TWG to resolve issues pertaining to JAO 1-2019 were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The failure of a registered cooperative to comply with reportorial requirements, on first offense, will only warrant a warning notice to comply, as opposed to the existing penalty of revocation of the Certificate of Tax Exemption (CTE) and prohibition to avail of tax exemption for a period of one year from the date of revocation, based on the JAO; and • The deadline of submission of the Annual Tax Incentives Report by all registered cooperatives will be changed from April 30, as required under JAO 1-2019, to May 15, in order to provide cooperatives with ample time to comply. <p>Before the meeting adjourned, Rep. Canama gave a report on the status of measures that were referred to the Committee for the 18th Congress. He assured the body that the Committee will exert efforts that these legislative measures will be pursued for the benefit of cooperatives.</p>

Disaster Management (Technical Working Group)	Consolidated Bill on HBs 3418, 3543 & 3922	Rep. Adiong, Deputy Speaker Hataman, and Rep. Balindong	Providing for monetary compensation for the loss or destruction of residential and commercial properties during the Marawi siege in the City of Marawi, Province of Lanao del Sur, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte), concluded its deliberation on the consolidated bill and agreed to present it to the mother Committee for consideration and approval in its next meeting.</p> <p>Among the points agreed upon that will be incorporated in the consolidated bill were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marawi Compensation Board (MCB) will be attached to the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development; • A resident auditor will be assigned by the Commission on Audit (COA) to examine, settle and audit the expenses of the MCB; • The proposed computation of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for the replacement cost (estimated value of the damaged properties) will be adopted; and • A monetary assistance will be granted to each affected family for the rehabilitation or reconstruction of their damaged property. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council-Office of Civil Defense (NDRRMC-OCD) proposed that the money assistance be in the amount of P300,000. <p>Under the present set-up, the National Housing Authority (NHA) constructs temporary shelters for families with damaged houses who are able to return to their original place of residence. On the other hand, permanent shelters are constructed for families with damaged houses or properties who are unable or prevented to return to their areas for safety reasons, especially if their areas are considered as danger zones.</p> <p>Present during the meeting were representatives from the Task Force Bangon Marawi, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Justice, DPWH, COA, NDRRMC-OCD, and NHA.</p>
People's Participation (Technical Working Group)	HB 1959	Rep. Cabochan	Amending Section 2 of RA 1827, or the law regulating the lobbying in the Congress of the Philippines and in the Commission on Appointments, so as to impose higher penalties for those engaged in unfair and unethical lobbying practices	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Manuel Cabochan III (Party-List, MAGDALO), will deliberate further on HB 1959 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Representatives from the Commission on Appointments (CA), PUBLICUS Asia, Inc., and Affiliated Network for Social Accountability in East Asia and the Pacific lauded the intention of the bill but expressed their reservations particularly on how it can be operationalized. They were of the opinion that aside from the difficulty of distinguishing lobbying from promoting advocacies, there are also non-</p>

Continuation... People's Participation (Technical Working Group)				<p>government organizations that represent the marginalized and rely largely on help from public officials.</p> <p>Under the proposed law, any person who shall employ corrupt means to influence legislation and confirmation of appointment will be punished by imprisonment of not more than six years and by a fine not exceeding P1 million. And if such person is holding any elective or appointive position, he or she shall be subject to the penalty of perpetual disqualification from holding any public office. RA 1827 only provides a punishment of two years imprisonment or a fine of P5,000.</p> <p>PUBLiCUS Asia, Inc. Founder and CEO Maria Lourdes Tiquia also suggested that lobbyists in the Judiciary and in the local government units be covered by the bill. Her suggestion was supported by CA Head Executive Assistant Casiano Flores. (PUBLiCUS Asia, Inc. is a registered lobbying and campaign management firm in the country.)</p> <p>Nina Perez, representing the Office of San Jose del Monte City Rep. Florida "Rida" Robes, suggested that duly licensed lobbyists should submit to Congress and CA a declaration stating the legislations that they support and oppose as well as the justification for their stand. She also suggested that former high-ranking government officials should be banned from engaging in lobbying activities within one year from the date their term expired or they vacated the office.</p>
--	--	--	--	--

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)	Discussion on the revenue collection performance of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR)	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), concluded its discussion on the revenue collection performance of PAGCOR.</p> <p>Among the recommendations made by the TWG relative to enhancing PAGCOR's financial performance were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and improve the procurement process of PAGCOR; • Increase the number of PAGCOR-owned operated casinos; • Establish a uniform sharing of 47.5% of the gross gaming revenue (GGR) of electronic games operating outside casinos; • Ensure the payment of taxes of all licensed Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGO) and impose a graduated licensing fee of 6% in Metro Manila and 3% in non-Metro Manila areas; • Update licensing requirements imposed by PAGCOR for service provider applicants in coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and other concerned government agencies; • Subject the income payments of POGO workers to expanded withholding taxes; and • Penalize POGOs which illegally hire foreign workers.

Continuation... Ways and Means (Technical Working Group)		Rep. Garin requested PAGCOR to submit its legislative proposals with regard to the improvement of its procurement process and the exercise of fiscal and administrative autonomy which will require amending the PAGCOR Charter.
---	--	--

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Health	Briefing by the Department of Health (DOH) on the status of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country and the current measures being undertaken in containing the virus	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), listened to the briefing of the DOH on the status of COVID-19 in the country and the current measures being undertaken in containing the virus.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Tan said that the briefing was conducted to allow DOH as well as other concerned government agencies to inform the House Members regarding the latest developments on COVID-19 and to give the health authorities an opportunity to clarify matters regarding the state of public health emergency in the country.</p> <p>DOH Secretary Francisco Duque III reported that to date, there are a total of 33 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and out of these, 31 cases have mild to moderate symptoms, while two are in critical state.</p> <p>Duque said that the DOH raised the COVID-19 Alert System to Code Red after the country recorded its first local transmission of the virus and in view of the exponential increase in the number of cases on a daily basis.</p> <p>With Code Red, the DOH has recommended to the Office of the President the declaration of a State of Public Health Emergency which will facilitate mobilization of resources, ease processes, including procurement of critical logistics and supplies, and intensify reporting. Under this alert level, the membership of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF-EID) is expanded to include other instrumentalities of the government and public awareness efforts are intensified to minimize fear and reduce anxiety and unrest among citizens.</p> <p>To control the fast transmission of the virus, Duque said the DOH proposes more stringent social distancing measures such as the temporary suspension of classes and mass gatherings.</p> <p>Duque said that the World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized that contact tracing and surveillance, isolation and medical management, and extreme social distancing are comprehensive set of efforts to successfully prevent the transmission of the virus nationwide.</p> <p>Likewise, Duque said that heightened diagnostic capacity is the backbone of the national response to COVID-19 outbreak. He reported that the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) together with the University of the Philippines-National Institute of Health (UP-NIH) and five other subnational laboratories have projected to perform 40,000 COVID-19 tests in the next few months. Duque informed the Committee that the use of the Rapid Diagnostic Test for COVID-19 developed by UP-NIH had just been issued clearance by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). However, the testing kit will be used initially for field research pending the issuance of WHO's Emergency Use Listing certification.</p> <p>Duque said that the DOH expanded its contact tracing activities by increasing the number of deployed surveillance teams to handle new COVID-19 cases. The Department also requested additional surveillance funding of P60 million, he added.</p>

<p>Continuation... Health</p>	<p>For clinical management of confirmed COVID-19 patients and persons under investigation (PUIs), Duque said that hospitals have been alerted to ensure that they have enough supplies, equipment, and medicines not only for the patients but also for their respective medical teams and hospital personnel. Moreover, guidelines on handling patients were created and updated for dissemination, and medical personnel and laboratory technicians were capacitated in anticipation of a surge of COVID-19 cases in health facilities in the country.</p> <p>Duque said that the DOH requested for fund augmentation amounting to P2.9 billion which will be used in undertaking measures to respond to COVID-19 in the next three to four months. The funds will be sourced from the revenues of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR). Duque asked Congress to act on the proposed supplemental budget for COVID-19 response as soon as it resumes session in May should circumstances still warrant an additional funding for this purpose.</p> <p>Reps. Tan and Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) urged the DOH to fast-track the promulgation and issuance of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 11332 or the "Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act." Duque replied that the IRR is already being reviewed by DOH's legal department.</p> <p>Duque mentioned that the DOH urges the people to practice social distancing. He said that the guidelines on social distancing are undergoing refinements and will soon be disseminated to the local government units down to the barangay level for implementation. However, Duque admitted that social distancing will be difficult to implement in urban areas where population density is higher and where people use rail transports that are usually crowded.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Philippine Health Insurance Corporation's (PhilHealth) Medical Specialist Marvin Galvez said that PhilHealth has increased the medical case rates for COVID-19 patients and PUIs to P14,000.</p> <p>Medical case rate is the amount that PhilHealth will reimburse for the hospital expenses related to a specific illness.</p> <p>Rep. Michael Defensor (Party-List, ANAKALUSUGAN) suggested not to apply the medical case rates to patients with COVID-19 and that PhilHealth should pay the full amount of the hospital expenses that will be incurred during the patients' confinement. Some of the Members also requested that the testing and management of COVID-19 infected patients should be free of charge, to be shouldered by PhilHealth.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon said that Duque should lead the government's inter-agency task force in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure coordinated efforts and effective management of this health crisis.</p> <p>On the availability of surgical and protective masks, Duque said there are enough funds for the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPEs) but the supply is limited due to heavy demand considering that more than 100 countries have recorded COVID-19 cases. Nevertheless, DOH Undersecretary Carolina Vidal Taiño said the DOH currently has 59,000 pieces of N-95 masks in stock for public health workers nationwide, which should be enough for a month's supply. She said the Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC) committed to provide the DOH at least 30,000 pieces of masks every week.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Tan, Philippine Hospital Association President Jaime Almora lamented that private hospitals seriously lack PPEs and are resorting to improvised protective masks which will not adequately protect both patients and medical personnel. Duque said the DOH is</p>
-----------------------------------	--

Continuation... Health		willing to give protective masks to private hospitals in need, but government health workers would still be the top priority.
Metro Manila Development	Briefing by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) on the first Metro Manila Summer Film Festival	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Luis Lopez (1st District, Manila), listened to the briefing conducted by MMDA General Manager Jose Arturo Garcia Jr. on the holding of the first Metro Manila Summer Film Festival.</p> <p>Garcia said that the 2020 Metro Manila Summer Film Festival is a pilot implementation of the resolution of the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) Executive Committee to hold two film festivals each year – during Christmas season and the other during summer.</p> <p>The summer film festival, which has eight film entries, is supposed to be held from April 11-21 starting with the Parade of Stars on April 4. However, in the light of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, the event will be postponed upon the advice of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) led by the Department of Health (DOH). Garcia said that an alternative date is yet to be determined.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Vilma Santos-Recto (6th District, Batangas) and Rep. Strike Revilla (2nd District, Cavite) each sent a letter to the Committee signifying their support for the conduct of the first Metro Manila Summer Film Festival. The representatives from the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board and the Metro Manila local government units (LGUs) also gave their support for the event.</p> <p>Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City) proposed that a senior member of the Committee be included as a member of the MMFF's Executive Committee.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Dan Fernandez (1st District, Laguna) recommended that the head and officers of the city and municipal leagues of governors and mayors be invited to discuss with them the proposal to waive the amusement tax imposed on MMFF entries.</p> <p>Regal Films Chief Executive Officer Marie Roselle Monteverde and Heavens Best Entertainment President Harlene Charmaine Bautista said that the taxes imposed on the industry discourage movie producers from creating more movies.</p> <p>Reps. Lopez and Joy Myra Tambunting (2nd District, Parañaque City) requested the film producers present to submit relevant documents to help the Committee in drafting a bill that will address the Philippine film industry's concerns.</p>
	Discussion with government agencies concerns regarding school policies and the quality of education in Metro Manila	<p>The Committee discussed with education and labor agencies the holding of graduation ceremonies during this time, the students' advancement to higher levels, and the graduates' employment prospects in Metro Manila.</p> <p>On graduation and moving up ceremonies, Department of Education (DepEd) National Capital Region Regional Director Malcolm Garma said that public schools may hold their graduation ceremony any day from April 13-17. Private schools, on the other hand, may choose other dates since some schools may still have classes during this period. However, in view of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, graduation and moving up ceremonies are cancelled upon the advice of the IATF-EID.</p> <p>Rep. Edgar Erice (2nd District, Caloocan City) requested DepEd to look into the practice of schools of holding moving-up ceremonies for Grade 10 students. He said that in other countries, graduation ceremonies are held only at the end of senior high school or Grade 12. Holding</p>

<p>Continuation... Metro Manila Development</p>		<p>graduation rites after finishing Grade 10 and again after finishing Grade 12 entails additional costs for students and their parents, he added.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) NCR Deputy Regional Director Dennis Rebuena and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) legal counsel Kaye Martinez expressed no objection to the proposal to use <i>Sablay</i> instead of toga during graduation rites. Rebuena said that using <i>Sablay</i> conforms to CHED's requirement for higher education institutions to hold simple graduation or commencement exercises.</p> <p>The <i>Sablay</i>, which is largely associated with the graduating students of the University of the Philippines (UP), is typically a handwoven sash with rich ties to indigenous groups across the country, draped on one's shoulder during formal rites.</p> <p>Regarding the monitoring of the students' advancement and performance in higher education, CHED-Office of Planning, Research and Knowledge Management Director Nelson Cainghog said that for the coming school year, the CHED and TESDA will adopt the Learner Reference Numbers (LRNs) issued by DepEd to basic education students to facilitate the tracking of learner movement and performance from basic to technical-vocation and higher education. This is in consonance with the Board Resolution of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) which enjoins the three education agencies to adopt an LRN scheme which will be used to track the movement and determine the volume of learners who stopped at secondary education, continue to higher education, or take technical-vocational courses.</p> <p>The DepEd's LRN is a permanent 12-digit number which a learner keeps while completing the basic education program, regardless of transfer to another school whether public or private.</p> <p>On the graduates' employability, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)-NCR Senior Labor and Employment Officer Ryan Roberto delos Reyes reported that youth employment rate this year was only 13.6% of the labor workforce based on the PSA survey. To improve this figure, DOLE continues to implement youth bridging programs to allow the students to identify which career should they pursue after graduation from college or technical-vocational courses.</p>
---	--	---

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>Women and Gender Equality</p>	<p>Gender-Responsive Legislation Workshop for Legislators</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1st District, Bukidnon), in partnership with the Asia Foundation, conducted a workshop on "Gender-responsive Legislation" on March 11 at the South Wing Annex Building, House of Representatives.</p> <p>Rep. Acosta Alba expressed her gratitude to the participants for attending the workshop. Other legislators who attended were Reps. Ma. Lourdes Arroyo (5th District, Negros Occidental), Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), and Ruth Mariano-Hernandez (2nd District, Laguna).</p> <p>One of the speakers, Nathalie Africa-Verceles, Director of the Center for Women's and Gender Studies of the University of the Philippines (UP), discussed the topic "Understanding Gender Issues."</p> <p>According to Africa-Verceles, women are still experiencing discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, oppression and subordination (DEMOS) every single day, and violence against women (VAW) is the most egregious manifestation of women's subordinate position in society. She</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> Women and Gender Equality</p>		<p>emphasized that women should have the freedom to do or to be, and live a life of value; should have control over their bodies and lives; and should have informed and enabled choice or the freedom to self-actualize.</p> <p>Africa-Verceles also discussed gender and development (GAD) analysis, which studies the division of labor in a household between a man and a woman characterized by the following triple roles: productive (paid work); reproductive (child bearing and rearing, cooking, cleaning, looking after the sick and aged); and community management (undertaken for the benefit of their communities). In traditional setting, women assuming reproductive and community management roles are done on a voluntary, unpaid basis, while men assuming leadership roles are usually paid.</p> <p>Another GAD analysis looks into the fulfillment of both the practical needs (water, food, clothing, housing, sanitation, health care, income and similar needs) and strategic needs of women. The strategic needs challenge or change existing roles and responsibilities which include equal pay for work of equal value; equal participation in decision-making; power to make independent decisions; and women's control over their bodies.</p> <p>Another speaker, UP College of Law Professor Evelyn Battad, discussed the gains from implementing existing laws that promote gender equality in the country. At the same time, Battad cited the gaps and challenges in the implementation of certain laws, particularly the Labor Code. She stated that the Labor Code has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No adequate protection to ensure equal work opportunities regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression; • No protective measures against types of work that may be harmful to pregnant and nursing women; • No mandatory provision on nursery or day care at the workplace; and • No protection for sexual violence in the workplace. <p>To ensure the gender responsiveness of the country's laws, Battad recommended the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all major laws and amend or repeal discriminatory provisions/laws; • Set up a monitoring body with the tasks of reviewing and studying pending bills to ensure that these bills are gender-fair and gender responsive; • Set up a mechanism to monitor the implementation of gender-responsive laws; • Undertake an in-depth study on various discriminatory practices at home, workplace, and school and identify corrective measures to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men; and • Conduct sustained and systematic educational campaign on gender sensitivity and gender-awareness in schools and workplaces to effect a social transformation.
---	--	---