



18th Congress
First Regular Session

Committee Daily Bulletin

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. I No. 78
March 3, 2020

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
West Philippine Sea (Special Committee)	Organizational meeting and adoption of the Committee's Rules of Procedure	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Manuel Sagarbarria (2nd District, Negros Oriental), held its organizational meeting during which the Committee's Rules of Procedure for the 18th Congress was adopted.</p> <p>Under the Rules of the House, the Committee composed of 20 members, has general jurisdiction over "all matters directly and principally relating to West Philippine Sea issues, including territorial and boundary disputes, national and regional peace and security issues, joint cooperation arrangements and maritime and environmental concerns."</p>

PRE-CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Pre-Conference Committee (Staff Level)	HB 6312 & SB 1086	Reps. Yap (V.) and Sen. Angara	Establishing the National Academy of Sports (NAS) System and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Pre-Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rommel Reyes, Committee Secretary of the House Committee on Basic Education and Culture, and Atty. Kathryn Cadiente, chief of staff of Senator Win Gatchalian, Chair of the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, harmonized HB 6312 and SB 1086. The harmonized version will be presented to the Conference Committee on March 9.</p> <p>The proposed national high school for sports, which will be established at the New Clark City in Capas, Tarlac, is mandated to implement a secondary education program, integrated with a special curriculum on sports, to develop the athletic skills of students with potential in sports in preparation for a sports-related career.</p> <p>The Pre-Conference Committee agreed, among others, on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment of the proposed school to the Department of Education (DepEd);• Adoption of the provision in SB 1086 on the composition of the Board of Trustees and its powers and functions; and• Inclusion of a provision allowing the hiring of foreign coaches, trainers and consultants.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	Consolidated Bill on HBs 6143, 5976 & 6299	Reps. Cua, Salceda, and Deputy Speaker Hernandez	Providing for the protection of financial consumers	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, approved the Consolidated Bill on HBs 6143, 5976 and 6299 subject to style and fine-tuning. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Cua said that HBs 5976 and 6299, authored by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay) and Deputy Speaker Ferdinand Hernandez (2nd District, South Cotabato), respectively, were received by the Committee after its deliberations on HB 6143. Considering that HBs 5976 and 6299 contain provisions similar to HB 6143, the Committee agreed to consolidate these bills.</p> <p>On the creation of several bodies to strengthen the regulatory framework for consumer financial protection, as proposed in HB 5976, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Deputy Director Charina de Vera-Yap said that these are not necessary. She explained that the draft Substitute Bill to HB 6143 that was previously prepared already strengthens and expands the powers and functions of financial regulators such as the BSP, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and the Insurance Commission (IC).</p> <p>Other resource persons present were from SEC, IC, Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Bankers Association of the Philippines, Chamber of Thrift Banks, Philippine Investment Fund Association, Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association, Philippine Association of HMO Companies, Association of HMO of the Philippines, Philippine Chamber of Mutual Benefit Associations, Laban Konsyumer Inc., and other stakeholders.</p>
Climate Change (Special Committee)	HB 3180	Rep. Tolentino	Commissioning a research on climate change drinking water adaptation	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Chatto (1st District, Bohol), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to deliberate further on HB 3180.</p> <p>Rep. Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino (8th District, Cavite), author of HB 3180, was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>Rep. Chatto acknowledged the need to come up with policies that would mitigate the effects of climate change particularly in ensuring sufficient and good quality water supply for the population. He said that global climate change would fundamentally alter the quality and quantity of the country's water resources.</p> <p>Environmental Management Bureau's (EMB) Climate Change Division Chief Albert Magalang expressed his Bureau's support for the bill. Apart from conducting specific and applied research on climate change adaptation for drinking water, he also cited the need to actively protect and ensure</p>

Continuation... Climate Change (Special Committee)				<p>the sustainability of existing ecosystems in the county as these are the primary sources of water.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Chatto if the EMB, which is under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), has enough budget to undertake the proposed research work, Magalang replied that the Department will submit a position paper on the matter.</p> <p>Expressing her support for the bill, Climate Change Commission (CCC) Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera also recommended that the research should focus on the following: the impacts of extreme weather events on natural reservoirs; identification of the most vulnerable river basins and communities; in-depth analysis of data on rainfall; and potential direction for cloud seeding and other related activities.</p> <p>Francis de la Cruz, convenor of Aksyon Klima Pilipinas also favors the bill as he suggested that the study cover other threats or hazards to water resources to come up with better and comprehensive protection measures.</p> <p>Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) Legislative Liaison Specialist Mark Joseph Tano said that the Department is still in the process of conducting a study on potable water which is a new research area for the Department.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
Ecology jt. w/ Energy	HBs 3174, 3423 & 5706	Reps. Tolentino, Vargas, and Olivarez	Promoting and allowing the use of waste to energy technology as an alternative source of renewable energy	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Glona Labadlabad (2nd District, Zamboanga del Norte), Chair of the Committee on Ecology, and Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Jay Velasco, Chair of the Committee on Energy, held a meeting to discuss HBs 3174, 3423, and 5706 which were jointly referred to the two Committees. The joint body also takes into account the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HBs 618, 933, 1938, 4419, and 5401 which was approved by the Committee on Ecology on November 23, 2019. Both sets of bills have similar subject matter, the use of waste-to-energy technology.</p> <p>After due deliberations, the Joint Committee eventually agreed to consolidate HBs 3174, 3423, and 5706 with the bills covered by the Committee Report previously approved by the Committee on Ecology, and to adopt this report as their Joint Committee Report, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Carlito Marquez (1st District, Aklan), author of HB 618, informed the body that a similar bill was approved on Third Reading by the House of Representatives during the 17th Congress.</p> <p>The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Health (DOH), and the Asia Pacific Renewable Energy Solutions expressed</p>
	Substitute Bill to HBs 618, 933, 1938, 4419 & 5401	Reps. Marquez, Cabochan, Pineda, Suarez (D.), and Limkaichong	Regulating the use of treatment technology for municipal and hazardous wastes, repealing for the purpose Section 20 of RA 8749, entitled "The Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999"	

Continuation... Ecology jt. w/ Energy				<p>their support for the bills as long as they conform to RA 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Green Convergence Philippines and No Burn Pilipinas, groups advocating a healthy environment, expressed their objection to the bills.</p>
Economic Affairs	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	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), directed the Secretariat to prepare a substitute bill incorporating therein the amendments agreed upon by the Committee Members.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Garin, author of HB 6162, highlighted the importance of the insurance business in the economic growth of the country. According to Rep. Garin, in converting the Insurance Commission (IC) into a collegial body, a majority vote is required to decide on policies and guidelines, thereby bringing stability in IC's decisions and actions. Under RA 10607, the administrative and adjudicatory powers only reside in the Insurance Commissioner.</p> <p>Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) representative, Atty. Jocelyn Angeles, expressed reservations on the proposed law and suggested instead that the IC be converted into a department or unit under the direct supervision of the BSP. Angeles also suggested that the supervision of health maintenance organizations (HMOs), which are currently under the jurisdiction of the IC, be transferred to the Department of Health.</p> <p>The Committee agreed on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert the IC into a collegial body under the direct supervision of the Department of Finance (DOF); • Allow the Commissioners to serve in staggered terms of office without reappointment; and • Require the attendance of at least three Commissioners to constitute a quorum.
	HB 5906	Rep. Quimbo	Amending certain provisions of RA 10667, or the law providing for a national competition policy prohibiting anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position and anti-competitive mergers and acquisitions, establishing the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) and appropriating funds therefor (by enhancing the PCC's ability to enforce its mandate and update its system and standards for remuneration, as well as by shifting to a voluntary merger review regime, among others)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to further discuss the two bills.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) was designated as head of the TWG.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City), author of HB 5906, said that her bill seeks to amend the Philippine Competitions Act to enhance the PCC's ability to pursue its mandate particularly in investigating cartels, bid rigging, market foreclosure, and other anti-competitive conduct, as well as in imposing fines and penalties. The bill also seeks to allow the PCC to focus its resources towards competition enforcement and proposes a shift to a voluntary merger review regime.</p> <p>PCC Chair Arsenio Balisacan expressed his support for the bills and recommended the following steps to ensure a competitive</p>
	HB 6243	Rep. Garin (S.)	Strengthening the powers of the PCC and legislating the national competition policy, amending for the purpose RA 10667	

Continuation... Economic Affairs				<p>environment in the country, to wit: streamline penalties for violations of competition policies to improve deterrence; enhance capability to detect anti-competitive conduct; assess competition-restrictive laws and policies, and improve the PCC's organizational structure.</p> <p>Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) representative, Atty. Niño Martin Cruz, expressed his reservations on the proposal to shift to a voluntary merger review, or voluntary notification, wherein the parties are not prevented from closing a merger deal ahead of a merger clearance.</p> <p>Cruz said that the existing compulsory review regime, or compulsory notification, wherein the companies need to secure approval from concerned agencies prior to closing a merger deal, is more appropriate to the ICT industry because it has very limited players.</p> <p>Likewise, Balisacan pointed out that at present, very few countries operate under a voluntary regime. He added that Southeast Asian countries are moving towards compulsory notification because of their experience in the last four decades. He expressed preference for compulsory notification for the reason that it is extremely difficult, both politically and administratively, to unravel a transaction that has already been consummated.</p> <p>The Secretariat was instructed to invite representatives from the Bureau of Investments (BOI), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), other concerned regulatory agencies, and chambers of commerce to take part in the TWG discussions.</p>
Foreign Affairs	Substitute Bill to HBs 340, 1371, 4288, 5316, 5729 & 5968	Reps. Romualdo, Go, (E.C.), Hofer, Eriguel, Nieto, and Datol	Providing for a new passport law, repealing for the purpose RA 8239, otherwise known as the Philippine Passport Act of 1996	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ann Hofer (2nd District, Zamboanga Sibugay), approved the substitute bill to the six bills subject to style and amendments and thereafter approved the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Hofer, author of HB 4288, underscored the importance of enacting a new passport law so that the Philippine passport will conform to international standards. She mentioned that a bill with similar subject matter was approved on Third Reading during the previous Congress.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco Datol Jr. (Party-List, Senior Citizens), author of HB 5968, said that his bill seeks to grant senior citizens a passport with lifetime validity.</p> <p>Commenting on the bill of Rep. Datol, Department of Foreign Affairs-Office of Consular Affairs Assistant Secretary Neil Frank Ferrer explained that the validity period of a passport is important in ascertaining whether the holder is allowed to travel or not. There is also a need to upgrade the security features of passports after a certain period of time as required by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Ferrer added. Nevertheless, Ferrer said that the matter will be raised to the ICAO for its consideration.</p>

Continuation... Foreign Affairs				<p>If the problem is about the difficulty of senior citizens in personally applying for or renewing their passports, Ferrer suggested that special arrangements may be made so they may no longer personally appear before the DFA's consular offices or passport processing offices. The DFA may also send a special mobile team to assist ailing senior citizens in securing a passport so they can travel abroad for medical treatment.</p> <p>In response to the query raised by Members of the Committee regarding the establishment of passport processing centers all over the country, Ferrer said it can be done for as long as adequate budget is allocated to this project.</p>
Justice	Substitute Bill to HBs 3409, 5403, 5528, 5654, 5686, 5691 & 5736	Rep. Biazon, Deputy Speakers Pimentel, Villafuerte, Garcia (P.) and Hernandez, Rep. Rodriguez, and Deputy Speaker Oaminal	Philippine Judiciary Marshals Service Act	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3 rd District, Leyte), approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 4945, 5018, 5128, 5139 & 5271	Reps. Salceda, Rodriguez, Chatto, Belmonte, and Defensor	Confirmation of imperfect titles under PD 1529 or the Property Registration Decree and Commonwealth Act 141 or the Public Land Act	The Committee approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 5527, 5584 & 5867	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Leachon, and Nograles (J.J.)	Further expanding the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Trial Courts (MeTC), Municipal Trial Courts in Cities (MTCC), Municipal Trial Courts (MTC), and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts (MCTC), amending for the purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980, as amended	The Committee approved the substitute bill and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HBs 5006 & 5063	Reps. Aragonese and Paduano	Granting Filipino citizenship to Stanley Lee and Chen Tian Man, respectively	The Committee approved HBs 5006 and 5063 and their corresponding Committee Reports.
	HBs 2877 & 3075	Majority Leader Romualdez and Rep. Vergara	Granting Filipino citizenship to Patrick Francois Renucci and Joseph Sigelman, respectively	The Committee approved HBs 2877 and 3075.
	HBs 4496 & 6369	Reps. Fortun and Rodriguez	Strengthening the legal staff of the Department of Justice (DOJ), renaming it as the Office of the Chief State Counsel, redefining, expanding, rationalizing and further professionalizing its organization, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HBs 4496 and 6369 subject to style.</p> <p>Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), author of HB 4496, volunteered to draft the substitute bill to the two bills.</p>
Poverty Alleviation	HB 184	Deputy Speaker Romero	Mandating the national government to increase the grant under the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) Program to P500 per person per	The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair, Rep. Domingo Rivera (Party-List, CIBAC), will deliberate further on the three bills in its next meeting.

Continuation... Poverty Alleviation			month to benefit 22 million poor Filipinos	<p>Deputy Speaker Michael Romero, PhD. (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), author of HBs 184, 3516 and 3517, cited the effectiveness of the UCT Program in alleviating poverty and recommended its continuous implementation with additional benefits.</p> <p>Resource persons from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and other stakeholders were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills within the week.</p> <p>Later on, Rep. Rivera requested fellow Vice Chair, Rep. Juliet Marie Ferrer (4th District, Negros Occidental), to take over as presiding officer because he had to attend another committee meeting where his other bills are being deliberated on.</p>
	HB 3516	Deputy Speaker Romero	Creating the monthly rice subsidy program for the 12 million extreme poverty stricken Filipinos	
	HB 3517	Deputy Speaker Romero	Creating a mandatory cash transfer program for the 12 million extreme poverty stricken Filipinos	
	HB 6060	Rep. De Jesus	Expanding the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to reconcile the recommendations of the resource persons and to draft the Substitute Bill to HB 6060.</p> <p>HB 6060 acknowledges the positive impact of the 4Ps to several Filipino households in the poverty line since its implementation.</p> <p>According to Rep. Adriano Ebcas (Party-List, AKO PADAYON), co-author of HB 6060, the bill expands the 4Ps by giving its beneficiaries increased access to electricity through a cash grant amounting to P500 per month, per household.</p> <p>Rep. Sergio Dagooc (Party-List, APEC), also a co-author of the bill, added that electricity has become an important aspect in improving human life in modern society. Investment in livestock and machineries has been made by 4Ps households which implies attempts to set up businesses and small-scale industries.</p> <p>The Department of Social Welfare and Development and the National Electrification Administration, expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>However, the Department of Finance's (DOF) Chief of Special Studies Division Aurora Luz Villaviray expressed her reservation on the bill. She said that various benefits and support as well as additional budget allocations are already extended to the poor with the implementation of the following: Rice Tariffication Law, Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, and the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) Program, among others.</p> <p>The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) cautioned the Committee on the fiscal implication of this measure, citing the required P26 billion annual budget to finance this program.</p> <p>In response to the comments of the DOF and the DBM, the Members asked the Aurora Pacific</p>

Continuation... Poverty Alleviation				Ecozone and Freeport Authority and the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority if they can be the source of funds for the proposed measure.
Public Order and Safety jt. w/ National Defense and Security	Draft Consolidated Bill on HBs 551, 2082, 2847, 3103, 3413 & 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, will deliberate further on the draft consolidated bill.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Committee discussed and resolved the contentious issues relating to Sections 4 (Terrorist Acts), 9 (Recruitment to or Membership in a Terrorist Organization), 10 (Foreign Terrorist Fighter), and 24 (Proscription of Terrorist Individuals, Organizations, Associations, or Group of Persons).</p> <p>The Department of National Defense, Integrated Bar of the Philippines, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Justice, Philippine National Police, Department of Foreign Affairs, Anti-Terrorism Council-Program Management Center, and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines support the retention of these provisions.</p> <p>Former Rep. Neri Colmenares of Bayan Muna presented the provisions that he believes may be deemed unconstitutional. Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, however, stressed that the joint body should not be bogged down by discussions of whether a provision is unconstitutional or not because it is only the Supreme Court that will decide on the constitutionality of a law.</p> <p>Reps. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), and Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN) stressed that the proposed law may be used against the opposition or organizations and groups that are critical of the government. Rep. Zarate also pointed out that the penalty being imposed on some offenses may not be proportional to the criminal act.</p> <p>The Joint Committee adopted Sections 12 (Humanitarian Exemption), 13 (Accomplice), 14 (Accessory), and 15 (Perpetual Disqualification from Public Office).</p>
Science and Technology	Substitute Bill to HBs 127, 2241, 4184, 4389, 4605, 4963, 5567, 5635 & 5964	Deputy Speaker Fernandez, Reps. Salceda, Balindong, Go (E.C), Tutor, Flores, Lara, and Aumentado	Strengthening the governance and management of the Philippine Science High School System	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Erico Aristotle Aumentado (2nd District, Bohol), approved the substitute bill subject to style.</p> <p>Rep. Kristine Alexie Tutor (3rd District, Bohol), author of HB 4963, expressed her reservation on the bill as she advocates for the establishment of only two Philippine Science High School (PSHS) campuses per region and not three campuses per region as proposed in the substitute bill. She said that setting up too many campuses may have an effect on the quality of education being offered by PSHS.</p>

Continuation... Science and Technology				<p>PSHS System Executive Director Lilia Habacon expressed her support for the proposed law. However, she said that additional budget will be required for the creation of the new campuses and the hiring of highly qualified teachers in order to maintain the standard of education being upheld by the PSHS.</p> <p>Rep. Jonathan Keith Flores (2nd District, Bukidnon) assured Habacon that Congress will ensure the allotment of funds for the PSHS System's expansion.</p> <p>The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the PSHS System interposed no objection to the bill.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HBs 1100, 1464, 3056, 3885 4572 & 6409	Reps. Salo, Yu, Babasa, Umali (A.), Rodriguez, and Acop	Converting the Provincial Science and Technology Center into Provincial Science and Technology Office in every province and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved the substitute bill subject to style.</p> <p>DOST Secretary Fortunato de la Peña expressed his gratitude for the crafting of the proposed law and its approval by the Committee.</p>
	HBs 952, 1032, 1471, 3053, 4235 & 4482	Reps. Salo, Salceda, Yu, Babasa, Nieto, and Deputy Speaker Romero	Amending for the purpose RA 9236, otherwise known as the National Metrology Act of 2003 (by strengthening the National Measurement Infrastructure System and providing stiffer penalties and sanctions)	The Committee approved the eight bills in principle subject to style.
	HBs 2441 & 3294	Deputy Speaker Villafuerte and Rep. Vargas	Modernizing the National Measurement System (NMS) of the Philippines, creating for this purpose the National Measurement Institute of the Philippines, appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 1025	Rep. Salceda	Establishing the Science for Change Program	The Committee approved HB 1025 in principle subject to style.
Senior Citizen	HBs 378, 390, 907, 1055, 1391, 1682, 2872, 3098, 3526, 4067, 4895, 4986, 5135, 5382, 5414, 5717 & 6360	Reps. Zamora (M.), Arroyo (M.L.), Lagon, Loyola, Go (M.), Deputy Speaker Villafuerte, Reps. Fortuno, Revilla, Ty (D.), Delos Santos, Yap (E.), Agabas, Cabochan, Tupas, Nieto, Datol, and Abunda	Amending RA 10868, otherwise known as the Centenarians Act of 2016 (by allowing senior citizens to receive in advance, in several tranches, the cash gift given to centenarians)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Francisco Datol Jr. (Party-List, Senior Citizens), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to draft the substitute bill to the 21 bills.</p> <p>Rep. Datol said that very few Filipinos live up to 100 years to be able to get the benefits under RA 10868. Based on the 2015 Population Census (POPCEN), there are only about 800,000 Filipinos who are 80 years old and above, representing only about 0.82% of the total population.</p> <p>The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) representative mentioned that based on the 2015 POPCEN, there are about 4,700 Filipino centenarians. However, the representative from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said that the Department has so far released the centenarian cash gift of P100,000 to only 941 beneficiaries.</p> <p>The DSWD, PSA, Department of Budget and Management, Department of Finance, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Government Service Insurance System, Social Security System, and the Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs expressed their support for the bills.</p>
	HB 1107	Rep. Atienza	Amending Section 2 of RA 10868 (by granting 101-year-old citizens P1 million, with an additional P1 million every birthday thereafter)	
	HB 3199	Rep. Marquez	Amending Section 2 of RA 10868 (by giving senior citizens the full coverage of health benefits by all government hospitals)	

Continuation... Senior Citizen	HBs 3415 & 4373	Reps. Zamora (R.) and Baronda	Providing for an automatic annual adjustment of the centenarian gift, amending for the purpose RA 10868	The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill for consideration by the TWG.
	HB 6298	Rep. Peña	Increasing the monthly social pension of senior citizens and expanding the coverage thereof	The Committee agreed to refer HB 6298 to the TWG that is currently deliberating on bills seeking to amend RA 9994, otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, by expanding the coverage and increasing the amount of social pension to senior citizens.
	HR 80	Rep. Suarez (D.)	Directing the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to review and revise the current institutional structure and payout schedule of the social pension program for senior citizens	The Committee agreed to terminate its discussion on HR 80.
Social Services	HB 4469	Rep Panotes	Institutionalizing the granting of assistance to individuals in crisis situation (AICS) program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sandra Eriguel, M.D. (2nd District, La Union), approved HB 4469 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The Secretariat was directed to draft a Substitute Bill to HB 4469.</p> <p>Rep. Marisol Panotes (2nd District, Camarines Norte), author of the bill, said that the granting of AICS, in the form of outright cash and/or guarantee letter, is part of DSWD's protective services program for the poor, marginalized and vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals. Rep. Panotes underscored the need to enact a law that will institutionalize the grant of AICS so that the program will continue even with the change of administration.</p> <p>Representatives from the DSWD, Department of Health (DOH), and League of Provinces in the Philippines (LPP) expressed their support for the bill.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit to the Committee their respective position papers on the bill.</p> <p>Meanwhile, DSWD Program Management Bureau Director Wilma Naviamos gave a briefing on the AICS program.</p> <p>According to Naviamos, assistance under the program may be in the form of financial and material assistance, psychosocial intervention, and referral to other institutions for other services. Financial assistance may be given in cash, which may be claimed from the designated disbursing officer of the DSWD, or through a guarantee letter or check, in which case, the amount of assistance will be paid directly by the DSWD to the service provider.</p> <p>Naviamos said that the DSWD has simplified the requirements for availing of services under the AICS. She added that for 2019, total clients served under the AICS program reached 1.07 million and total financial assistance granted amounted to P4.89 billion.</p>

Continuation... Social Services				<p>Problems encountered by the DSWD in the implementation of the program are the lack of manpower, particularly social workers and disbursing officers, and lack of funds, Naviamos said, adding that clients are increasing due to the frequency of crisis situations that the country experiences.</p> <p>Aurora Rep. Rommel Rico Angara queried why DSWD was not allowed to download the funds for the AICS program directly to the local government units (LGUs) which was previously the practice.</p> <p>DSWD Assistant Secretary Joseline Niwane explained that the directive came from President Rodrigo Duterte. She mentioned that some of the funds downloaded to the LGUs in the past remain unliquidated up to now, based on the Commission on Audit (COA) findings.</p> <p>With regard to the delay in the processing of requests for assistance by AICS clients, Naviamos said that it is due to the slow replenishment of cash citing the huge volume of people availing of the program and the lack of people to handle all the requests.</p> <p>The DSWD was requested to submit to the Committee the budget allocated for the AICS program per region.</p>
------------------------------------	--	--	--	---

COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Labor and Employment	Inquiry into the reported impending closure of Honda Cars Philippines, Inc. (HCPI), Nokia Technology Center, Philippines, and Wells Fargo & Co., and the impact on their workers	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), held an inquiry into the possible repercussions of the impending closure of Honda Cars, Nokia Philippines, and Wells Fargo to their employees.</p> <p>The representatives of the three companies explained that the reduction in their operations is in response to the unprecedented changes in the global market. They clarified, when asked, that the shutting down is not related to the country's current tax regime.</p> <p>HCPI General Manager Louie Soriano said that Honda's manufacturing plant in Laguna will close down on March 25 affecting 387 HCPI workers. Citing low production as the main reason for the closure, Soriano said that last year, the plant produced only 8,000 cars though it has the capacity to make 15,000 units per year. Instead of manufacturing, the company decided to just import cars to the Philippines, Soriano added.</p> <p>Nokia Philippines Country Human Resource Manager Mary Grace Rayos said that Nokia's research and development (R&D) unit is winding down its operations in the country, expecting to end its operations by September this year. The shutdown will displace 700 IT professionals, Rayos said.</p> <p>Wells Fargo Chief Administrative Officer Gilda Lourdes del Rosario explained that Wells Fargo, an American multinational financial services company, is undergoing a major corporate restructuring and will be downsizing its</p>

<p>Continuation...</p> <p>Labor and Employment</p>		<p>operations in the country. Wells Fargo has also decided to transfer its IT and business processing operations in the country to India, which will affect 700 employees, she added.</p> <p>Aside from other benefits for the retrenched employees, HCPI's separation pay is 280% of a worker's monthly salary for every year of service. On the other hand, Nokia and Wells Fargo will pay their retrenched workers one month salary for every year of service. The officials of the three multinational firms said that they are also assisting the displaced workers to find another job.</p> <p>Rep. Romeo Momo Sr. (Party-List, CWS) inquired about the government's support to affected workers.</p> <p>Labor Undersecretary Ana Dione said that the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is constantly monitoring the negotiations between the companies and the displaced workers with regard to employment separation packages as well as employment facilitation.</p> <p>Lakas Manggagawang Nagkakaisa sa Honda Vice President Christopher Oliquino expressed his concern that the affected workers are uncertain on whether they could still find a new job considering that most of them are already in their 40s. Dione replied that the workers may join job fairs to increase their chances of finding jobs, or they can avail themselves of benefits and assistance under the DOLE's livelihood programs.</p> <p>On DOLE's suggestion that overseas employment is an option for the retrenched workers, Rep. Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN) countered that the government should focus more on creating jobs in the country rather than encouraging Filipinos to work overseas, citing its social costs.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Philippine Airlines (PAL) Senior Vice President Rosemarie Katalbas disclosed that PAL too had to undergo cost-cutting measures, including the retrenchment of 287 of its employees. She explained that PAL incurred a net loss of \$208 million (equivalent to P10.6 billion at the prevailing exchange rate) and continues to suffer more financial losses due to the Taal Volcano eruption and the COVID-19 outbreak. Nevertheless, she assured the Committee that PAL has a retrenchment program for the displaced workers and a voluntary separation program for eligible long-serving PAL employees.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go emphasized the importance and urgency of looking for viable alternatives, such as the aggressive promotion of domestic tourism, to ensure the viability of the country's aviation and hotel industries, especially amid the COVID-19 health crisis.</p>
--	--	---

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Metro Manila Development (Technical Working Group)	HB 2141	Rep. Fernando	Enhancing the effectiveness of the Metropolitan Manila Council (MMC) in formulating policies, rules, regulations, and in enacting ordinances for Metro Manila,	The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Allan Benedict Reyes (3 rd District, Quezon City), terminated its deliberation on HB 2141. The Secretariat was directed to

Continuation... Metro Manila Development (Technical Working Group)			amending for the purpose RA 7924 or the law creating the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA)	prepare a substitute bill incorporating therein the suggestions of the resource persons. The substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval in its next meeting.
Revision of Laws (Technical Working Group)	HBs 1550 & 2764	Reps. Garbin and Rodriguez	Creating a Civil Code Commission to implement the re-codification of all existing civil laws of the Philippines, defining its composition and functions, and appropriating funds therefor	The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (2 nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), will deliberate further on the two bills in its next meeting. The bills seek to create a Civil Code Commission that will be responsible for the codification of all existing civil laws in the country. This will involve the review and consolidation of these laws to be able to detect and correct inconsistencies towards a more effective implementation of the laws. Rep. Rodriguez, author of HB 2764, said that the proposed law will only cover the codification of laws and not their revision as the latter would take up more time. The TWG noted the comments and suggestions of the resource persons as it discussed each section of HB 2764, which was used by the TWG as its working draft.

AGENCY BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)	Briefing by concerned government agencies on the status of implementation of various programs and projects in the Bicol Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Education (DepEd) 	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jocelyn Fortuno (5 th District, Camarines Sur), listened to the briefing by concerned government agencies on the status of implementation of various programs and projects in the Bicol Region. DepEd Region V Director Gilbert Sadsad apprised the Committee of the state of basic education in Region V. Currently, Sadsad said, there are 4,462 schools in the entire Bicol Region, of which 3,438 schools offer purely elementary level; 52 schools offer purely junior high school; 91 schools offer purely senior high school; and the remaining schools offer a combination of different levels. Of the total enrollees, Sadsad said, public and private schools accounted for 85.45% and 14.28%, respectively, while local universities and colleges (LUCs) accounted for only 0.27%. Replying to the query of Rep. Edcel Lagman (1 st District, Albay), Sadsad said there are 20,000 “struggling” readers in English and about 18,000 “struggling” readers in Filipino among grade schoolers. Sadsad explained that there are three classifications of readers—the struggling, the instructional, and the independent. Struggling readers refer to students or pupils who are able to identify or read some words, but with very poor comprehension; instructional readers are those who can read with little comprehension and thus still need guidance and instruction; and independent readers are those who are able to read with full understanding.

<p>Continuation... Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) • Department of Tourism (DOT) 	<p>According to Sadsad, some of the causes for the under par reading development of learners are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malnutrition; • Poor study habits and inclination to playing games or operating gadgets and cellphones instead of reading books; • Negative attitude towards reading; • Insufficiency in the education curriculum; • Lack of parental involvement; and • Poor quality of teachers. <p>DSWD Region V Director Arnel Garcia presented the major accomplishments of the DSWD in the Bicol Region.</p> <p>Based on a report by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Garcia said that poverty incidence in the Bicol Region significantly decreased from 30.8% to 19.9% between 2015 and 2019 despite being consistently hit by typhoons and volcanic eruptions. This, Garcia said, can be attributed to the conditional and unconditional cash transfer and social pension programs being implemented in the region.</p> <p>With regard to the supplemental feeding program for the targeted 12.3 million children, Garcia said the DSWD is encountering problems such as in the conduct of competitive bidding which mostly end up in a "failure of bidding." He also said that the P15 per child per day allocation for supplemental feeding for children aged 3-5 years is insufficient. He proposes an additional P10 to be able to add milk in the food package.</p> <p>DOT Region V Director Benjamin Santiago discussed the DOT's program portfolio for the Bicol Region.</p> <p>Santiago said that, despite the region's meager budget of P12 million, the DOT aims to improve Bicol's tourism competitiveness and enhance its growth by intensifying the transport structure and pursuing travel facilitation.</p> <p>According to Santiago, among the strategies employed by the DOT to enhance tourism in the area include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract tourist involvement and improve business establishments; • Inspire product development by designing and implementing an expanded marketing program; and • Extend support to cultural offering. <p>Santiago added that access to tourism sites will improve with key infrastructure projects in the Bicol Region under the "Build, Build, Build" program of President Duterte's administration such as the Camarines Sur Expressway and the Bicol International Airport which will open soon.</p> <p>Santiago said that one of the areas that the Bicol Region needs to develop and promote is its cultural heritage, citing the region's lack of a genuine Bicolano music and costume. Santiago emphasized that for its heritage to flourish, it has to be a part of every Bicolano's life.</p>
<p>Climate Change (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Update on the People's Survival Fund (PSF) as the Department of Finance's (DOF) commitment to the Philippine Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Edgar Chatto (1st District, Bohol), listened to the briefing on the People's Survival Fund (PSF) as part of the DOF's commitment to the NDC in line with the Paris Agreement on climate change.</p> <p>The PSF was created by virtue of RA 10174, as an annual fund intended for local government units (LGUs) and accredited</p>

Continuation... Climate Change (Special Committee)		<p>local/community organizations to implement climate change adaptation projects that will better equip vulnerable communities to deal with the impacts of climate change. The Philippine government programmed at least P1 billion into the PSF which will be sourced from the national budget. The allocation may be augmented by mobilizing funding sources such as counterpart LGUs, the private sector, and individuals who support adaptation initiatives (Source: CCC website).</p> <p>CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Emmanuel de Guzman informed the body that 18 project proposals on climate change adaptation have been submitted by the LGUs with a total cost of P2.19 billion. The PSF Board, tasked to manage and administer the fund, is currently evaluating the proposals. De Guzman also reported that an e-learning program has been established by the CCC to properly mentor LGU proponents in coming up with top quality project proposals.</p> <p>DOF Director for International Finance Group Neil Adrian Cabiles said that the PSF has an assured budget and the priority is to finance LGU projects along the lines of food security, water sufficiency, environmental stability, and sustainable energy. He mentioned that the United Nations (UN) has the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund which finance other studies and programs on climate change adaptation.</p> <p>Rep. Chatto asked the DOF on the utilization rate of the LGUs relative to the PSF and on LGUs' capability to fulfill the requirements for PSF support. Cabiles replied that only six projects are being financed under the PSF at the moment, with total cost of P400 million. With regard to the PSF requirements, Cabiles said he will check if these can easily be complied with by the LGUs or not.</p>
--	--	--

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ways and Means	Status of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office's (PCSO) non-tax revenues	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), will continue its discussion on the status of the PCSO's non-tax revenues.</p> <p>In today's meeting, Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), chairperson of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Non-Tax Revenues of PCSO Taxation and Administration, reported on the TWG's recommendations to increase PCSO's revenues.</p> <p>According to Rep. Suansing, the PCSO's retail receipts decreased from P66.57 billion in 2018 to P44.03 billion in 2019, which translates to about P22.5 billion or 31% decrease in revenue last year.</p> <p>The Committee adopted the following recommendations of the TWG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce tax on winnings from 20% to 10% to increase the Prize Fund and encourage more people to patronize PCSO number games; • Reduce the Documentary Stamp Tax (DST) from P0.20 to P0.10 to raise more funds. Passing the P0.20 DST to Lotto and Keno bettors resulted in reduced sales; • Pass a House resolution requesting the Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to strengthen their

Continuation... Ways and Means		<p>programs on eradicating illegal numbers games and to institutionalize an informer's reward system;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the Office of the President to approve the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations on Small Town Lottery (STL); and • Request the Department of the Interior and Local Government to notify all local chief executives to not require local business permits to PCSO's STL operations. <p>Rep. Suansing likewise raised the problem of the decrease in PCSO budget and reduced funds for charity, as well as the TWG recommendations to address these issues. The Committee, however, agreed to discuss these issues in another meeting.</p>
-----------------------------------	--	--

OTHER MATTERS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Bicol Recovery and Economic Development (Special Committee)	Discussion of the proposal to change the name of the Committee to "Special Committee on Bicol Resiliency and Economic Development"	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jocelyn Fortuno (5th District, Camarines Sur), agreed with the proposal to change the name of the Committee into the "Special Committee on Bicol Resiliency and Economic Development."</p> <p>The Committee sent a formal request to Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte), Chair of the Committee on Rules, regarding the change in the name of the Committee on Bicol Recovery and Economic Development.</p> <p>In the letter, the Committee Members explained that the proposal to change the name of the Committee is premised on the need to provide a more encompassing approach to disaster and emergency management in the Bicol Region considering that its geographical location and general topography make the region prone to natural disasters, such as intense typhoons and frequent volcanic eruptions. They also explained that this is the most opportune time that the Committee invigorates its mandate to swift to resiliency to respond to these changing times.</p>