



## COMMITTEE MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
<b>Banks and Financial Intermediaries</b>	HB 6375	Rep. Romualdez (Y. M.)	Consolidating all subsequent amendments to the charter of the Philippine Veterans Bank, reenacting for the said purpose the pertinent portions of Republic Act No. 3518, as amended, and introducing further amendments thereto	<p>The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, will deliberate further on HB 6375 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Cua underscored the need to amend the charter of the Philippine Veterans Bank (PVB), especially on the matter of capitalization, to revitalize it and become more capable of providing benefits and other forms of assistance to all Filipino war veterans and retired military personnel, including their surviving spouses, orphans, and compulsory heirs. This is in recognition of the patriotic services of the Filipino war veterans and retired military personnel in times of war and peace for the cause of freedom and democracy.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the Committee discussed and reviewed Sections 1 to 11 of the bill.</p> <p>PVB Chair and CEO Roberto de Ocampo expressed support for the bill. He said that expanding the coverage of RA 3518 to include retired military personnel and their immediate dependents does not diminish the priority intent of the law which is to ensure the support for World War II (WWII) veterans.</p> <p>De Ocampo likewise mentioned that the proposed increase in the capital stock of PVB would provide it with the resources necessary to service an expanded group of beneficiaries.</p> <p>Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Managing Director for Financial Supervision Arifa Ala suggested that the provision increasing the bank's capital stock should be aligned with BSP rules and regulations. PVB President Renato Claravall agreed with this statement.</p> <p>Section 5 of HB 6375 increases the capital stock of PVB from P100 million to P10 billion divided into 75 million common shares and 25 million preferred shares with a par value of P100 each.</p> <p>Likewise, Ala suggested that the PVB should have corporate power to approve short-term loans and not just long-term loans, as stated in Section 4 of the bill.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Committee Members and the resource persons agreed to clarify in the bill the definition of "compulsory heirs" as to whether to include the grandchildren of war veterans and retired military personnel as beneficiaries under the proposed law.</p>

Continuation... Banks and Financial Intermediaries				<p>Representatives from SEC and Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) will be invited to attend in the Committee's next meeting.</p> <p>The resource persons were directed to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
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DEFEAT COVID-19 AD HOC COMMITTEE (DCC) MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
<b>Social Amelioration Cluster</b>	HR 807	Rep. Fernando	Urging the national government to fast-track the disbursement of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> tranche of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) by giving the barangay the power to identify the beneficiaries and to disburse the allocation	<p>The Cluster, presided by Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez (4<sup>th</sup> District, Leyte), adopted HR 807 subject to style and amendment. Thereafter, the Committee Report on the measure was also approved.</p> <p>The Social Amelioration Cluster is one of the smaller bodies under the Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee (DCC) – an advisory and coordinating committee that was created through the initiative of Speaker Alan Peter "Compañero" Cayetano (1<sup>st</sup> District, Taguig City-Pateros) with the objective of harmonizing and streamlining government efforts to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund "LRay" Villafuerte Jr. (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Camarines Sur), co-chairperson of this Cluster, commented that the proposed law is highly feasible in Metro Manila because of the technical capability and sufficient workforce of the barangays. This may not be true, however, for some barangays in the provinces, thus, he said the main responsibility of distributing the SAP subsidy should lie with the mayors and governors.</p> <p>Rep. Bayani Fernando (1<sup>st</sup> District, Marikina City), author of HR 807, underscored the importance of allowing the barangays to take an active role in the distribution of SAP subsidies. He said that the barangays are in a better position to identify qualified beneficiaries given their updated database of constituents. He also proposed that a fixed subsidy amount of P5,000 be implemented in the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of the program, instead of the P5,000 to P8,000 subsidy scheme that was implemented for the 1<sup>st</sup> tranche, in order to simplify and fast-track the distribution process.</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Assistant Secretary Glenda Relova supports the proposal to authorize the barangays to disburse the SAP allocations saying that this would lift the burden off the shoulders of DSWD personnel.</p> <p>Likewise, Department of the Interior and Local Government Undersecretaries Martin Diño (for Barangay Affairs) and Ricojudge Echiverri (for External and Legal Affairs) expressed their support for the resolution.</p> <p>Rep. Cristal Bagatsing (5<sup>th</sup> District, Manila) expressed her support for the resolution. She</p>

Continuation... Social Amelioration Cluster				<p>claimed that the database of barangays is more accurate than the 2015 database being used by the DSWD in validating qualified beneficiaries under the SAP.</p> <p>On the other hand, Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) Budget Technical Bureau Director John Aries Macaspac expressed reservation on the intent of the resolution saying that it might not guarantee optimal distribution of the subsidies citing the low technical capacities and lack of manpower of some barangays. He promised to submit the DBM's official position paper on HR 807 as soon as it is done.</p> <p>The DSWD was requested to submit its list of SAP beneficiaries for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche, while the DILG was requested to submit the compliance report of all barangays that were involved in the distribution of the 1<sup>st</sup> tranche of the SAP.</p>
	HR 821	Rep. Robes	<p>Expressing the commitment of the House of Representatives to work with the Department of Agriculture to pass the proposed supplemental budget of the Department to support its programs to address the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the areas of food security and price stability</p>	<p>The Cluster adopted HR 821 subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>San Jose del Monte City Rep. Florida "Rida" Robes, author of HR 821, said that she is proposing a P1 billion supplemental budget for the Department of Agriculture (DA) to ensure food supply availability and price stabilization in the country during the pandemic and to alleviate the condition of Filipinos affected by the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).</p> <p>DA Secretary William Dar and DSWD Assistant Secretary Relova expressed their support for the resolution.</p> <p>Secretary Dar gave a brief presentation on the DA's food security framework. He also presented the DA's stimulus package to mitigate the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P31 billion for "Ahon Lahat Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Kontra sa COVID-19;"</li> <li>• P15 billion for Cash for Work Program; and</li> <li>• P20 billion for other interventions to mitigate the economic effects of COVID-19.</li> </ul> <p>According to Dar, the ALPAS program will include rice buffer stocking program, rice resiliency project, revitalized "gulayan" project, logistical support to frontline essential services, and social amelioration for farmers, fisherfolk and farm workers.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Villafuerte supported the Agriculture Secretary's proposal to exempt the DA from the 35% budget reduction in line with the realignment of funds of the national government for the purpose of fighting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The body decided to include a provision in the resolution that will support the three programs under the proposed stimulus package of the DA.</p>

Continuation... Social Amelioration Cluster				Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo requested the DA to submit a detailed utilization plan on the proposed P31 billion budget for the ALPAS Program.
	HB 6620	Deputy Speaker Legarda	Providing emergency food subsidy to every poor Filipino family affected by the ECQ due to the COVID-19 pandemic and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Cluster will deliberate further on HB 6620 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Resource persons present during the meeting were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 6660	Deputy Speaker Villanueva	Granting hazard pay to workers in critical industries during a state of calamity or emergency or public health emergency	<p>The Cluster will deliberate further on HB 6660 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bill were the resource persons from the DBM, Department of Health, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Private Hospital Association of the Philippines.</p> <p>Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN) requested to invite resource persons from private companies falling under the category of critical industries to provide their comments on the bill.</p>
	HB 6692	Rep. Zarate	Extending the SAP during the implementation of the general community quarantine (GCQ) and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Cluster will deliberate further on HB 6692 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HB 6692, emphasized the need to continue the distribution of SAP subsidies to qualified beneficiaries in areas under GCQ.</p> <p>Relova conveyed the DSWD's support for the bill and confirmed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of SAP subsidy is forthcoming. She added that the DSWD is just awaiting the President's approval of the guidelines on the matter.</p> <p>DOLE Undersecretary Renato Ebarle expressed his support for the bill. He also highlighted the Department's COVID-19 mitigating programs as follows: DOLE-AKAP for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs); Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged or Displaced Workers (TUPAD); and COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP).</p> <p>Ebarle said that out of the P3 billion budget for these mitigating programs, P168 million has already been distributed to 633,000 beneficiaries.</p> <p>Rep. Edgar Mary Sarmiento (1<sup>st</sup> District, Western Samar) said that the DOLE should closely coordinate with the DSWD to avoid duplication of beneficiaries. Ebarle replied that the DOLE regularly updates the list of beneficiaries in coordination with the DSWD.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Wes Gatchalian (1<sup>st</sup> District, Valenzuela City) on who will be the beneficiaries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche of the SAP, Relova said that the recipients of the 1<sup>st</sup> tranche will also be the recipients of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche that are still under ECQ, as well as qualified beneficiaries that were</p>

Continuation... Social Amelioration Cluster				not able to receive their subsidies during the 1 <sup>st</sup> tranche.  The Department of Finance said that it would submit its position paper on the bill.
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DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES/ENTITIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<b>Information and Communications Technology</b>	<p>Discussion with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Department of Health (DOH), and private companies on the following ICT-related initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National ICT Agenda in the New Normal</li> <li>National Broadband Program (NBP)</li> </ul>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Victor Yap (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Tarlac), discussed with concerned government agencies and private companies the status of the country's National ICT Agenda in the new normal era and the National Broadband Program, as well as the use of contact tracing technology in containing the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>DICT Assistant Secretary Emmanuel Rey Caintic said that under the "new normal" brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to digitalize the transactions and services of the government and the public sector, as a whole. Towards this end, Caintic, said that the DICT will provide technical assistance to national government agencies and local government units to transform into ICT-enabled government.</p> <p>The DICT will also help in continuing the learning and education of Filipino children through the promotion of ICT in education, such as providing digital learning management systems, setting up digital learning content, and providing training through its ICT Academy.</p> <p>Caintic said that the DICT is also working on reskilling and upskilling the Filipino workforce and promoting digital jobs. ICT will also be used in the profiling of target beneficiaries to effectively distribute social assistance to the communities. Caintic added that the delivery of health services will be undertaken using digital platforms to make these services available in far-flung areas.</p> <p>In 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte directed the DICT to develop a national broadband plan to accelerate the deployment of fiber optic cables and wireless technologies to improve internet speed. A year after, RA 10929 was passed as an enabling law, which mandates the establishment of a program that will provide free access to internet service in public places throughout the country.</p> <p>DICT Undersecretary Eliseo Rio Jr. apprised the Committee of DICT's accomplishments based on the five components of the NBP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of the dark fiber or unused fiber optic cables by the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) and the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo) – DICT has successfully tested 158 dark fiber segments of the NGCP;</li> <li>Construction of cable landing stations (CLS) – DICT has completed the construction of two CLS, one in Baler, Aurora and the other in Poro Point, La Union;</li> <li>Accelerated building of cellular towers – DICT has signed memoranda of agreement with 24 common tower providers that are interested in investing in shared tower projects in the country;</li> <li>Accelerated access to fiber optics – DICT has connected 862 government agencies to the Internet via fiber optic cables; and</li> <li>Satellite overlay – DICT is coordinating with the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) on the approval of a grant to fund the conduct of a feasibility study for the procurement, launching, and deployment of a sovereign communications satellite for the Philippines.</li> </ul>

<p>Continuation... Information and Communications Technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of contact tracing technology amid the COVID-19 pandemic</li> </ul>	<p>The Members noted the 2-terabyte bandwidth that the government can access, in partnership with Facebook, as a result of the connection of the two giant submarine cables that form the backbone of the digital super expressway from Los Angeles, USA via the Pacific Ocean, and the Asian backbone through Hongkong via the West Philippine Sea, that traverses through North Luzon. They underscored the importance of fast-tracking the establishment of infrastructure facilities that will enable the distribution of this bandwidth to various areas in the country. The construction of the two cable landing stations in Aurora and La Union is part of this digital super expressway. This backbone infrastructure in Luzon is expected to be installed by July 2020.</p> <p>Rep. Yap urged the DICT to use the budget already available to the Department to buy bandwidths from small telecommunication companies and distribute the same while waiting for the full NBP to roll out in July.</p> <p>Quirino Rep. Junie Cua informed the body of HB 6623, filed by Speaker Alan Peter “Compañero” Cayetano (1<sup>st</sup> District, Taguig City-Pateros), which has a provision on internet connectivity. He asked the DICT to submit its recommendations on the bill which will help in fast-tracking the implementation of the NBP. HB 6623 establishes the policies and regulations for the new normal in workplaces and public places.</p> <p>Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), co-chair of the Economic Stimulus Response Package Cluster of the Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee (DCC), underscored the importance of establishing the much-needed digital infrastructures to help address the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. She pushed for the inclusion of a budget allocation for NBP in the proposed Philippine Economic Stimulus Act being deliberated on by the DCC.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco “Kiko” Benitez (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Occidental) commented that it would be helpful to know first how the DICT plans to distribute the 2-terabyte bandwidth capacity before Congress decides on the needed budget for the implementation of the NBP.</p> <p>With regard to contact tracing, Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Eric Tayag defined the term as the identification, listing, and follow-up of persons who may have come in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case. He added that contact tracing is an important component in containing outbreaks of infectious diseases.</p> <p>Multisys Corp. Chief Executive Officer David Almirol Jr. discussed the StaySafe PH application that his company has created to help in the contact tracing efforts of the government. He said the app, which was recognized by the DICT and the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), is already being used by the DOH and some local government units.</p> <p>Likewise, Atty. Yves Gonzales, head of the Government Affairs and Public Policy of Google Philippines, said that Apple and Google have partnered to help in contact tracing through the development of the Exposure Notification technology which they are willing to share with the government. This technology will notify iPhone and Android users if they have come in close contact with COVID-19 infected people. Tayag said that talks with DOH on the use of the system are already being undertaken.</p>
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