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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Civil Service and Professional Regulation	HBs 1006, 5138 & 6988	Reps. Campos, Salo, and Tan (A.)	Regulating the education and licensure of physicians and the practice of medicine in the Philippines, repealing for the purpose RA 2382, as amended, or the Medical Act of 1959	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Mario Vittorio "Marvey" Mariño (5th District, Batangas), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate and harmonize the recommendations of the resource persons.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon).</p> <p>Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4th District, Quezon), author of HB 6988, explained that her bill aims to regulate the practice of medicine and the education, residency, and licensing of physicians in the country through the Philippine Medical Residency Board.</p> <p>Representatives from the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) Board of Medicine, Department of Health (DOH), University of the Philippines (UP) College of Medicine, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and private organizations such as the Philippine Medical Association (PMA), Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology (PAO), Philippine Hospital Association (PHA), and Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines (PHAP) presented their respective comments and recommendations on the proposed law.</p> <p>The Committee requested the resource persons to submit their official position papers on the bills.</p>
	HB 3475	Rep. Escudero	Amending RA 9298, otherwise known as the Philippine Accountancy Act of 2004 [by removing the accreditation requirement for certified public accountants (CPA) and the required minimum three-year "meaningful experience" in public practice prior to accreditation]	The Committee deferred its discussion on HB 3475 until the submission of the resource persons' recommendations on the bill.
Dangerous Drugs	HR 456 and Privilege Speech Nos. 84 and 88	Rep. Jalosjos	Investigation into the illegal drug trading activities in the Province of Zamboanga del Norte	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), approved the Committee Report on HR 456 and Privilege Speech Nos. 84 and 88.

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs	HB 1982	Rep. Suansing (H.)	Securing the Philippines' borders to make more effective the prohibition against the entry of illegal drugs into the country	<p>The Committee approved the bill subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), co-author of HB 1982, said that because of the country's expansive coastal areas, the Philippines has become an attractive hub for the movement of contrabands run by transnational drug trafficking organizations.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing called for additional funds to improve the effectiveness of anti-drug law enforcement and border control agencies such as the Department of National Defense (DND), Bureau of Customs (BOC), and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).</p> <p>Philippine National Police (PNP) Maritime Group Director, Police Chief Supt. Rodelio Jocson, requested that the PNP be also granted additional appropriations citing its role in the government's anti-drug campaign. Likewise, Rep. Barbers suggested that the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) be counted in as well.</p> <p>Rep. Suansing requested PDEA to submit its budget proposal for the assignment of its personnel in every port and coast guard stations in the country.</p>
	HB 4659	Rep. Velarde	Expanding the coverage of authorized drug testing amending for the purpose Section 36 Article III of RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the bills.</p> <p>Rep. Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia III (2nd District, Bataan), author of HB 4671, lamented the sluggish resolution of drug-related cases in courts. He pointed out that under RA 9165, the trial of the cases involving violations of this law should be finished by the court not later than 60 days from the date of filing of information, while the decision on the case should be rendered within 15 days from the date of submission of the case for resolution. However, records from the Supreme Court show that it usually takes at least three years before the courts render their decision on cases involving violations of RA 9165.</p>
	HB 4671	Rep. Garcia (J.E.)	Further expediting the disposition of judicial cases involving violations of RA 9165, enhancing its efficacy against dangerous drugs, and amending for the purpose Sections 90 and 92 thereof	<p>Rep. Garcia proposes that prosecutors and judges shall be administratively liable if they fail to observe the prescribed period for resolving such cases without justifiable reason. He said holding them accountable for such failure may compel them to be more diligent in the prosecution of drug-related cases.</p>
	HB 4728	Rep. Batocabe	Providing for the disposition of confiscated, seized, and/or surrendered dangerous drugs, plant sources of dangerous drugs, controlled precursors and essential chemicals, instruments/paraphernalia amending for the purpose RA 9165, as amended by RA 10640	<p>Police Chief Supt. Albert Ignatius Ferro, director of PNP's Drug Enforcement Group, said that in instances when a drug-related case is dismissed, the police investigator and the arresting officer will be subjected to</p>
	HB 6984	Rep. Bernos	Institutionalizing the automatic rehabilitation of arrested/apprehended persons found to be drug dependent, amending for the purpose RA 9165	

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs				<p>investigation to determine if there have been irregularities or lapses in the preparation of pertinent documents and the filing of the case.</p> <p>Reps. Garcia and Barbers both requested the PNP and DOJ to provide the Committee a report on drug-related cases that were dismissed, including the reason for such dismissal.</p> <p>Representatives from PDEA, PNP, and Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) expressed their support for HB 4671.</p> <p>Abra Rep. Joseph Sto. Niño Bernos, author of HB 6984, said that his bill requires the “automatic” treatment and rehabilitation of arrested or apprehended individuals who, immediately after arrest, confess or admit the use of illegal drugs. The rehabilitation shall be for a minimum period of six months in a rehabilitation facility duly accredited by the DDB. The arrested individual will be examined for drug dependency by a Department of Health (DOH)-accredited physician before he/she is admitted to a rehabilitation center.</p> <p>Rep. Bernos also said that his bill proposes that arrested offenders of RA 9165 are to be subjected to treatment and rehabilitation even while inside the jail or correctional facilities.</p> <p>PDEA Assistant Secretary Jesus Fajardo expressed concern that the automatic admittance to a rehabilitation facility based on the arrested individual’s confession will undermine the process of screening and assessment, which is the basis for determining appropriate intervention.</p> <p>Police Chief Supt. Eric Serafin Reyes, deputy director of the PNP’s Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management (DIDM), said that the proposal to subject the arrested person to an examination by a DOH-accredited physician should not delay his/her detention in jail.</p>
Games and Amusements	Substitute Bill to HB 4843	Rep. Batocabe	Strengthening the Games and Amusements Board (GAB)	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Gus Tambunting (2nd District, Parañaque City), approved the Substitute Bill to HB 4843 subject to style.
	HRs 132, 321, 343, 394, 1646, 1698 & 1705	Reps. Dimaporo (A.), Floirendo, Velasco-Catera, Sambar, Castelo, Pineda, and Rodriguez (M.)	Congratulating and commending Filipino boxers for defending or winning world boxing titles in different divisions	The Committee adopted the seven resolutions.
	HB 2062	Rep. Unabia	Imposing the payment of entrance fee to residents of the Philippines who patronize casinos, amending for the purpose PD	The Committee will deliberate further on HBs 2062 and 5871 in its next meeting.

Continuation... Games and Amusements			1869, as amended, also known as the Charter of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR)	Rep. Peter "Sr. Pedro" Unabia (1st District, Misamis Oriental), author of HB 2062, said that his bill seeks to dissuade people, who are not financially capable, from entering and playing in the casinos.
	HB 5871	Rep. Albano	Authorizing the collection of a casino entrance charge in the amount of P3,000 from all persons entering any and all casinos and similar gaming establishments for the purpose of engaging in gambling and related gaming activities therein	<p>PAGCOR Assistant Vice President Arnold Salvosa, in opposing the bills, cited a study conducted by the University of Nevada which concluded that the imposition of fees is not an effective tool for promoting responsible gambling. The study, according to Salvosa, indicated that fees tend to counter the intended effect because people with gambling disorders are less price sensitive compared to recreational gamblers. Salvosa added that the proposed fees will more likely lower casino revenues without necessarily discouraging people with gambling disorders from playing in the casinos.</p> <p>Salvosa disclosed that PAGCOR has operationalized a Responsible Gaming Helpline which offers support for people who have gambling-related concerns and created the PAGCOR Exclusion Program wherein family members and even the gamblers themselves can request PAGCOR to ban people from entering PAGCOR's casinos.</p> <p>Department of Justice (DOJ) State Counsel Charles Cambaliza and Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) Government Corporate Attorney Owen Vidad expressed support for the bills. Vidad said that the proposed law should also cover gaming establishments not owned by PAGCOR.</p> <p>Several Committee Members remarked that the proposed law should impose entrance fees only to those who intend to gamble in the casinos as distinguished from the rest of the hotel guests.</p> <p>Salvosa said that as an alternative to the payment of entrance fee, one may present proof of financial capacity such as the Income Tax Return (ITR) showing an annual income of not less than P250,000.</p>
	HB 3545	Rep. Castelo	Prohibiting government officials and employees, including members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), from playing in casinos and prescribing fines for violation thereof	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to fine-tune HB 3545.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Mark Aeron Sambar (Party-List, PBA).</p> <p>Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo (2nd District, Quezon City), author of HB 3545, manifested that the explanatory note attached to his bill be included in the record as his sponsorship speech.</p> <p>On the query of Committee Members whether the term "government officials" cover both</p>

Continuation... Games and Amusements				<p>elected and appointed officials of the government, Salvosa and Atty. Christian Agodon of the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Legal Division answered in the affirmative. Agodon cited RA 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, which defines the term "public officials" as "elective and appointive officials and employees, permanent or temporary, whether in the career or non-career service, including military and police personnel, whether or not they receive compensation, regardless of amount."</p> <p>PAGCOR was asked to submit a list of government officials who were denied entry into casinos.</p> <p>Department of National Defense (DND) Assistant Secretary Antonio Bautista and AFP representative Col. Reno Tolentino also expressed their support for the bill.</p>
	HB 6249	Rep. Lacson	Criminalizing the credit and loaning activities of loan sharks inside casino premises and providing penalties therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to fine-tune HB 6249.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Maximo Rodriguez Jr. (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City).</p> <p>Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS), author of HB 6249, said that "loan sharks" take advantage of the misfortune of some gamblers by offering to finance the latter's gambling activities at exorbitant interest rates or collateral. Rep. Lacson underscored the need to enact a law to prevent these nefarious financiers from perpetrating their activities inside casinos, and to hold accountable casino operators and employees who will be found conniving with these loan sharks.</p> <p>PAGCOR expressed support for the bill. On the other hand, the OGCC opined that the proposed law might be impossible to enforce.</p>
Good Government and Public Accountability	HR 1188	Rep. Evardone	Inquiry into the alleged grossly disadvantageous lease contract entered into by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT), and Manila Exposition Complex, Inc. (MECI)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1188 in its next meeting.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Pimentel explained that pursuant to Republic Act 7844, or the Export Development Act of 1994, the five-hectare DTI-managed government land situated in Pasay City was leased to PHILEXPORT on January 23, 1996 with the objective of promoting the export industry. PHILEXPORT, in turn, subleased the same property to MECI, which formed a consortium to invest in the construction of the World Trade Center (WTC).</p>

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability</p>				<p>Rep. Salvador Belaro Jr. (Party-List, 1-Ang Edukasyon) noted that the intent of the law is to promote export and to provide small and medium exporters better opportunities to participate in the world market. Thus, he said, the Committee's inquiry does not intend to restrain the freedom of contracts but to determine if a new legislation is needed to improve the Philippine export industry.</p> <p>Dionisio Carpio Jr., president of Medco Holdings, Inc., maintained that Medco is just a minority shareholder of MECI. But upon questioning, he admitted that Medco had a 156% return on its original investment of P31.5 million in 1996.</p> <p>The other investors of MECI present during the meeting, such as the National Development Company (NDC), Philippine American Life and General Insurance (Philam Life), World Trade Center Management, Inc. (WTCMI), Science Park of the Philippines, Inc. (SPPI), and PHILEXPORT manifested that their investment with MECI has been one of their most profitable business ventures.</p> <p>DTI Undersecretary Nora Terrado claimed that the business ventures of NDC and PHILEXPORT actually contributed to the development of the country's export industry.</p> <p>MECI President Pamela Pascual disclosed that MECI, as authorized under its sublease contract with PHILEXPORT, entered into a tripartite lease and sublease agreement with the joint venture of Agri Aqua Venture Business Enterprise, Inc. (AAVBEI) and Platinum Wealth Plan Development, Inc. (PWPD) for the construction of a hotel and office building at the WTC Complex.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) stated that it was through Executive Order 289, signed by former President Fidel Ramos in 1995, which set the lease of the subject property to only P1,000.00 per year. Rep. Pichay suggested that the former President and the DTI secretary during that time be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to shed light on the issue. The Committee acceded to this request.</p> <p>The Committee requested the submission of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of MECI's sublease contract with AAVBEI and PWPD; and • Copy of the legal opinions of the Office of the President (OP) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) relative to EO 289.
	HR 1683	Minority Leader Suarez	Investigation into the alleged <i>ultra vires</i> acts by Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) President Reuben Lista	The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1683 in its next meeting.

Continuation...
Good
Government and
Public
Accountability

At the outset, Rep. Pimentel identified the following allegations of impropriety against Lista as contained in HR 1683:

- That he contracted the services of a new security agency, in lieu of Alexis Security Agency, without conducting a public bidding;
- That he ordered the stoppage of the joint tender of the banked gas without authority from the PNOC Board of Directors; and
- That he demanded a higher amount for the retrofitting of the PNOC building from P57 million, which was approved by the previous PNOC leadership, to P68 million.

Lista remarked that there are documents to prove that all the questioned transactions were presented to, deliberated on, and approved by the PNOC Board of Directors and covered by corresponding Board Resolutions, thus taking them outside the ambit of *ultra vires* acts or acts that are beyond one's legal power or authority.

Lista maintained that the hiring of a new security agency for the interim period of January 1 to March 21, 2018 was undertaken by the PNOC management in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act and its 2016 revised implementing rules and regulations (IRR), and on the strength of PNOC Board Resolution 2474, series of 2017. He asserted that there was no unilateral action on his part in relation to the hiring of a new security agency.

Lista asserted that he could not have ordered the stoppage of the joint tender of the banked gas as it was already completed when he assumed office. He added that upon assuming office, he recognized that the banked gas is one of the most important assets of the PNOC, and since then the PNOC has been intending to sell, burn, or monetize the banked gas. The proceeds of the intended sale of the banked gas shall form part of the equity of PNOC, so that the government may not obtain loans for the PNOC liquefied natural gas (LNG) Hub Project, Lista disclosed.

On the retrofitting of the PNOC building, Lista claimed that there has never been an approved nor awarded retrofitting project of PNOC's Building 6, although the bidding was done in 2016.

PNOC Senior Vice President Graciela Barleta disclosed that PNOC did not renew the services of Alexis Security Agency due to loss of trust and confidence for committing serious infractions. Thus, Barleta said, the PNOC had

Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability				<p>to resort to an emergency procurement of a new security agency, which she claimed underwent competitive bidding.</p> <p>Barleta also confirmed that the retrofitting project underwent the public bidding process, with Global-V Builders as the lowest bidder.</p> <p>The Committee requested Lista to submit a copy of his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN), and Global-V Builders a copy of its bid documents for the retrofitting project.</p>
Government Enterprises and Privatization	HBs 2232, 3212, 5411 & 7000	Reps. Revilla, Escudero, Batocabe, and Relampagos	Instituting the Boy Scouts of the Philippines' (BSP) Charter, defining its objectives, powers, and functions, repealing for the purpose Commonwealth Act No. 111, as amended	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the four bills.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Rene Relampagos (1st District, Bohol), author of HB 7000.</p> <p>BSP Senior Vice President Roberto Pagdanganan expressed his support for the bills. He emphasized that the Supreme Court ruling in 2011, that the BSP is a public corporation and its funds are therefore subject to audit by the Commission on Audit (COA), must be rectified. He argued that the BSP is a private corporation.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
	HB 7053	Rep. Benitez	Excluding the services performed by employees of religious entities from employment services covered by the Social Security System (SSS) Law, amending for the purpose RA 8282, otherwise known as the Social Security Act of 1997	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 7053 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Rodante Marcoleta (Party-List, SAGIP), co-author of HB 7053, said that the bill seeks to exclude employees of entities or corporations organized exclusively for religious purposes from the coverage of the SSS Law (RA 8282).</p> <p>Rep. Marcoleta explained that the remuneration received by said employees are mere financial assistance and does not equate with the salary paid to regular employees.</p> <p>Atty. Marializa Rosario, legal counsel of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), expressed her reservation on the proposed measure.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bill.</p>
	HB 7305	Speaker Alvarez	Abolishing the Philippine Aerospace Development Corporation (PADC), repealing for the purpose PD 286, as amended	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 7305 in its next meeting.</p> <p>HB 7305, authored by Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte),</p>

Continuation... Government Enterprises and Privatization				<p>seeks to abolish the PADC for its failure to fulfill its mandate of advancing aviation-related transport services.</p> <p>Department of Transportation (DOTr) Undersecretary Manuel Antonio Tamayo informed the Committee that the DOTr and the Department of National Defense (DND) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) transferring the supervision of PADC to the DND. Tamayo said that the MOA has been submitted to the Office of the President (OP) for consideration.</p> <p>The Governance Commission for Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation (GCG) was directed to report to the Committee the status of the said MOA.</p>
	HB 6456	Rep. Villarin	Amending RA 10084 or the law granting survivorship benefits to the legitimate spouse of a deceased retired member of the Commission on Audit (COA), Civil Service Commission (CSC), Commission on Elections (COMELEC), and the Ombudsman	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 6456 in its next meeting.</p> <p>HB 6456, authored by Rep. Tom Villarin (Party-List, AKBAYAN), seeks to include the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in the coverage of RA 10084.</p> <p>Representatives from the CSC and CHR expressed their support for the bill.</p>
Government Enterprises and Privatization jt. w/ Transportation	HB 4114	Rep. Dalipe	Creating the Zamboanga City International Airport Authority to administer and operate the Zamboanga City International Airport and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato), Chair of the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization, and Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, Chair of the Committee on Transportation, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the five bills, using HB 7306 as the lead bill.</p> <p>The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Rene Relampagos (1st District, Bohol), author of HB 7047.</p> <p>Rep. Sarmiento, who sponsored HB 7306 in behalf of the author, Speaker Pantaleon "Bebot" Alvarez (1st District, Davao del Norte), said that the proposed Philippine Airport Development Corporation (PADC) will be responsible for the planning, maintenance, operation, and improvement of all airports, and the control and supervision of the construction of any structure or the rendition of any service within the airports. In effect, the creation of the PADC will abolish the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA), Clark International Airport Corporation (CIAC), and Subic Bay International Airport Corporation (SBIAC).</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
	HB 6327	Rep. Pimentel	Creating the Philippine Airports Management Authority, defining its powers, functions, and responsibilities, providing funds therefor	
	HB 7047	Rep. Relampagos	Creating the Panglao - Bohol International Airport Authority to administer and operate the Panglao - Bohol International Airport and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 7165	Rep. Aumentado	Creating the Panglao Airport Authority to administer and operate the Bohol International Airport and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 7306	Speaker Alvarez	Creating the Philippine Airport Development Corporation and appropriating funds therefor	

Government Reorganization jt. w/ Transportation	Substitute Bill to HBs 5092 & 6275	Reps. Macapagal-Arroyo and Fuentebella	Transforming the Office for Transportation Security (OTS) into the Commission on Transportation Security (CTS)	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, Chair of the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, Chair of the Committee on Transportation, will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Among the amendments to the bill agreed upon by the Joint Committee were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OTS shall be transformed into the Commission on Transportation Security (CTS); • The powers and functions of the CTS shall be limited to national emergencies related to security threats (Section 10); and • The power to enforce transportation security policies, and rules and regulations in relation to the National Transportation Security Program (NTSP) shall be excluded from the powers and functions of the CTS (Section 11). <p>Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), author of HB 5092, stressed that the Commission's powers and functions should be limited to policy-making relating to transportation security and not to the enforcement or execution of the law.</p> <p>OTS OIC-Administrator Miguel Oraa lauded the intent of the bill to comply with international treaties and conventions. Oraa said these treaties and conventions require the designation by the contracting parties, such as the Philippines, of the proper authority to administer the NTSP.</p>
Overseas Workers Affairs	HB 7124	Rep. Pacquiao	Mandating the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) to publish, disseminate, and update a handbook on the rights and responsibilities of migrant workers, amending for the purpose RA 8042, otherwise known as the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995, as amended	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), approved the Committee Report on HB 7124.
	HB 3746	Rep. Marcoleta	Establishing the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) Social Security and Retirement System and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the three bills.
	HB 5470	Rep. Alejano	Creating the OFWs Pension Fund and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 7228	Rep. Castelo	Providing for the protection of OFW dependents by setting up for them a special pension fund in the event of income loss due to death or disability	
	HR 625	Rep. De Jesus	Inquiry into and assessment of the efforts of the Philippine government to respond to the needs of OFWs affected by the crisis in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the aim to develop appropriate measures to	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HR 625 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Emmi de Jesus (Party-List, GABRIELA), author of HR 625, asked the Land Bank of the</p>

<p>Continuation... Overseas Workers Affairs</p>			<p>assist OFWs in distress in the Middle East</p>	<p>Philippines (LBP) about the loans being extended to OFWs.</p> <p>Generoso David of LBP informed the Committee of its partnership with the Overseas Workers Affairs Administration (OWWA) to raise P1.3 billion, as of December 2017, to serve as loan funds for returning OFWs who want to put up their own business in the Philippines. The amount of loans to OFWs ranges from P300,000.00 to P2 million with a 7.5% interest per annum, David said.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. De Jesus on why OFWs are now required to have collateral for their loans, David explained that Land Bank has to ensure the viability of the loan program. David cited the poor payment history of loans without collaterals as what was experienced in the initial implementation of the program. He also mentioned that the collateral requirement will instill financial discipline among the borrowers and encourage them to treat their loans more seriously given what is at stake.</p> <p>Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) advised OWWA to consider placing OFW funds in banks as time deposits in order to yield a 5% annual interest income.</p>
	<p>HRs 1694 & 1708</p>	<p>Reps. Violago and De Jesus</p>	<p>Investigation into the case of Joanna Demafelis, who was killed by her Syrian and Lebanese employers a year ago and whose body was found inside a freezer in an abandoned apartment in Kuwait only recently, and other abuses against OFWs in the Middle East, with the view of protecting their welfare</p>	<p>The Committee will prepare and submit its report on the two resolutions as soon as it receives the document it requested from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), which is conducting a parallel investigation of the Demafelis case.</p> <p>POEA Deputy Administrator Jocelyn Sanchez disclosed that the POEA's Repatriation Unit, upon finding out that the license of the recruitment agency that deployed Demafelis to Kuwait was already cancelled, referred the case to OWWA's Repatriation and Assistance Division and the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO)-Kuwait.</p> <p>The Committee earlier requested from the NBI a copy of the sworn statement of Agnes Tuballes, alleged recruiter of Demafelis, and Adrian Briones, identified as the owner of the recruitment agency, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Global E-Human Resources, Inc.</p> <p>While the NBI has already furnished the Committee a copy of the sworn statement of Briones, it has not yet done so in the case of Tuballes.</p> <p>According to the sworn statement of Briones, he was once one of the owners of the said recruitment agency. However, he clarified that he was no longer connected with the company when Demafelis was recruited. He has divested his interest in the company since 2012, Briones added.</p>

Public Order and Safety	HB 4171	Rep. Barbers	Requiring mandatory autopsy on bodies of crime victims, deaths under mysterious and suspicious circumstances	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study further the four measures.
	HB 4900	Rep. Castelo	Interdicting unauthorized disposition of human corpses by individuals, crematorium or funeral parlors and prescribing penalties for violations thereof	The TWG will be chaired by Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar).
	HB 4994	Rep. Roque (H.)	Prohibiting the cremation of bodies of victims of crimes under investigation	Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), author of HB 4171, manifested that the explanatory note to the bill be registered as his sponsorship speech.
	HR 758	Rep. Uybarreta	Urging the Department of Health (DOH) to adopt and implement rules on the operation of crematoriums to ensure that such facilities shall not be used to destroy or conceal evidences of crimes	<p>Rep. Ciriaco Calalang (Party-List, KABAYAN), who sponsored HB 4994, said that the bill seeks to penalize the cremation of bodies of victims of crimes undergoing investigation without clearance from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) or the Philippine National Police (PNP). The aim is to avoid any attempt to conceal or destroy evidences.</p> <p>Dr. Raquel Fortun, chairperson of the Department of Pathology, UP College of Medicine, emphasized that medico-legal practitioners and funeral parlors should not be allowed to conduct autopsies because the practice of forensic pathology requires extensive skills and training.</p> <p>Fortun pointed out the need to establish a "death investigation system" that will guide authorities in determining if a dead body needs to undergo autopsy for medico-legal purposes, among others; and a "medical examiners system" which will set the guidelines in identifying who will do the autopsy.</p> <p>Fortun said she recently attended committee meetings at the House of Representatives and at the Senate wherein a proposed law creating a Forensic Science Institute is being deliberated on. She also recalled having participated in the deliberations on a bill requiring mandatory autopsy years back but does not know what happened to it.</p> <p>Replying to Iligan City Rep. Frederick Siao's query, PNP Crime Laboratory Director Debold Sinas said that it is the investigating officer on the case who requests for a medico-legal officer from the PNP Crime Laboratory to conduct an autopsy on a dead body.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Barbers how funeral parlors dispose of unclaimed corpses, Veronica Memorial Chapels General Manager Remedios Esperidion explained that if an unidentified cadaver is not claimed after 60 days, the funeral parlor requests the local government unit (LGU) concerned for its burial in a public cemetery.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the proposed law were resource persons from the government:</p>

Continuation... Public Order and Safety				Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Justice (DOJ), and PNP's Crime Laboratory and Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management (DIDM); and from the Philippine Embalmers and Undertakers Review and Training Center (PEURT) and Philippine Embalmers and Undertakers Association, Inc. (PEUA).
Tourism	HBs 5072, 5229, 5230, 5231, 5332, 5333 & 5720	Reps. Gorriceta, Cagas, Deputy Speaker Abueg, and Rep. Siao	Declaring certain parts of the country as ecotourism zones/sites and tourist destinations, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Lucy Gomez (4 th District, Leyte), approved the seven bills. The Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) expressed no objection to the bills.
	HB 7207	Rep. Gonzales (A.D.)	Declaring the Paskuhan Village in the City of San Fernando, Province of Pampanga as cultural heritage and declaring the land where the Village is situated as property of the public domain	The Committee approved HB 7207 with amendments. Associate Solicitor Eric Lavadia of the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) informed the Committee that TIEZA's sale of Paskuhan Village to Premier Central Inc. (PCI) is considered null and void from the beginning for not complying with the procurement law. The sale of the Paskuhan Village was also the subject of investigation by the House Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability due to alleged irregularities attendant to the sale. Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Region IV Director Jethro Sabariaga also apprised the Committee that although the sale between TIEZA and PCI was consummated, the certificate of title to the property has not yet been transferred to the buyer.
Transportation	HB 6090	Rep. Sandoval	Establishing and constructing a hospital for the Philippine Coast Guard, its personnel and dependents to be known as the Philippine Coast Guard General Hospital and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, approved HB 6090 subject to style.

DISCUSSION WITH AGENCIES		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Ecology	Discussion of the environmental condition of Philippine coastal areas with beach resorts and other developments in Regions IV-A and V	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija), will continue its inquiry into the environmental condition of Philippine coastal areas in its next meeting. Supervising Environmental Management Specialist Michael Dapdapig of the Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (EMB-DENR), informed the Committee that out of 88 beach resorts being monitored in the provinces of Cavite, Batangas and Quezon, only 12 have discharge permits (DP). The 76 resorts without DPs have been issued with

<p>Continuation... Ecology</p>		<p>notices of violation (NOVs). While 30 resorts served with NOVs have complied (some already have approved DPs while others are still awaiting approval), 46 others have not yet complied with the requirements.</p> <p>Based on RA 9275 or Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, the DP is the legal authorization granted by the DENR to operators of facilities to discharge wastewater into a particular body of water, provided that they observe the following conditions specified: quantity and quality of effluent that is allowed to be released; compliance schedule; and monitoring requirement.</p> <p>EMB Region IV-A OIC-Regional Director Noemi Paranada conveyed that domestic wastes from the communities along or near coastal areas largely contribute to the problem. She also committed to submit the list of establishments that have been issued with NOVs and those issued with Environmental Compliance Certificates (ECCs).</p> <p>DENR Undersecretary Maria Paz Luna said that water pollution from domestic wastes may be solved through the National Sewerage and Septage Management Program of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) although the program is limited only to highly urbanized cities and first class municipalities.</p> <p>Meanwhile, EMB Region V Director Eva Ocfemia presented the Recreational Water Monitoring Program in Bicol Region and the list of resorts per province showing those that are operational, non-operational, with ECCs, with waste disposal plants, with septic tanks, and with sewerage treatment plants.</p> <p>She said monitoring results showed that the water bodies in Camarines Sur, Masbate, and Sorsogon failed to comply with the allowed level of oil, grease, and fecal coliform.</p> <p>Several House Members advised the EMB to coordinate with local government units in ensuring that ECCs are complied with first, before the issuance of business permits.</p> <p>The Committee directed the EMB to implement significant solutions to the environmental problems in Metro Manila, and gave EMB Regions IV-A and V 10 months to issue NOVs and to report back to the Committee in January 2019.</p>
<p>North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Discussion with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on issues and concerns relative to the infrastructure projects in North Luzon</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Deogracias Victor "DV" Savellano (1st District, Ilocos Sur), discussed with the DPWH the issues and concerns relative to the infrastructure projects in North Luzon.</p> <p>At the outset, Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Luisa Lloren Cuaresma inquired how the DPWH identifies the infrastructure projects in various congressional districts that will be funded by the Department.</p> <p>DPWH Region II Assistant Regional Director Alexander Nola explained that local government units (LGUs) and congressional district representatives submit their proposed projects to the DPWH district engineering offices concerned which will then forward the proposal to the DPWH regional office.</p> <p>DPWH Assistant Secretary Maximo Carvajal and Nola said that all proposed projects aligned with the programs of the Department are submitted to the central office for evaluation. Carvajal added that the DPWH Central Office ultimately determines which projects will be funded.</p> <p>DPWH officials were asked about the possible effects of HB 7302 or the proposed Budget Reform Act on infrastructure projects that were not yet completed after the fiscal year.</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>		<p>HB 7302 seeks to institutionalize the initiative to promote the disciplined execution of the budget, which limits the time span of appropriation and enforces a cash-based rather than an obligation-based appropriation. It was approved by the House of Representatives on third reading last March 20.</p> <p>Carvajal said that with the proposed cash-based appropriations, unutilized funds would not be easy to recover, hence the remaining budget for 2018 which has not been fully utilized should be implemented by not later than March of 2019.</p> <p>Under Section 36 (Availability of Annual Cash-Based Appropriations) of HB 7302, all annual appropriations shall be available for release, contractual commitment and disbursement until the end of the fiscal year. However, government agencies may still disburse the funds not later than three months from the end of the fiscal year for goods or services which have already been delivered or rendered, inspected and accepted within the fiscal year. After the end of the validity period, any unspent appropriations shall lapse, while unexpended balances of funds shall revert to the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund.</p> <p>The resource persons answered the queries of the House Members regarding the status of DPWH projects in their respective districts.</p> <p>The Committee directed the resource persons to submit the documents and reports requested by the Members.</p>
<p>Overseas Workers Affairs</p>	<p>Discussion on the implementation of Section 4 of RA 8042, as amended by RA 10022, on the guarantees of protection of migrant workers and the status of the bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) between the Philippines and countries of destination of OFWs</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Jesulito Manalo (Party-List, ANGKLA), listened to the report of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on the bilateral labor agreements (BLAs) between the Philippines and the countries of destination of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).</p> <p>DOLE Secretary Silvestre Bello informed the Committee that DOLE and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) are convening a three-day workshop to assess the rules and procedures on the drafting, negotiation, and concluding of BLAs. The goal is to create BLAs that ensure the welfare and protection of OFWs. He also cited the recently concluded BLA negotiation between the Philippines and Kuwait which led to the inclusion of new provisions such as the right of OFWs to keep his or her passport, and the right to communicate with others through his or her cellphone or laptop, among others.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>National Defense and Security</p>	<p>Briefing by the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on the funding for the revised AFP Modernization Program and the status of the BCDA's Asset Disposition Program</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Amado Espino Jr. (5th District, Pangasinan), listened to the briefing conducted by the BCDA and the AFP on the funds for the revised AFP Modernization Program and the status of the BCDA's Asset Disposition Program.</p> <p>BCDA President and CEO Vivencio Dizon reported that from May 1993 to December 2017, the total proceeds from BCDA's Asset Disposition Program amounted to P91 billion. The AFP's share in the proceeds from the disposition (sale and non-sale transactions) of military lands amounted to P40 billion which was allocated as follows: P29 billion for the AFP modernization program and P11 billion for the replication of military facilities. During the first two years (2016-2017) of President Duterte's administration, the BCDA was able to remit P8.8 billion to the AFP.</p>

<p><i>Continuation...</i> National Defense and Security</p>		<p>According to Dizon, the policy directive of the President and the Secretary of the Department of National Defense (DND) with regard to asset disposition is to give priority to non-sale transactions such as lease and joint venture, instead of a sale transaction, as they will render higher net proceeds. This is due to the recurring or continuous income that can be obtained from a lease or joint venture transaction.</p> <p>AFP Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans BGen. Restituto Padilla presented to the Committee the status of the revised AFP Modernization Program (RA 10349) and its funding requirement.</p> <p>A total budget of P1.8 trillion is required to fund the 15-year revised AFP Modernization Program composed of “three horizons” as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horizon 1 – 52 projects for the period 2013-2017 with a budget of P94.28 billion (11 projects have been completed thus far with 41 more ongoing); • Horizon 2 – 89 projects for the period 2018-2022 with a budget of P375.90 billion; and • Horizon 3 – 141 projects for the period 2023-2027 with a budget of P1.32 trillion. <p>On the request of DND Secretary Delfin Lorenzana for additional funds to be utilized for the titling of AFP lands especially those in military camps, Budget and Management Specialist Beverly Galmesa of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) replied that it should be included in the AFP’s first five priority programs in order for it to be given additional funds.</p> <p>The DND also recommended that the pension system for veterans and retirees be handled by another agency or office.</p>
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