

# Committee Daily Bulletin



17<sup>th</sup> Congress  
Second Regular Session

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## BICAMERAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Public Order and Safety	HB 4863 & SB 1239	Rep. Matugas and Sen. Lacson	Granting the Chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the Director and the Deputy Director for Administration of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) the authority to administer oath and to issue subpoena and subpoena duces tecum, amending for the purpose RA 6975, as amended, otherwise known as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Act of 1990	<p>The Bicameral Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Romeo Acop (2nd District, Antipolo City), Chair of the House Committee on Public Order and Safety, and Senator Panfilo Lacson, Chair of the Senate Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs, agreed to adopt the Senate version with amendments and thereafter approved the Bicameral Conference Committee Report.</p> <p>Other conferees who were present during the bicameral conference meeting were the following: On the part of the House, Reps. Francisco Jose "Bingo" Matugas II (1st District, Surigao del Norte), Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar), and Leopoldo Bataoil (2nd District, Pangasinan); On the part of the Senate: Senators Gregorio Honasan II, Maria Lourdes "Nancy" Binay, and Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan.</p>

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Ecology	HRs 705 & 709	Reps. Biazon and Pineda	Inquiry into the status of initiatives being implemented by the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) and the government in general relative to the rehabilitation of Laguna de Bay	<p>The Committee, presided by Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1<sup>st</sup> District, Agusan del Norte), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HRs 705 and 709 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Fortun emphasized that the inquiry aims to address the following issues relative to the continuing deterioration of the Laguna Lake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether or not there is a need to review the implementation of programs and projects of the LLDA as well as its powers and functions to determine possible amendments to its charter or if a new agency should be created in its place;</li> <li>• Whether or not existing laws, rules and regulations governing waste water disposal and water treatment are adequate; and</li> <li>• Whether or not a concrete effort by the government is directed at revitalizing the Laguna de Bay as an important water source.</li> </ul>

<p>Continuation... Ecology</p>				<p>Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), author of HR 709, inquired on the reason for the cancellation of the P18 billion contract with a Belgian firm for the dredging of the Napindan Channel, which is part of the Laguna Lake Rehabilitation Project, and on the plans of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to solve the deterioration of the Laguna de Bay Basin.</p> <p>DENR's River Basin Control Office Executive Director Antonio Daño said that the contract was cancelled because of the opposition of the settlers in the areas that will be affected by the dredging.</p> <p>LLDA's Research and Development Chief Adelina Santos-Borja added that several concerns, such as the actual design of the project and the area where the dredged materials would be disposed, remained unresolved. She also said that LLDA was not consulted during the conceptualization phase of the project.</p> <p>DENR Undersecretary Ma. Paz Luna said the Department is currently meeting with the stakeholders relative to the implementation of the Laguna de Bay Basin Master Plan 2016 and Beyond. (The master plan contains strategies to harness the potentials of the Basin to ensure the sustainable use of the Lake and its resources.) Luna emphasized that, apart from commercial and industrial wastes, more than 50% of the wastes being deposited in the Basin come from domestic wastes.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda also raised concern on the disposal into the lake of untreated waste water coming from quick-service restaurants (QSRs). He urged the DENR to come up with an industry-specific standard for effluents (or waste water discharged into bodies of water) which should be complied with by QSRs.</p> <p>Santos-Borja disclosed that there are around 17,000 industries around the Lake and 800 of these are QSRs. Of the 800, only 30% comply with the current effluent standard. She informed the Committee that the DENR has in fact issued Administrative Order (AO) No. 8 in 2016 which directs industries' compliance with the Water Quality Guidelines and General Effluent Standards within five years.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Aklan Rep. Carlito Marquez, Ronald Padua, water supply operations head of the Maynilad Water Services Inc. (Maynilad), said that the company's plant in Muntinlupa City draws 150 million liters per day from the Laguna Lake to supply water to Muntinlupa City and some parts of the Cities of Parañaque and Las Piñas.</p> <p>Ryan Orillo, septage management head of Maynilad, added that Maynilad is planning to</p>
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Continuation... Ecology				<p>put up two more waste water treatment facilities in Cupang and Tunasan in Muntinlupa by 2018.</p> <p>On the query of Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, author of HR 705, Santos-Borja said that one of the projects of the LLDA is to demolish illegal fish pens which cover more than half of the surface area of the Laguna Lake. She also mentioned the need for a centralized waste water treatment facility to take care of domestic wastes in the area.</p> <p>The LLDA, DENR, and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MMWS) were requested to submit the documents and reports requested by the Members of the Committee.</p>
Games and Amusements	HR 1394	Rep. Oaminal	<p>Inquiry into the procedure of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) in granting provisional certificates of accreditation to electronic gaming system (EGS) service providers and the manner of selecting and awarding the privilege to operate internet gaming cafés</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Gus Tambunting (2nd District, Parañaque City), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 1394 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Henry Oaminal (2nd District, Misamis Occidental) asked PAGCOR why it still issued a provisional certificate of accreditation to PhilWeb Inc., a gaming technology provider, despite the President's pronouncements against online gaming.</p> <p>PAGCOR Assistant Vice President Arnold Salvosa replied that a certificate of accreditation given to a service provider is different from a license given to operators of online gaming. He also believes that the President has softened his stance against online gaming with the condition that proper taxes are paid by the operators and that gaming establishments are located in areas prescribed by law.</p> <p>When asked to comment about the audit reports of the Commission on Audit (COA) indicating that PAGCOR has failed to remit to the National Treasury the mandated government share of 50% of its income since 2011, Salvosa explained that PAGCOR is supposed to remit 50% of casino earnings and not based on its gross earnings.</p> <p>COA Audit Team Leader Abdul Nassif Faisal maintained that PAGCOR is mandated to remit 50% of its gross income to the National Treasury. Faisal, however, could not explain why similar findings did not come about prior to 2011. He promised to look into the matter and report back to the Committee in the next meeting.</p> <p>PAGCOR was asked to submit the following: document outlining the accreditation process of service providers, list of licensed online gaming operators, copy of PhilWeb's contract as well as the contract of Interactive Entertainment Solutions Technology (IEST),</p>

Continuation... Games and Amusements	Privilege Speech 130	Rep. Teves	On the alleged PhilWeb Corporation's quitclaim requirement	<p>the only remaining service provider for PAGCOR, pending the return to operations of PhilWeb Inc.</p> <p>The Committee will deliberate further on the issues raised in the privilege speech of Rep. Arnolfo "Arnie" Teves Jr. (3rd District, Negros Oriental) in its next meeting.</p> <p>In his privilege speech, Rep. Teves questioned the policy of PhilWeb of requiring its operators to sign a quitclaim stating among others that they have received the betting credit fund (BCF) when in fact they have not.</p> <p>BCF refers to the "available total credit amount of the gaming site for deposit to gaming terminals as availed by the players for game play. The prescribed initial amount of BCF is deposited by the operator to the service provider." (Source: PAGCOR Gaming Site Regulatory Manual)</p> <p>Rep. Randolph Ting (3rd District, Cagayan), asked PhilWeb Inc. Vice President for Legal Affairs Raymund Aquino to shed light on the quitclaim issue.</p> <p>According to Aquino, an operator is required to deposit P100,000 to PhilWeb Inc. as BCF, which will be given back to the operators once clearance from liabilities or obligations has been issued by PAGCOR.</p> <p>The Committee requested PhilWeb Inc. to submit a list of operators with pending quitclaims and the status of such claims.</p>
Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Banks and Financial Intermediaries	HR 1433	Rep. Evardone	Inquiry into the recently reported improper and allegedly illegal act of stocks trading of certain key officials of the Social Security System (SSS) leading to investment opportunity losses of the SSS to the prejudice of the corporation and its members, and to recommend appropriate legislation	<p>The Joint Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Eastern Samar Rep. Ben Evardone, Chair of the Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries, will continue its inquiry into the issues raised relative to HRs 1433 and 1434 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Pimentel said that the inquiry will look into whether SSS officials committed acts constituting malfeasance, misfeasance or nonfeasance in office; and whether remedial legislation is required to address the issues raised in the two resolutions and those that may crop up during the inquiry.</p> <p>SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Emmanuel Dooc, who also sits as the vice chair of the Social Security Commission (SSC), initially said that he would like to refrain from giving comments on the alleged irregularities in the SSS since these are already under administrative investigation by a special committee created by the SSC.</p> <p>However, Deputy Speaker Romero "Miro" Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City), together</p>
	HR 1434	Rep. Zarate	Inquiry into the alleged conflict of interests and profiteering of SSS executives	

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Banks and Financial Intermediaries</p>				<p>with Reps. Pimentel and Robert "Ace" Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte), said that notwithstanding the SSC's ongoing administrative investigation, the Committee can still pursue its own inquiry in aid of legislation, especially considering that the issues involve national interest. Thus, they advised the SSS officials to cooperate with the Committee in this inquiry.</p> <p>SSC Commissioner Jose Gabriel La Viña said that he filed a complaint against SSS Executive Vice President for Investments Rizaldy Capulong, Equities Investment Division Chief Reginald Candelaria, Equities Product Development Head Ernesto Francisco Jr., and Chief Actuary George Ongkeko Jr.</p> <p>La Viña alleged that Capulong, Candelaria, and Francisco illegally profited from an unethical internal arrangement in stocks trading, while Ongkeko committed gross negligence for failure to provide the SSC with the complete trading records of the three other respondents.</p> <p>Francisco and Ongkeko denied the allegations hurled against them during the hearing.</p> <p>SSC Chair Amado Valdez said that despite the controversy, he believes that the SSS is generally composed of honest, dedicated and committed personnel. He added that he himself would want to know the truth, further saying that the case should be investigated thoroughly to determine whether there were other people involved aside from the SSS executives already identified.</p> <p>The Joint Committee requested SSS to immediately submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on the partial result of the administrative investigation being conducted by the SSC Special Committee;</li> <li>• Copy of the complaint-affidavit of La Viña, together with the counter-affidavits of the respondents;</li> <li>• List of SSS accredited stock brokers;</li> <li>• Guidelines in the accreditation of stock brokers;</li> <li>• Organizational structure of the SSS; and</li> <li>• List of SSS officials with equity investments within the last five years.</li> </ul> <p>Rep. Pimentel said the Committee will again invite Candelaria to attend the next meeting, but will be given a warning that if he again fails to honor the invitation, a show cause order shall be issued against him.</p>
<p>Government Reorganization jt. w/ Natural Resources</p>	<p>HBs 1173 &amp; 4266</p>	<p>Deputy Speaker Cayetano and Rep. Escudero</p>	<p>Instituting reforms in the land administration system, creating the Land Administration Authority (LAA)</p>	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Camiguin Rep. Xavier Jesus Romualdo, Chair of the Committee on Government Reorganization, and Rep. Arnel Ty (Party-List,</p>

Continuation... Government Reorganization jt. w/ Natural Resources	HB 4588	Rep. Romero	Institutionalizing the powers of the Land Registration Authority (LRA), rationalizing its functions to provide faster and more effective adjudication on all land registration concerns to preserve and maintain the integrity of all land records	<p>LPGMA), Chair of the Committee on Natural Resources, agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the three bills.</p> <p>Rep. Jose "Pingping" Tejada (3rd District, North Cotabato) lauded the intent of the proposed law, saying that this will streamline government services on land titling.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Jesus Nonato Sacdalan (1st District, North Cotabato) enjoined the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Land Registration Authority (LRA) to look into cases of double titling, particularly in his district, and come up with measures to immediately address the problem.</p> <p>Representatives from the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), DAR, DENR, and LRA expressed their support for the bills. They were requested to submit their position papers on the bills for the consideration of the TWG.</p>
Human Rights	Substitute Bill to HBs 79, 1556, 3312 & 3541	Reps. Aglipay-Villar, Villafuerte, Bagao, and Deputy Speaker Garin	Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Act	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), approved the substitute bill, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to adopt and harmonize the penal provision of the substitute bill with that of HB 4982 or the proposed Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE) Equality Act, which was already approved by the House of Representatives on September 20, 2017.</p>
Legislative Franchises	Substitute Bill to HB 4974	Rep. Bataoil	Renewing the franchise granted to Ultrasonic Broadcasting System Incorporated under RA 8081	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1st District, Palawan), approved the Committee Report on the Substitute Bill to HB 4974.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 4513 & 6660	Reps. Vargas and Romualdo	Renewing the franchise granted to Radio Marine Network (RMN) Incorporated, under RA 4607, as amended by RA 7512	<p>The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HBs 4513 and 6660.</p> <p>National Telecommunications Commission's (NTC) Services and Interconnection Division Chief Marie Raben expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Assistant Director Kenneth Joy Quimo advised the Radio Marine Network to secure a certificate of good standing from the SEC.</p> <p>RMN Vice President Regis Abuel said his company has already secured a certificate of good standing and promised to submit a copy to the Committee.</p>

Continuation... Legislative Franchises	HB 5265	Rep. Robes	Renewing for another 25 years the franchise granted to Peñafrancia Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) under RA 8166	<p>The Committee approved HB 5265.</p> <p>NTC Broadcasting Division Chief Alvin Bernardo Blanco expressed support for the bill.</p> <p>On the other hand, Quimo disclosed that PBC has not yet submitted to the SEC certain documents which are required prior to the issuance of a certificate of good standing.</p> <p>PBC Secretary and Treasurer Elmer Galica promised to submit the required documents to SEC.</p>
Population and Family Relations	HB 116	Rep. Lagman	Instituting absolute divorce in the Philippines	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragonés (3 <sup>rd</sup> District, Laguna), will deliberate further on the seven bills in its next meeting.
	HB 1062	Rep. Barbers	Amending Title I, Chapter 3, of EO 209, otherwise known as the Family Code of the Philippines, prescribing additional ground for annulment	Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Legal Service Director Lourdines dela Cruz informed the Committee that there were over 439,000 marriages solemnized in the Philippines in 2015 and around 3,295 annulment cases decided by the court and annotated by the PSA in its civil registry files.
	HB 1629	Deputy Speaker Garcia	Legalizing church annulment or dissolution of certain marriages	Dela Cruz said that the small number of annulment cases in the country can be attributed to the high cost involved, tedious documentary requirements, and time consuming process.
	HB 2380	Rep. De Jesus	Introducing divorce in the Philippines, amending for the purpose Articles 26, 55 to 66 and repealing Article 36 under Title II of EO 209, as amended	Asked on the reported proliferation of fake annulment documents, Dela Cruz said that to determine the authenticity of these documents, the PSA requires the submission of the original or certified true copy of the court decision which should contain the docket number or title of the case.
	HB 3705	Rep. Romualdez	Recognizing the civil effects of church declaration of nullity, annulment, and dissolution of marriages	Elizabeth Angsioco, chairperson of the Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines (DSWP), said that considering that only the rich are able to afford the high cost of filing annulment cases, the passage of a divorce law has become imperative.
	HB 6027	Rep. Baguilat	Providing for grounds for the dissolution of a marriage	For his part, Juanito Chua Jr. of the Catholics for Reproductive Health recommended that the process of divorce should be simplified and made inexpensive to make it accessible to the poor.
	HB 6446	Deputy Speaker Cayetano	Recognizing the capacity of the Filipino spouse to remarry when the alien spouse has obtained a foreign judicial decree of absolute divorce, amending for the purpose EO 209	Reverend Vernie Compas, executive director of the Interfaith Partnership for the Promotion of Responsible Parenthood Inc. (IPPRP), suggested that the proposed law on divorce should be pro-poor, pro-development, and pro-family.
				Replying to Rep. Evelina Escudero's (1 <sup>st</sup> District, Sorsogon) question, Atty. Dominic Solis, former governor of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), explained that annulment of marriage means the marriage is invalid from the beginning. In divorce, the parties involved

Continuation... Population and Family Relations				may jointly petition the court for divorce due to irreconcilable differences, Solis added.
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	HBs 15, 519, 902, 1712, 1917, 2925, 3249, 3380 & 3411	Rep. Belmonte (F.), Deputy Speaker Castro, Reps. Fortuno, Oaminal, Ocampo, Villanueva, Primicias-Agabas, Panganiban, and Unabia	Increasing the authorized expenses of candidates and political parties, amending for the purpose Section 13 of RA 7166 or the law providing for synchronized national and local elections and for electoral reforms, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sherwin Tugna (Party-List, CIBAC), agreed to consolidate the nine bills and come up with a substitute bill.</p> <p>Rep. Tugna said that a bill with similar subject matter was approved by the House of Representatives on Second Reading during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Fredenil "Fred" Castro (2nd District, Capiz), author of HB 519, said that increasing the authorized expenses of candidates and political parties will encourage the candidates to truthfully declare their campaign expenses during elections.</p> <p>Rep. Jose Panganiban Jr. (Party-List, ANAC-IP), author of HB 3380, suggested that the term "independent candidate" should be defined in the substitute bill, to which representatives from the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) agreed.</p> <p>Likewise, COMELEC legal counsel Renel Tatlonghari expressed the Commission's support for the proposed law, explaining that the provisions of RA 7166 that pertain to the authorized expenses of candidates and political parties are already outdated.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to increase the maximum allowable campaign expenditures per registered voter for the following positions: President, P50; Vice-President, P40; Senator, District Congressman, Governor, Vice Governor, Board Member, Mayor, Vice Mayor, Councilor, and political parties, P30; Party-List representatives; P10; and independent candidates for Senator, Congressman, Governor, Vice Governor, Board Member, Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Councilor, P40.</p>
Veterans Affairs and Welfare	Substitute Bill to HBs 1128 & 1262	Reps. Alejano and Biazon	Mandating the use of proceeds from the development, lease or use of certain government properties for payment of pensions and other benefits of the veterans	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Leopoldo Bataoil (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Pangasinan), approved the substitute bill subject to style.</p> <p>The bill will be transmitted to the Committee on Appropriations for its comments on the bill's appropriations provision.</p> <p>Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) Administrator Ernesto Carolina expressed support for the bill as it will provide more resources for the benefit of veterans.</p> <p>On the other hand, Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP) General Manager Eric Himan lamented that the bill will greatly affect the revenues of the VFP considering that most of its income come from the 50-hectare VFP Industrial Complex in Taguig City, which is one of the properties covered by the bill.</p>

Continuation... Veterans Affairs and Welfare				<p>Rep. Gary Alejano (Party-List, MAGDALO) said that VFP's revenues from other properties it manages may be enough to finance its operating expenses.</p> <p>Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon suggested that other government agencies such as the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) may be mandated to assist PVAO in the administration and management of the properties identified in the bill.</p>
	HR 1020	Rep. Acop	<p>Inquiry into the performance of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) as the primary medical facility for the hospitalization and medical care of eligible veterans and dependents with the end view of charting immediate policy measures and/or substantial recommendations that will secure and promote the health care of military veterans and retirees in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)</p>	<p>The Committee terminated its deliberation on HR 1020.</p> <p>Earlier, VMMC Director Dominador Chiong Jr., commenting on the issue raised in the previous meeting, said that he already issued a memorandum reiterating the office policy against drinking of alcoholic beverages within the hospital premises and also called the attention of the resident trainees who allegedly violated this policy.</p> <p>Rep. Romeo Acop (2<sup>nd</sup> District, Antipolo City) asserted that a formal investigation should still be conducted on the matter.</p> <p>On the request of Rep. Acop, Commission on Audit (COA) Audit Team Leader Aurora Dacanay gave an update on the findings in the COA audit report pertaining to VMMC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of drugs and medicines has improved;</li> <li>• The implementation of VMMC's infrastructure projects is still delayed; and</li> <li>• The VMMC's collection rate is still low because a lot of civilian patients are discharged by only issuing promissory notes.</li> </ul> <p>Chiong explained that the bulk of the collectibles come from patients admitted in the hospital emergency section who are financially incapable of paying their bills. He, however, assured the Committee that measures were already implemented to address this problem.</p>
Youth and Sports Development	HB 6159	Rep. Amatong	Establishing the Zamboanga del Norte Sports Academy and Training Center in the Province of Zamboanga del Norte, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Conrado Estrella III (Party-List, ABONO), approved the bill subject to style.
	HB 6207	Rep. Mercado	Establishing the Southern Leyte Sports Academy in Southern Leyte, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the bill subject to style.
	HB 544	Rep. Sambar	Creating the Philippine Sports Academy (PSA) as an attached agency of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), providing for its structure, powers, and functions	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the two bills.</p> <p>Rep. Mark Aeron Sambar (Party-List, PBA), author of HB 544, said that it is high time for the country to establish a school that will train athletes capable of winning gold and other medals as well as coaches, referees and other educators in the field of sports. According to</p>
	HB 4530	Rep. Dimaporo (M.K.)	Establishing the Philippine Institute of Sports, defining its powers, functions, and responsibilities, and appropriating funds therefor	

Continuation... Youth and Sports Development				<p>Rep. Sambar, the country should make use of sports as a tool for human development.</p> <p>Rep. Mohamad Khalid Dimaporo (1st District, Lanao del Norte), author of HB 4530, pointed out that his bill aims to establish the Philippine Institute of Sports as the principal governing body in creating a standard sports development and training program for the country.</p> <p>Representatives from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Department of Health (DOH), Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), University of the Philippines (UP) College of Human Kinetics, and Fencing Confederation of Asia (FCA) expressed support for the bills.</p> <p>Meanwhile, League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) Executive Director Sandra Paredes and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP) Executive Director Bernardino Sayo suggested that funds for the implementation of this proposed law be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).</p>
	HB 5024	Rep. Gomez	Institutionalizing a comprehensive national grassroots sports development program centered in the Philippine National Games	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to fine-tune the bill.</p> <p>HB 5024, authored by Rep. Lucy Gomez (4<sup>th</sup> District, Leyte), seeks to provide a structure for a truly integrated and comprehensive national sports program, linking grassroots sports promotion to elite sports development and encourage all local government officials to promote the development of sports in the countryside.</p> <p>Southern Leyte Rep. Roger "Oging" Mercado expressed support for the bill, saying that this will help divert the attention and energy of the youth away from unconstructive activities such as illegal drug-use.</p> <p>FCA President Celso Dayrit expressed support for the bill, which to him will complement the proposed measures establishing a sports academy. He added that the Philippines truly needs an integrated and comprehensive national sports program.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 1257 & 3809	Reps. Biazon and Barbers	Strengthening and intensifying the campaign against illegal drug trafficking, amending for this purpose certain sections of RA 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Acting Committee Secretary Virgilio "Jun" San Diego, will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Among the suggestions raised by the resource</p>

Continuation... Dangerous Drugs (Technical Working Group)				<p>persons during the meeting were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define “conspiracy” as used in the bill;</li> <li>• Provide a graduated scale of penalties that will be imposed on persons found in possession of any dangerous drug, depending on the number of offenses committed; and</li> <li>• Identify the qualifications for granting witnesses immunity from prosecution based on RA 6981 or the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act.</li> </ul> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their additional comments and recommendations to the TWG before the finalization of the bill.</p>
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<b>IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS</b>		
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>SUBJECT MATTER</b>	<b>DISCUSSIONS</b>
Justice	Impeachment complaint against Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno filed by Atty. Lorenzo Gadon and endorsed by 25 House Members	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Reynaldo Umali (2nd District, Oriental Mindoro), continued its hearing on the determination of probable cause regarding the impeachment complaint leveled against the Chief Justice.</p> <p>At the outset, the Chair briefly discussed the highlights of the previous hearing and proceeded to acknowledge the invited guests from the Supreme Court (SC). He also informed the Committee that retired SC Associate Justice Arturo Brion and SC Associate Justice Francis Jardeleza, would not be able to attend today’s hearing but expressed commitment to attend the succeeding hearings.</p> <p>Court Administrator Jose Midas Marquez read the SC en banc decision allowing SC justices and officials to appear before the House Impeachment Committee upon the latter’s invitation. However, SC justices and officials shall only speak about administrative matters, while only Associate Justice Teresita Leonardo-De Castro is allowed to testify on charges against the Chief Justice where she was linked.</p> <p>De Castro said that appearing before the Committee is an opportunity for her to correct certain misinformation said during the hearings and to discuss the processes involved in deciding on matters at the SC.</p> <p>Asked by Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) about a memorandum letter she wrote dated December 3, 2012, De Castro narrated the events that led to its issuance. As early as November 26, 2012, De Castro said, she already wrote a memorandum letter requesting the SC en banc to discuss collectively the creation of a Regional Court Administration Office (RCAO) in Region 7 on the basis of Administrative Order 175-2012 issued by Sereno, which did not follow the correct procedure.</p> <p>During the SC en banc meeting on November 27, 2012, all the Justices agreed with De Castro's recommendation to study further the said AO noting that RCAO 7 is vested with the powers and functions of a Judiciary Decentralization Office (JDO). Serreno committed to amend AO 175-2012.</p> <p>In distinguishing an RCAO from a JDO, De Castro explained that RCAO is created as an ad hoc body upon action by the SC en banc with the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) as the implementing</p>

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Justice

arm. A JDO is a permanent office which does not need SC en banc approval but requires delegation from the legislative branch. As such, the Chief Justice has no power to create such office on her own.

However, De Castro stressed that said AO was not amended by the Chief Justice but was actually ratified without the Justices' knowledge which led her to issue her December 3 memorandum letter. Upon convening on December 11, 2012, the SC en banc ruled in favor of De Castro overturning the Chief Justice' AO.

Both De Castro and Marquez declined to answer the question of the Majority Leader whether such acts of the Chief Justice can be considered a culpable violation of the Constitution. De Castro added that her purpose of appearing in the impeachment hearing is to lay down the facts and leave the determination to the Committee.

Siquijor Rep. Ramon V.A. "Rav" Rocamora asked De Castro whether her opposition to said AO was an emotional response to Sereno's appointment as Chief Justice by then President Benigno Simeon "Noy" Aquino III. De Castro answered in the negative.

Replying to the query of Deputy Speaker Ferdinand Hernandez (2nd District, South Cotabato) and Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), De Castro said that she was not against the creation or revival of the RAO 7, but was against the manner by which it was created, which was done with the actual intention of creating a JDO.

The Committee moved on to discuss another allegation, the supposed falsification by Sereno of a temporary restraining order (TRO) regarding the case of the Coalition of Associations of Senior Citizens in the Philippines, Inc. vs. Commission on Elections (COMELEC) in 2013, where De Castro was head of the division handling the case.

De Castro disclosed that the TRO she submitted pertaining to the case of the party-list for senior citizens was altered by the Chief Justice and replaced with a TRO preventing COMELEC from proclaiming all remaining party-list winners.

Rep. Doy Leachon (1st District, Oriental Mindoro) asked De Castro to comment on the Chief Justice's written answer that such act was within her powers as Chief Justice.

In response, De Castro countered that such act by the Chief Justice was "grossly unprocedural" as she was not consulted prior to the issuance of the final TRO when she was the "member-in-charge" of that case.

When asked by Rep. Rocamora if there is a rule requiring the Chief Justice to subscribe to the recommendation of the member-in-charge, De Castro answered that there is none, but that there is no rule as well authorizing the Chief Justice to set aside the recommendation of the member-in-charge.

On the query of Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia (3rd District, Cebu) if the Chief Justice's action on the TRO constitutes a flagrant disobedience of the internal rules and procedures of the SC, De Castro said yes.

Due to some questions on the definition of "culpable violation of the Constitution," Rep. Umali read a portion of the report of the then Special Committee on Impeachment Cases, which heard the case filed against former President Elpidio Quirino, which states that "a culpable violation of the Constitution should be both willful and intentional."

The Committee will issue subpoenas to several persons or offices to compel the submission of documents pertinent to the case.



<p>Continuation... North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>		<p>Rep. Mangaoang manifested that the Committee file a resolution urging the DOF to undertake the reclassification of LGUs.</p> <p>Based on Executive Order 249 issued in 1987, the income classification of provinces, cities, and municipalities (ranging from first class to sixth class) serves as a basis for fixing the maximum tax ceilings that may be imposed by LGUs, for establishing the salary scales and rates of allowance and other emoluments that LGU officials and personnel may be entitled to, and for determining the financial capability of LGUs to undertake developmental programs and projects, among others.</p>
<p>Transportation</p>	<p>Briefing by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on the status of its project implementation for 2016 and its absorptive capacity for 2017, in terms of fund utilization</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Catanduanes Rep. Cesar Sarmiento, listened to the presentation of DOTr Undersecretary Garry de Guzman on the status of DOTr's project implementation for 2016 and its absorptive capacity for 2017</p> <p>De Guzman reported that as of October 31, 2017, the absorptive capacity of DOTr and its attached agencies is at 44% or only P36 billion of the P81.5 billion allocation received by the DOTr from its current year and continuing appropriations. The utilization rates per transportation sector are as follows: Road, 42.77%; Maritime, 82.18%; Aviation, 30.49%; and Rail, 19.04%.</p> <p>De Guzman, however, expressed confidence that the absorptive capacity of the entire Department is expected to reach 52% by November and 85% by the end of the year. He also assured the Committee that reforms are being instituted to speed up the procurement process, such as outsourcing, allowed under RA 9184 or the Government Procurement Reform Act, and creating separate sectoral bids and awards committees (BACs) for aviation, rail, maritime and road sectors.</p> <p>Representatives from the Philippine National Railways (PNR), Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Land Transportation Office (LTO), and Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) also presented their respective reports on their absorptive capacity during the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee Members expressed concern over DOTr's low absorptive capacity considering that 2017 is about to end. Rep. Sarmiento urged the DOTr to look for ways to fast-track the implementation of government infrastructure projects, as well as to resolve long standing right-of-way (ROW) cases to improve the transportation system in the country.</p> <p>The DOTr and its attached agencies were requested to submit their list of projects with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name of project/program;</li> <li>• Annual budget allocation (2016 and 2017);</li> <li>• Obligated/unobligated funds for the project or program;</li> <li>• Status of project implementation; and</li> <li>• Fund utilization rate (absorptive capacity).</li> </ul>

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>Women and Gender Equality</p>	<p>Forum on "Reviewing the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004"</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sol Aragones (3<sup>rd</sup> District, Laguna), in partnership with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), conducted a forum entitled, "Reviewing the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004" (or RA 9262) on November 29, 2017 at the House of Representatives.</p>

<p>Continuation... Women and Gender Equality</p>	<p>Rep. Ma. Lourdes Aggabao (4<sup>th</sup> District, Isabela) welcomed the participants and guests to the forum. She said that the purpose of the forum is to serve as a venue for discussing the Anti-VAWC Law to help women value and fight for their rights.</p> <p>Rep. Emmi de Jesus (Party-List, GABRIELA) discussed the importance of Section 39 of RA 9262, which establishes an Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and their Children (IAC-VAWC). The Council, composed of various government agencies, is tasked to formulate programs and projects to eliminate VAW and serves as the monitoring body with regard to VAW initiatives.</p> <p>Rep. Aragonés highlighted the importance of declaring November 25 to December 12 of every year as the “18-day Campaign To End VAW” by virtue of Proclamation No. 1172, series of 2006.</p> <p>PCW’s Gender and Development (GAD) Senior Specialist Aurora San Juan underscored the importance of conducting massive information campaign on the Anti-VAWC Law, especially at the grassroots level.</p> <p>The following resource persons presented their respective reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kristel Biscayda, executive director of the Office of the Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, Department of Education (DepEd), explained DepEd’s Gender Responsive Basic Education Policy pursuant to Department Order (DO) 32, series of 2017. This policy enables the Department to undertake gender-mainstreaming in education to address gender and sexuality-related issues in basic education; promote the protection of children from all forms of gender-related violence, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, and bullying; and promote gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace and within the DepEd;</li> <li>• Cheryl Daytec-Yañgot, assistant secretary of the Department of Justice (DOJ), reported on the number of case loads and disposition of cases regarding VAW from 2013 to 2017 and on the disposition of criminal cases involving VAW by trial courts nationwide for CY 2016-2017;</li> <li>• Maria Evelyn Lita Manangan, chief of the Women Workers Development Division of the Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns, Department of Labor and Employment (BWSC-DOLE), discussed the 10-day VAWC leave provided under Section 43 of RA 9262 which entitles victims to take a paid leave of absence up to 10 days in addition to other paid leaves under the Labor Code; and</li> <li>• P/Supt. Angela Rejano of the Anti-VAWC Division, Women and Children Protection Center (WCPC) of the Philippine National Police (PNP), discussed the PNP’s effort to end VAWC.</li> </ul> <p>Renzo Valmonte, creative copywriter of Dentsu Jayme Syfu, the country’s leading creative agency, introduced the very first anti-sexual harassment chatbot named “Gabbie,” an automated program meant to make reporting of sexual harassment easier. (Gabbie is a facebook messenger chatbot which can be searched as “Gabbiegabriela” on the social media site.)</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) provided the synthesis of the forum, while Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT TEACHERS) gave her closing remarks which revolved around eliminating VAWC.</p>
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