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COMMITTEE MEETINGS				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Economic Affairs	HR 898	Rep. Yap (A.)	Inquiry into the desired economic policy direction of the Philippines with regard to foreign participation in the ownership and operation of corporations and firms engaged in the business of construction of buildings and other infrastructure in the country	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), will deliberate further on the issues raised in HR 898 in its next meeting.</p> <p>Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) Senior Lawyer Maria Mercedes Torrijos said that lifting the restrictions on foreign participation in construction activities would translate to better competition in the market.</p> <p>Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary Ruth Castelo explained that the amended implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of RA 4566 or the Contractor's License Law allows the participation of foreign construction companies in the infrastructure program of the government.</p> <p>Under the amended IRR of RA 4566 that was approved in 2015, contractor companies with 100% foreign equity can participate in infrastructure projects provided that they will bring in at least P1 billion worth of capital investments to the country.</p> <p>Castelo, however, mentioned that the government is still capable of implementing its "Build, Build, Build" Program without need yet of the participation of foreign contractors.</p> <p>National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Deputy Director General Rolando Tungpalan said that NEDA has received a memorandum from the Office of the President directing it to ease restrictions on the construction sector. However, Tungpalan asked for more time to look into the matter considering the opposing statements of the DTI and PCC.</p> <p>Reps. Yap and Randolph Ting (3rd District, Cagayan) expressed concern for the small-scale construction companies that might close shop when foreign entrants come into play.</p> <p>The PCC was requested to submit to the Committee a report on the number of foreign contractors that may possibly operate in the</p>

Continuation... Economic Affairs				country once the licensing restrictions are lifted and the number of small to medium scale construction companies that will be affected as a result of this policy change.
Economic Affairs jt. w/ Trade and Industry	HBs 28, 346, 2053, 2672, 3756, 5034, 6339 & 6472	Reps. Umali, Romualdez, Defensor , Pimentel, Mercado, Lanete, Speaker Alvarez, and Rep. Cua	Establishing special economic zones in various parts of the country, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), Chair of the Committee on Economic Affairs, and Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, for the Committee on Trade and Industry, approved the eight bills.</p> <p>Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) Assistant General Manager Hector Miole and Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) legal counsel Francis Brillantes expressed concern over the establishment of ecozones and freeports, saying that it requires huge expenditures on the part of the government.</p> <p>National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Regional Development Coordination Staff Fresita Araneta averred that the grant of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to locators in economic zones must be in line with the government's effort to rationalize incentives.</p> <p>Director Leandro Caymo of the Bureau of Land Tenure Improvement, Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), conveyed DAR's support for the bills provided that agricultural lands should not be converted into other uses and the rights of farmers would not be compromised.</p> <p>Likewise, the representatives of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) expressed their support for the bills.</p>
Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Transportation	Privilege Speech 283	Rep. Bertiz	Alleged irregularities in the procurement of vehicle license plates by the Land Transportation Office (LTO)	<p>The Joint Committee, co-presided by Rep. Johnny Ty Pimentel (2nd District, Surigao del Sur), Chair of the Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability, and Rep. Edgar Sarmiento (1st District, Samar), Vice Chair of the Committee on Transportation, will continue its deliberation on the issues raised in the privilege speech of Rep. Aniceto "John" Bertiz III (Party-List, ACTS-OFW).</p> <p>Rep. Bertiz asked Atty. Leo Romero to explain the case filed against LTO. Romero is the counsel of record in the 2013 Supreme Court en banc case, <i>Dela Cruz and Tambunting vs. Ochoa Jr., et al.</i>, representing the complainants.</p> <p>According to Romero, the LTO violated the Constitution when it allocated P1 billion for the purchase of license plates despite not having been included in the 2017 General Appropriations Act (GAA).</p> <p>Section 29 (1), Article VI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that "No money shall be paid out of the Treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by law."</p>

<p>Continuation... Good Government and Public Accountability jt. w/ Transportation</p>				<p>Atty. Romeo Vera Cruz, executive director and head of the LTO's Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), denied the allegations of Romero and cited Budget Circular 532 dated November 28, 2011 of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) as the guideline that allowed LTO to modify its budget and classify the procurement of license plates as part of its "motor vehicle registration and driver's license regulatory services" under its Major Final Output (MFO) found on page 164 of GAA 2017.</p> <p>DBM Bureau-A Supervising Analyst Loremee Pereda confirmed the statement of Vera Cruz, adding that during Congress' budget deliberation on LTO's 2017 budget, it was agreed that funds amounting to P1 billion will be authorized to be deducted from some of the Department of Transportation's (DOTr) major projects for the LTO's purchase of license plates.</p> <p>Rep. Pimentel expressed doubts if such agreement indeed took place last Congress and requested the Secretariat to reproduce and study the transcript of that proceeding.</p> <p>On the issue of the alleged rigged bidding raised by Rep. Eugene Michael de Vera (Party-List, ABS), Vera Cruz denied that there was collusion between LTO and the German bidders.</p> <p>In response to the query of Muntinlupa City Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, Vera Cruz explained that the P1 billion was allocated only for the procurement of license plates and that an additional P75 million was allocated for the purchase of plate-making machines to enable the agency to produce license plates on its own.</p> <p>Rep. Rodel Batocabe (Party-List, AKO BICOL) commented that the practice of line item budgeting in the GAA is susceptible to numerous interpretations and circumvention of the law. He then called for a study on the said DBM budget circular and previous Supreme Court decisions on issues related to line item budgeting.</p> <p>The LTO was requested to submit to the Committee all its documents pertaining to the bidding of the license plates.</p> <p>The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) will be invited to the Committee's next meeting.</p>
<p>Human Rights</p>	<p>HRs 486 & 487</p>	<p>Reps. Elago and Zarate</p>	<p>Condemning the violent dispersal of the demonstration of national minority groups and their supporters in front of the United States Embassy in Manila, and calling for an investigation of the incident</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), approved the Committee Report on HRs 486 and 487 subject to the submission of the final investigation report on the violent dispersal by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and an update on the cases filed against the</p>

Continuation... Human Rights				concerned policemen by the Philippine National Police-Internal Affairs Service (PNP-IAS).
	HRs 948, 960 & 976	Reps. Roque (H.), Baguilat, and Alejano	Investigation into the alleged secret detention facility at the Manila Police District - Station 1	The Committee terminated its deliberation on the four measures. The Secretariat was directed to prepare the corresponding Committee Report.
	HR 950	Rep. Rocamora	Urging the Oversight Committee provided under RA 9745 or the Anti-Torture Act of 2009 to convene in order to investigate the alleged violations by some members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) on the Anti-Torture Law and to determine whether such practices are widespread among law enforcement agencies	
Ways and Means	Substitute Bill to HBs 4904, 5023, 5326, 5433, 5443, 6190 & 4018	Reps. Yap (A.), Macapagal-Arroyo, Chavez, Panganiban, Deputy Speaker Garin, Reps. Geron, and Unabia	Replacing the quantitative import restrictions on rice with tariffs, amending for the purpose RA 8178, as amended, or the law replacing the quantitative import restrictions on agricultural products, except rice with tariffs, creating the Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund	The Committee, chaired by Quirino Rep. Dakila Carlo Cua, approved the Substitute Bill to the seven bills with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 162, 327, 435, 1305, 1697 & 3005	Reps. Belmonte (F.), Romualdo, Escudero, Bataoil, Rodriguez (M.), and Castelo	Creating the Commission on Immigration defining its powers and functions, expanding, rationalizing and further professionalizing its organization, upgrading the compensation and benefits of its officials and employees, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to the six bills with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HB 2286	Rep. Marquez	Regulating the use of treatment technology for municipal wastes, repealing for the purpose Section 20 of RA 8749, otherwise known as the Clean Air Act of 1999	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 2286 with amendment.
	Substitute Bill to HBs 3165 & 4565	Reps. Pimentel and Salo	Providing for the legal framework and mechanisms for the creation, operation and administration of transnational higher education in the Philippines, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee will deliberate further on the substitute bill in its next meeting. Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), author of HB 4565, interposed no objection to the recommendation of the Committee to rephrase Section 19 (Tax Exemptions) of the bill. Department of Finance (DOF) Assistant Secretary Soledad Emilia Cruz requested ample time to study the bill and submit the DOF's position paper. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and National Tax Research Center (NTRC) will be invited in the next meeting of the Committee.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Joint Subcommittee of the Committee on Local Government, Committee on Muslim Affairs, and Special Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity	HBs 92, 6121, 6263 & 6475	Deputy Speaker Sema, Reps. Macapagal-Arroyo and Dimaporo (M.K.), and Speaker Alvarez	Providing for the basic law for the Bangsamoro and abolishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), repealing for the purpose RA 9054, or the law strengthening and expanding the Organic Act for the ARMM, and RA 6734 or the law providing for an Organic Act for the ARMM	<p>The Joint Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Wilter "Sharky" Wee Palma II (1st District, Zamboanga Sibugay), agreed to deliberate further on the four bills in its next meeting on January 9, 2018.</p> <p>Rep. Palma informed the body that the Subcommittee will adopt the Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Local Government in deliberating on the four bills.</p> <p>The body had initial discussions on the title and the preamble of the proposed law, but due to several contentions, the body decided to discuss the matter in another meeting.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Natural Resources (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HB 4116	Rep. Rocamora	Providing for the creation of the Philippine Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by its Committee Secretary Raul Terso, approved the draft Substitute Bill to HB 4116.</p> <p>The bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p>