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JOINT CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Congressional Oversight Committee on Competition	Discussion on some issues and concerns regarding the implementation of the Philippine Competition Act (RA 10667)	<p>The Joint Congressional Oversight Committee, co-presided by, Rep. Arthur Yap (3rd District, Bohol), Chair of the House Committee on Economic Affairs, and Senator Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, Chair of the Senate Committee on Trade, Commerce and Entrepreneurship, discussed with the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) issues and concerns relative to the implementation of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA).</p> <p>At the outset, PCC Chairperson Arsenio Balisacan presented the Commission's mandate, organizational development, and accomplishments as of July 2018. He also apprised the Congressional Oversight Committee of the challenges being faced by the PCC such as the lack of awareness and understanding of the Philippine Competition Act among Filipinos which makes enforcement of the law difficult, PCC's limited presence in regions outside Metro Manila, and its difficulty to retain a core of highly competent staff due to uncompetitive salary levels.</p> <p>The PCA, which was passed in 2015, aims to protect the well-being of consumers and preserve the efficiency of competition in the marketplace. The PCA is expected to improve consumer protection and help accelerate investment and job creation in the country, consistent with the national government's goal of creating a more inclusive economic growth.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Yap, the PCC Chair said that out of the 153 filled-up plantilla positions, only 41 are lawyers. This is because the lawyers are more inclined to work with the private sector, which offers competitive salary. Balisacan added that due to lack of lawyers, the PCC outsources the services of legal practitioners to undertake some of its tasks.</p> <p>Sen. Pimentel and Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian urged the PCC to conduct an effective information dissemination program so that more people will understand what "competition policy" is all about and what PCC's advocacies are.</p> <p>Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) Legal Counsel Anthony Bengzon agreed to the Senators' suggestion, adding that very few micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are aware of the intent of the Philippine Competition Act.</p> <p>Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Undersecretary Ruth Castelo inquired why DTI is not included in the list of government agencies that PCC has partnered with considering that some policies being formulated by the PCC touch on matters under DTI's jurisdiction. Balisacan replied that a memorandum of agreement with the DTI is already underway.</p> <p>The Congressional Oversight Committee directed the PCC to submit its annual reports and policy notes, as well as its preliminary findings on the acquisition of San Miguel Corporation's telecommunications unit by PLDT Inc. and Globe Telecom.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 2448, 5274, 5924 & 6304	Reps. Yap (A.), De Venecia, Vargas, and Nieto	Providing for artists' welfare protection and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Cristal Bagatsing (5th District, Manila), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>The TWG thoroughly discussed all the provisions of the substitute bill. Among the agreements reached during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a legal office at the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), which will provide legal assistance to accredited artists; • To establish a range of one year to five years validity period of the accreditation issued to an artist and artist's associations, depending on the assessment of the NCCA; and • To impose a penalty of suspension to first time violators who commit the grounds under Section 17 (Grounds for Revocation of Accreditation), instead of outright revocation. <p>Rep. Bagatsing said that the proposed law is aimed at strengthening the existing policies that will promote the welfare of Filipino artists.</p> <p>Rep. Christopher V.P. De Venecia (4th District, Pangasinan), said that his bill, HB 5274, aims to improve the social security, labor, and medical benefits of the artist through a system of accreditation, to recognize artists as professionals, and to empower them to self-organize and collectively defend their common interest.</p> <p>With regard to including the artists under the coverage of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), GSIS Vice President Lucio Yu explained that only government-employed artists are qualified to become members of the GSIS.</p> <p>Expressing support for the proposed law were representatives from the NCCA, Public Attorney's Office (PAO), Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), and the Social Security System (SSS).</p> <p>Also in support of the bill were the Artists Welfare Project Inc., Theater Actors Guild (TAG), Movie Workers Welfare Foundation Inc., (MOWELFUND) of the Philippines, Katipunan ng mga Artistang Pilipino sa Pelikula at Telebisyon (KAPPT), and the Filipino Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Inc., (FILSCAP). The Secretariat was directed to get the position of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) on the bill.</p>

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