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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture	HB 9157	Rep. Romulo	Renaming the Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) to National Literacy Council, strengthening its powers and functions, expanding its membership structure and support mechanisms, repealing for the purpose RA 7165, as amended, or the law creating the LCC, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, approved HB 9157, subject to style and amendment, and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Romulo, who is also the author of HB 9157, said that his bill seeks to reintroduce the LCC as the National Literacy Council (NLC), and strengthen its powers and functions and enhance its structure and membership towards improving the basic literacy rate among Filipinos. The NLC shall coordinate with the Bureau of Alternative Education of the Department of Education (DepEd-BAE) on programs and projects that are geared towards the universalization of literacy. Local Literacy Councils will also be established in cities and municipalities, which shall serve as the coordinating and advisory body on the ground on matters pertaining to the implementation of measures for the propagation of literacy.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were the DepEd-BAE and Unang Hakbang Foundation Inc., a non-government organization empowering children in poor communities.</p>
	HB 4675	Rep. Nieto	Amending Section 24 of RA 8491, otherwise known as the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines (by expanding the coverage of Section 24 and providing a clear direction as to who shall be entitled to receive the honor and privilege of having the flag draped on one's casket)	The Committee approved the consolidation of HB 4675 with its recently approved substitute bill on the "Revised Flag and Heraldic Code."
	HB 5693	Deputy Speaker Yu	Separating the Dulop National High School-Labangon Annex in Barangay Labangon, Municipality of Dumingag, Province of Zamboanga del Sur from the Dulop National High School, converting it into an independent national high school to be known as Labangon Subanen Agricultural National High School and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 5693 and the corresponding Committee Report subject to style and amendment and compliance with the requirements set by DepEd on the conversion of schools.
	HB 9387	Rep. Go (M.)	Creating a high school for the arts in the City of Baguio to be known as the Baguio City High School for the Arts, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved HB 9387 and the corresponding Committee Report subject to style and amendment and compliance with the requirements set by DepEd on the creation of schools.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, author of HB 9387, said that his bill seeks to create a high</p>

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	HB 5907	Rep. Quimbo	<p>Extending the national feeding program to undernourished children in secondary schools thereby amending RA 11037, otherwise known as the Masustansyang Pagkain Para Sa Batang Pilipino Act</p>	<p>The Committee will deliberate further on HB 5907.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City), author of HB 5907, said that her bill seeks to expand the coverage of RA 11037 by implementing the school-based feeding program for undernourished public school children from kindergarten up to grade 12. The feeding program involves the provision of one fortified meal per student per day, for not less than 120 days in a year.</p> <p>Under RA 11037, the school-based feeding program only covers public school children from kindergarten to grade six.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon) noted that the bill does not have an appropriations provision and asked the author about the budget requirement to implement the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Quimbo replied that she is considering a budget proposal of P3 billion to cover an estimate of 130,000 undernourished public school children from kindergarten to grade 12.</p> <p>Rep. Go suggested that an appropriation provision be included in the bill. However, he also sees the benefit of just providing the parents of these children some form of financial assistance to motivate them to provide nutritious food for their children.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Escudero said this might not be a good idea because the parents might use the budget for other household needs and not on nutritious food. The Deputy Speaker also asked how the proposed law will be implemented given that there are no face-to-face classes for basic education students at present because of the pandemic.</p> <p>Rep. Quimbo said a pilot feeding program is being implemented in her district through the help of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-FNRI). She said the feeding program is being done at the same</p>

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HB 7009	Rep. Garin (S.)	Establishing a National Farm to School Program and appropriating funds therefor		<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to study further and consolidate the two bills.</p>
HB 9318	Rep. Tambunting	Providing free food for children in public schools and day care centers from products of farmers purchased by the government, otherwise known as the School Feeding Purchased from Local Farmers Program		<p>The author of HB 7009, Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>According to Rep. Garin, establishing the farm to school program will provide benefits to education by promoting food and agriculture-based learning activities. She said this will increase children's knowledge and awareness on gardening, agriculture, and proper nutrition, and at the same time instill in them the values of hard work and responsibility from growing their own food. Further, she said the farm to school program provides economic development opportunities by mandating the procurement of food from local farms and producers to be used in the program components.</p> <p>Under HB 7009, the Farm to School Program shall have the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-School Farm Program – students will be taught how to grow

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IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Justice	Committee Report and Resolution dismissing the complaint for impeachment against Supreme Court Associate Justice Marvic MVF Leonen filed by Mr. Edwin M. Cordevilla, endorsed by Rep. Angelo Marcos Barba (2 nd District, Ilocos Norte)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3rd District, Leyte), approved the Committee Report and the attached Resolution dismissing the complaint for impeachment against Supreme Court Associate Justice Leonen.</p> <p>The motion to approve the Committee Report and the attached Resolution was sustained by a vote of 21 in favor, with zero vote against and zero abstention.</p> <p>In his opening statement, Rep. Veloso recounted that in the Committee's previous meeting, the Committee found the complaint insufficient in form as the allegations were not based on personal knowledge of complainant Cordevilla and neither were the allegations supported by authentic records. Thus, the complaint was dismissed due to insufficiency in form, Rep. Veloso further said.</p> <p>Section 3, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the House Rules of Procedure in Impeachment Proceedings states that "An impeachment complaint is verified by an affidavit that the complainant has read the complaint and that the allegations therein are true and correct of his personal knowledge or based on authentic records. An impeachment complaint required to be verified which contains a verification based on 'information and belief,' or upon 'knowledge, information and belief,' or lacks a proper verification, shall be treated as an unsigned impeachment complaint."</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Poverty Alleviation (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 1813, 2675 & 3601	Deputy Speaker Pacquiao, Reps. Tallado, and Garin (S.)	Creating an agricultural pension fund for enhanced social protection to poor agricultural workers	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by the Committee Chairperson, Rep. Dahlia Loyola (5th District, Cavite), will deliberate further on the draft substitute bill in its next meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Loyola underscored the importance of the bill especially since many indigent and senior citizen farmers and fisherfolk are still not included as beneficiaries in the government's social protection programs such as the Social Pension for Indigent Senior</p>

<p>Continuation... Poverty Alleviation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Citizens and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).</p> <p>The author of HB 3601, Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), thanked the Chair for the consideration of her bill which has reached this far, unlike the other bills she filed in previous Congresses which did not move forward.</p> <p>Rep. Garin said her bill seeks to create an Agricultural Pension Fund (APF) to provide pension benefits to indigent retired or senior citizen farmers and fisherfolk. She explained that many farmers and fisherfolk, especially those in the informal sector, could not retire from work even if they are beyond retirement age, because they need to continue to provide for their families. If these farmers and fisherfolk can have pension or retirement benefits as an alternative, they may not have to continue to endure backbreaking work, she added.</p> <p>She also mentioned that the passage of the proposed law will be a way of showing gratitude to the farmers and fisherfolk for their contributions in ensuring food security and accelerating the growth of the agriculture sector.</p> <p>Committee Secretary Maria Lourdes Sagmit-Mendoza informed the body of the new direction of the proposed law. She said a contribution scheme will be adopted for the APF wherein farmers and fisherfolk will be classified as “self-employed.” She added that the Social Security System (SSS) will be the administrator of the APF, instead of the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), as proposed in HB 3601. The PCIC has confirmed that this is beyond its mandate.</p> <p>According to Sagmit-Mendoza, providing a contribution scheme for the APF will be a better option for the government so as not to deplete government funds. Thus, she said farmers and fisherfolk will have to contribute but only for a small amount. For example, an agriculture worker whose monthly income is below P3,250 will only have to contribute P135.00 per month. She also said that under the proposed contribution scheme, a beneficiary will receive a monthly pension of about P2,900 after 10 years of contribution. This scheme, however, is still subject to the review and recommendation of the SSS.</p> <p>Rep. Loyola said there should be an exemption because there are farmers and fisherfolk who have really small income especially during this pandemic. She proposed that farmers and fisherfolk who are earning below P5,000 per month should be exempted from contributing, which is currently being applied to <i>kasambahays</i>.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Poverty Alleviation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Under RA 10361 (Batas Kasambahay or Domestic Workers Act), premium payments or contributions to SSS shall be shouldered by the employer if the domestic worker is receiving a wage below P5,000.</p> <p>Rep. Garin agreed with the suggestion of the Chair.</p> <p>SSS Legislative Affairs Department legal researcher Marc Laurence Monterde also agreed that special consideration can be extended to farmers and fisherfolk who earn less by way of exemption from contributions. He assured the TWG that SSS will study and submit its recommendations on the proposed APF contribution scheme.</p> <p>The TWG proceeded to discuss all the sections of the draft substitute bill and took note of the comments and suggestions of the resource persons from the SSS, PCIC, Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, among others.</p> <p>Rep. Loyola said another TWG meeting will be held to present to the stakeholders the final draft of the substitute bill which will already include the inputs of the resource persons, particularly the SSS.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
<p>North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>	<p>Briefing/update by the Department of Health (DOH) on the status of implementation of the Medical Assistance to Indigent Patients (MAIP) Program in Regions I & II and the Cordillera Administrative Region; and by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) on the status of payment of PhilHealth claims to hospitals in these regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of implementation of the MAIP Program 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ramon Guico III (5th District, Pangasinan), listened to the briefing conducted by the DOH on the implementation of the MAIP Program, and by PhilHealth on the status of payment of pending PhilHealth claims to hospitals in the three regions of North Luzon.</p> <p>Rep. Guico stated that his Committee wants to know the status of implementation of the MAIP Program in the North Luzon regions to ensure that indigent patients receive proper assistance for their medical needs, especially during this time of pandemic.</p> <p>Rep. Guico likewise said that PhilHealth's update on the payment of pending claims to hospitals in North Luzon will validate the announcement of the DOH Secretary that the PhilHealth Board has approved the immediate payment of such claims to various hospitals as part of its COVID-19 response. The immediate payment of pending PhilHealth claims will allow hospitals to continue providing adequate and quality medical care to the people, which will redound to the sustainability of the country's health care system.</p> <p>DOH's Malasakit Program Office Director Angelina del Mundo apprised the Committee of the revised guidelines on the MAIP Program.</p> <p>Under the guidelines, Del Mundo explained that the Center for Health Development (CHD) of the DOH may enter into a</p>

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North Luzon Growth
Quadrangle
(Special Committee)

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with accredited private hospitals authorizing the latter to provide medical services to indigent and financially incapacitated patients the cost of which will be funded under the MAIP Program. Del Mundo said that only when medical services or facilities are not available in government hospitals can the patients be referred to partner hospitals. However, the chief of the hospital, or an authorized person, shall issue a certification attesting that the patient could not be accommodated in the government hospital in that particular instance.

With regard to the mode of payment to partner hospitals, Del Mundo said that it will be through reimbursement, adding that no advance downloading of funds will be made.

DOH-CHD offices in Regions I and II and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) reported on their respective fund utilizations under the MAIP Program.

CHD Region I Assistant Regional Director Mar Wynn Bello said that for 2020, almost all hospitals in the Region have fully utilized their MAIP appropriations. For 2021, Bello said only one hospital was able to utilize its funding allocation, so far at 24%, since its MOA with DOH was already signed. According to Bello, a Sangguniang Panlalawigan resolution is needed to authorize the governor to sign the MOA for the allocation of funds to government hospitals in the region.

For Region II, Adelina Acosta, DOH Medical Officer IV, reported that P13 million of the P49 million appropriation for 2021 was already transferred to retained hospitals, while the remaining P36 million will be released to other hospitals upon signing of the MOA. Acosta said that P6.1 million, or 12% of the funds, was already utilized, serving 180 patients in Region II. Acosta explained that one of the reasons for the delay in the utilization of the program fund is the turnaround time for the signing of the MOA, which usually takes two to three months. To address this concern, Acosta said the DOH intends to involve the DOH Development Management Officers in the facilitation of the signing of MOAs and in monitoring the utilization of funds per hospital on a weekly basis.

For DOH-CHD Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Regional Director Ruby Constantino reported that for 2020, CAR utilized 97.79% or P59.07 million of the total P60.4 million appropriation under the MAIP Program, serving a total of 4,817 patients. According to Constantino, the remaining P1.33 million will be transferred to two recipient hospitals upon the signing of the MOA. For 2021, Constantino reported that CAR is set to receive an allocation of P6 million for the MAIP Program, also upon the signing of the MOA.

- Status of payment of pending PhilHealth claims

PhilHealth Area Vice President Walter Bacareza started his report with a brief background on PhilHealth's "combat plan against poverty" in North Luzon. Bacareza said that with the passage of RA 11223 or the Universal Health Care Law, everyone can now benefit from the programs of PhilHealth, thereby ensuring affordable and accessible health care services for all Filipinos.

Bacareza reported that Region I has the highest PhilHealth membership registration rate, ranging from 86% to 96%, among the regions in North Luzon. Bacareza also said that PhilHealth's collection efficiency rate as of March 2021 is considered to be "outstanding" – 55% at the lowest and 79% at the highest – considering the difficulties and limitations brought about by the pandemic. He added that PhilHealth has established an online payment system to allow members to pay their dues without going to its offices or payment centers, thereby limiting their exposure to the virus.

<p>Continuation... North Luzon Growth Quadrangle (Special Committee)</p>	<p>With regard to the payment of pending PhilHealth claims to the hospitals in the North Luzon regions, Bacareza explained that only a very low percentage, or from 0.09% to 1.29%, of PhilHealth claims in North Luzon are denied or fall under the return to hospitals (RTH) category. For the turnaround time in the payment of claims, Bacareza said that they work within the target time of 60 days due to manual processing of documents and limited number of staff reporting to the office.</p> <p>On the other hand, Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines, Inc. (PHAPI) President Jose Rene de Grano contended that private hospitals around the country are in dire situation and may soon collapse due to billions of pesos of pending or unpaid claims with PhilHealth. De Grano said that this problem led private hospitals to resort to bank loans, downsize hospital operations, and retrench nurses in order to avoid closing down.</p> <p>De Grano sought the support of Congress in speeding up the payment of the claims so that private health institutions will be able to continue providing healthcare services to the people especially in this time of pandemic.</p> <p>Reps. Mark Go (Baguio City) and Antonio “Tonypet” Albano (1st District, Isabela), noting the conflicting statements between PhilHealth and PHAPI, requested Bacareza to submit to the Committee a complete list of all claims filed by private hospitals and payments made by PhilHealth.</p> <p>Rep. Go inquired as to the reason for the delay in the processing of hospital claims when government offices, like PhilHealth, are required to act on all documents within 3 to 20 days pursuant to the law on Ease of Doing Business. Bacareza reasoned that they lack the manpower to comply with the required processing time.</p> <p>On the query raised by Rep. Albano, Bacareza explained that some claims are not processed or returned to the concerned hospital due to incomplete documents or non-compliance with certain requirements. Bacareza assured the Committee that PhilHealth will work closely with PHAPI on this matter.</p> <p>Rep. Ria Christina Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte) questioned PhilHealth for the unpaid PhilHealth hospital claims in her district amounting to P133 million from as far back as 2011 despite the submission of required documents.</p> <p>Rep. Joseph “Jojo” Lara (3rd District, Cagayan) asked PhilHealth to act swiftly on these unpaid claims which seriously affect the cash flows of hospitals, considering the surge in the number of COVID cases in various areas, including in his district.</p> <p>Several Members of the Committee agreed to file a resolution requiring PhilHealth to immediately settle their unpaid obligations with the hospitals in North Luzon.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed to file two resolutions: one, honoring the fallen heroes in the medical field in North Luzon; and two, recognizing the medical frontliners for their sacrifices in helping save the lives of many Filipinos afflicted with COVID-19.</p>
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