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CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Conference Committee	HB 300 and SB 1156	Rep. Yap (V.) and Sen. Pangilinan	Promoting foreign investments, amending thereby RA 7042, otherwise known as the "Foreign Investments Act of 1991," as amended	<p>The Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA) and Sen. Imee Marcos, respective Chairpersons of the Committee on Economic Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate, approved the harmonized version of House Bill 300 and Senate Bill 1156.</p> <p>Rep. Garin expressed her gratitude to the members of the Conference Committee and to the Secretariat for their contribution in the crafting of the harmonized version of the bills. She underscored that the passage of the proposed law is long overdue.</p> <p>Sen. Marcos informed the body that prior to today's meeting, there have been thorough deliberations on HB 300 and SB 1156, which resulted in the crafting of the harmonized version.</p> <p>The proposed law seeks to amend Republic Act 7042 or the Foreign Investments Act of 1991 "to attract, promote, and welcome productive investments from foreign individuals, partnerships, corporations, and governments, including their political subdivisions, in activities which significantly contribute to sustainable, inclusive, resilient, and innovative economic growth, productivity, global competitiveness, employment creation, technological advancement, and countrywide development." It also mandates the creation of an Inter-agency Investment Promotion Coordination Committee (IIPC), which shall integrate all promotion and facilitation efforts to encourage investments in the country. Likewise, the IIPC, which will be headed by the Department of Trade and Industry, is mandated to develop a comprehensive and strategic Foreign Investment Promotion and Marketing Plan for the medium-term (five years) and long-term (10 years).</p> <p>Aside from Rep. Garin, other House Members present during the meeting were the following: Deputy Speaker Weslie Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City), as well as Reps. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City), Xavier Jesus Romualdo (Camiguin), John Reynald Tiangco (Navotas City), Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija), and Victor Yap (2nd District, Tarlac). On the part of the Senate, Sen. Win Gatchalian joined Sen. Marcos in the meeting.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Diplomacy	HR 2281	Rep. Mariano-Hernandez	Congratulating Miss Rechie Valdez for becoming the first Filipino-Canadian woman to be elected Member of Parliament in the September 20, 2021 Canadian federal elections	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Sandra Eriguel, M.D. (2nd District, La Union), adopted House Resolution 2281, subject to style. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Eriguel said that the historic election of Rechie Valdez to the Canadian Parliament is relevant to the “active” bilateral relations between the Philippines and Canada.</p> <p>Rep. Ma. Theresa Collantes (3rd District, Batangas) sponsored HR 2281 on behalf of the author.</p> <p>Based on HR 2281, Valdez is the first Filipino-Canadian woman to get elected in the House of Commons, the lower chamber of the Parliament of Canada. But she is the second Filipino-Canadian to have been elected in the House of Commons after Dr. Rey Pagtakhan. (Dr. Pagtakhan was elected Member of Parliament from 1988-2004.)</p> <p>Department of Foreign Affairs’ Office of American Affairs Executive Director Romulo Victor Israel Jr. expressed his support for the measure. He said that Valdez’ winning a seat in the House of Commons will positively impact the lives of Filipinos living in Canada. Likewise, it provides a good opportunity to further improve the bilateral relations between the Philippines and Canada.</p>
Labor and Employment	HB 7569	Rep. Duterte	Directing the National Wages Productivity Commission of the Department of Labor and Employment to establish a minimum wage for nurses in private hospitals	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), decided to refer the three House Bills to its Subcommittee on Labor Standards for consolidation and further deliberation.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Pineda said that the low wages of nurses was already a problem even before the pandemic. Unfortunately, he said the plight of the nurses was further aggravated with the onset of the pandemic as they became overworked and highly exposed to COVID-19. He said it is about time that the nurses be given adequate compensation in order to uplift their welfare, considering their contribution to the country’s health system and the fight against COVID-19.</p> <p>Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HB 7851, stressed that majority of health professionals in hospitals are nurses who work long duty hours ranging from 8 to 12 hours, yet are underpaid. Rep. Gaité added that nurses in the Philippines receive much lower salaries than their counterparts in other countries. He also pointed out that entry level nurses in private hospitals in the country receive lower pay ranging from P5,000 to P10,000 per month compared to entry level nurses in public hospitals who receive a salary</p>
	HB 7851	Rep. Gaité	Increasing the minimum salary of nurses in the private sector	
	HB 9298	Rep. Espino	Providing for an upgrade in the minimum wage of nurses and allied medical and health workers in all private hospitals and health institutions	

<p>Continuation... Labor and Employment</p>				<p>ranging from P8,000 to P13,000 a month. Thus, he said his bill seeks to increase the salary of nurses employed in the private sector to the same level or rate being received by nurses in the public sector. He believes that this is one way of encouraging nurses to stay and practice their profession in the country.</p> <p>Under HB 7851, the minimum salary for nurses in the private sector shall be P32,000 per month or equivalent to Salary Grade 15 based on the Salary Standardization Law, which standardized the salaries of all government workers.</p> <p>Baguio City Rep. Mark Go sponsored HB 7569 on behalf of the author, Deputy Speaker Paolo Duterte (1st District, Davao City), while Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP) sponsored HB 9298 on behalf of the author, Rep. Jumel Anthony Espino (2nd District, Pangasinan). They both manifested that the explanatory notes attached to the bills be considered as the authors' sponsorship speeches.</p> <p>Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) Governor Antonio Abad Jr. expressed his reservation on the bills. He said mandating private hospitals to pay nurses a minimum salary of P32,000 will be financially difficult for them and may even result in the closure of some hospitals. He explained that some private hospitals are still not fully paid by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) for their COVID-19 related claims.</p> <p>On the other hand, Filipino Nurses United National President Maristela Abenojar expressed her support for the bills. She said an increase in the salary of nurses in the private sector will compensate their risk of exposure to COVID-19. She agreed that it will also encourage nurses to continue practicing their profession. She explained that there are many nurses who have shifted to other professions and some are now working in business process outsourcing (BPO) companies.</p> <p>Although supportive of the bills, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) - National Wages and Productivity Commission Executive Director Maria Criselda Sy said that the upgrading of the salary of nurses should be commensurate to their level of education and the services they provide. She also mentioned that private hospitals are hesitant to increase the salary of nurses because most of them only stay in their jobs for a couple of years just to gain experience and then seek employment abroad. She recommended that the proposal of raising the salary of nurses in the private sector be discussed with the stakeholders of the health system.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda agreed that the issue should be discussed further with other stakeholders.</p>
	HR 2210	Rep. Gaité	Inquiry into the illegal implementation of 'No Vaccine, No Work' policies in private establishments and government offices	The Committee will continue its inquiry relative to House Resolutions 2210 and 2309. The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of

<p>Continuation... Labor and Employment</p>	<p>HR 2309</p>	<p>Rep. Zarate</p>	<p>Investigation into the reported illegal implementation of 'No Vaccine, No Pay' policies in private establishments</p>	<p>Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) will be invited to the Committee's next meeting to respond to the issues raised during the inquiry.</p> <p>Rep. Gaité, author of HR 2210, said his resolution calls for the suspension of the implementation of IATF Resolutions 148-B and 149 issued on November 11 and November 18, respectively. Under the IATF Resolution 148-B, on-site workers are required to be fully vaccinated and on-site workers who remain unvaccinated should not be terminated but must take RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) tests regularly at their own expense.</p> <p>Meanwhile, IATF Resolution 149 states that all partially vaccinated employees in the public and private sector tasked to do onsite work need not undergo regular RT-PCR test at their own expense, as long as their second dose is not yet due based on the interval prescribed for the brand of vaccine they received for their first dose.</p> <p>According to Rep. Gaité, the policies under these IATF resolutions are discriminatory to workers who choose not to be vaccinated. He emphasized that vaccination is not mandatory and that it is the right of the workers to choose whether to be vaccinated or not. He also said that there are workers who are not yet vaccinated because the vaccines are not yet available to them and not because they do not want to. Further, he stressed that the requirement for unvaccinated workers to undergo RT-PCR tests at their own expense will be burdensome to the workers especially those with low salaries.</p> <p>On behalf of Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HR 2309, Rep. Gaité sponsored the resolution and manifested that the text therein be considered as the author's sponsorship speech.</p> <p>Reps. Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP) and France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS), co-authors of HRs 2210 and 2309, expressed their support for the suspension of the implementation of the two IATF resolutions. They said before issuing such policies, the IATF should ensure first that there are adequate vaccines available for all and that proper consultations were done with the stakeholders. They both suggested that the RT-PCR test should be shouldered by the employers whether in the private sector or the government.</p> <p>Rep. Go said that the presence of the IATF in the next meeting is necessary so that it can clarify the basis for these resolutions. He also expressed his concern for the unvaccinated workers who are on a "no-work, no-pay" scheme, saying that if they will not be allowed to work because of the IATF resolutions, then they will not receive their salaries and certainly will not have money to pay for the required RT-PCR test.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda recommended that instead of the RT-PCR test, the COVID-19 antigen test should suffice which is a cheaper alternative. He said that</p>
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<p>Continuation... Labor and Employment</p>				<p>in Congress, the antigen test is not being shouldered by the employees.</p> <p>For her part, DOLE Assistant Secretary Ma. Teresita Cucueco concurred that vaccination is indeed not mandatory. She said unvaccinated employees are still allowed to go to work provided that they submit a negative result of RT-PCR test once every two weeks. She explained that this is one of the strategies adopted by the government to minimize the spread of the virus and reduce the number of unvaccinated individuals who may have severe and critical case of COVID-19. She also clarified that partially vaccinated individuals, who already have a confirmed schedule of their second dose, may come to work and no longer be subjected to RT-PCR testing. In addition, she said the work-from-home arrangement must be made available by the employers to unvaccinated workers who refuse to be vaccinated or cannot afford the RT-PCR test.</p> <p>Abad said the members of ECOP will continue to comply with the IATF resolutions. He said if the employee will continue to refuse to be vaccinated and not fulfill the RT-PCR test requirement, the employee may be allowed to work from home for a certain period. After this, the non-compliant employee will just have to use his or her available leave credits to cover the days when he or she still cannot report for work. But when all the leave credits have been consumed, Abad said the employer will be forced to stop paying the salary of the employee who does not go to work.</p> <p>Representatives from the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, Center for Trade Union and Human Rights, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Concerned Doctors and Citizens of the Philippines, Institute for Occupational Health and Safety Development, and BPO Industry Employees Network all expressed their support to suspend IATF Resolutions 148-B and 149. They said the RT-PCR test is costly and that vaccines are still not readily available for all.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda said the Committee will write a letter to the IATF recommending the suspension of the implementation of IATF Resolutions 148-B and 149 until further notice.</p>
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