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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Agriculture and Food	HB 2340	Deputy Speaker Escudero	Strengthening the veterinary quarantine services of the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture	The Committee, presided by Deputy Speaker Conrado Estrella III (Party-List, ABONO), agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to consolidate the four bills.
	HBs 2445, 3374 & 8416	Reps. Villafuerte, Garin (S.), and Deputy Speaker Estrella	Strengthening the animal industry and veterinary services in the Philippines	<p>Deputy Speaker Estrella, who is also the author of House Bill 8416, was designated as head of the TWG.</p> <p>He stated that all the bills seek to protect the country's livestock and poultry industry from the onslaught of domestic and foreign communicable animal diseases.</p> <p>In addition, Deputy Speaker Estrella said that his bill also seeks to strengthen the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and upgrade its powers and functions to keep up with the changing times. He said that the existing legal mandates of BAI are already outdated, such as Act 3639, which created the BAI and was enacted in 1930.</p> <p>BAI is a bureau under the Department of Agriculture (DA) tasked "to make the animal industry productive and profitable under sustainable environment through sound policies, programs, research and services on animal production, post-harvest, health and welfare." (Source: BAI website)</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon), author of HB 2340, underscored the importance of protecting the livestock and poultry industries, enabling them to contribute to the attainment of the nation's food security goal. This, she said, can be done through institutionalizing the National Veterinary Quarantine Services of the BAI, which was established only through DA Special Order 240 series of 2000.</p> <p>Rep. Sharon Garin (Party-List, AAMBIS-OWA), author of HB 3374, pushed for the passage of her bill, adding that its enactment is long overdue.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bills were resource persons from the DA, BAI, National Meat Inspection Services (NMIS), Philippine Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA), and National Federation of Hog Farmers, Inc.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Estrella sought the opinion of the resource persons as to whether they are amenable to just strengthen the existing BAI or</p>

<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food</p>				<p>to restructure and convert the BAI into an authority. He said that his bill and that of Deputy Speaker Escudero both seek to only strengthen the BAI by expanding its powers and functions. On the other hand, HBs 2445 and 3374 seek to convert the BAI into a National Livestock and Veterinary Services Authority.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary-designate for Livestock William Medrano replied that the DA is more inclined to the proposal of just strengthening the BAI by expanding its regulatory and developmental mandates, which will make it at par with its counterparts in the ASEAN region.</p> <p>BAI Director Reildrin Morales, NMIS Executive Director Jocelyn Salvador, and PVMA President Corazon Occidental agreed with Medrano.</p> <p>Morales further said that giving the BAI police power will make it more effective in preventing the entry and proliferation of animal diseases in the country.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Estrella manifested that it is also the intention of his bill to have veterinarians in every municipality or city to make their services more accessible to the people especially to the farmers. He then asked if there are enough veterinarians in the country should their services be needed once the proposed law is enacted.</p> <p>Occidental replied that according to the Professional Regulation Commission, there are around 12,000 licensed veterinarians in the country at present, which is more than enough to fill up the number of veterinarians needed in all municipalities and cities in the country.</p>
<p>Civil Service and Professional Regulation</p>	<p>HBs 666, 2501, 5079 & 6198</p>	<p>Reps. Salo Belmonte, Nieto, and Yap (E.)</p>	<p>Mandating 14th month pay for all employees in the government and private sector regardless of status of employment</p>	<p>The Committee, presided by its Vice Chair Rep. Raymund Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), approved in principle the four bills, subject to amendment.</p> <p>The Secretariat will consolidate the bills to come up with a substitute bill, incorporating the pertinent recommendations made during the meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Mendoza stated that the passage of the proposed law will institutionalize the granting of 14th month pay to workers, which will be a big help to those who are only receiving “survival wages.”</p> <p>In today’s meeting, the Committee focused its discussion on the coverage of the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), author of HB 666, manifested that the intent of his bill is to provide 14th month pay to all employees regardless of employment status.</p> <p>Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) advised the Committee to use the proper</p>

<p>Continuation... Civil Service and Professional Regulation</p>				<p>terminologies to reflect the intent of the authors considering that there are various types of employment status. He explained that the term “employees” suggests the presence of an employer-employee relationship. However, for those working in the government under a job order or contract of service employment, such relationship is absent. He then suggested that they be covered under the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Gaité’s manifestation was supported by Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS), as well as Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Assistant Secretary Mariano Alquiza, Civil Service Commission lawyer Rodel Ebreo, and Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (PSLINK) Secretary General Annie Enriquez-Geron.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Department of Budget and Management’s Organization, Position Classification, Compensation Bureau Director Gerald Janda suggested that the Committee further review the bill particularly on the section granting 14th month pay to government employees. He explained that there are already existing laws granting government employees midyear and yearend bonuses which are equivalent to 13th and 14th month pay, respectively.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills at the soonest possible time.</p>
	<p>HBs 9828 & 9962</p>	<p>Reps. Bravo and Duterte</p>	<p>Recognizing the role of the members of the Career Executive Service (CES) in effectively upholding, pursuing, and maintaining good governance and accountability in public service by granting them salaries, special allowances, retirement benefits, and privileges commensurate to their CES ranks, appropriating funds therefor</p>	<p>The Committee approved HBs 9828 and 9962 subject to amendment. The Secretariat will consolidate the two bills incorporating the suggestions made by Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (2nd District, Surigao del Norte).</p> <p>The Secretariat was likewise directed to transmit the corresponding Committee Report to the Committee on Appropriations for its comments on the proposed law’s funding provision.</p> <p>Rep. Narciso Bravo Jr. (1st District, Masbate), author of HB 9828, agreed to adopt the following amendments as suggested by Rep. Barbers through a letter presented during the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CES members shall include third-level career executives in government institutions, who, by the legislative charters or by the nature of their government office, are not Presidential appointees and yet occupying positions classified by the CES Board as equivalent to undersecretary, assistant secretary, bureau director, assistant bureau director, regional director, assistant regional director, and chief of a service. They shall also be conferred with the appropriate CES ranks by the President upon the recommendation of the CES Board

Continuation... Civil Service and Professional Regulation				<p>after successfully completing the four-stage CES eligibility process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those CES members who possess a CES rank for at least three years and have rendered at least 15 years of service in any branch of government shall be entitled to retirement pension based on the highest monthly salary, plus the highest monthly benefits. <p>Expressing their support for the proposed law were resource persons from the DOLE, Department of Education, and Professional Regulation Commission.</p>
Higher and Technical Education	HB 9804	Rep. Suarez (D.)	Establishing a veterinary hospital in the Southern Luzon State University Campus in the Municipality of Catanauan, Province of Quezon and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Baguio City Rep. Mark Go, approved, subject to style and amendment, House Bill 9804 and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Go sponsored HB 9804 on behalf of the author, Rep. David “Jay-Jay” Suarez (2nd District, Quezon), and manifested that the explanatory note attached to the bill be considered as the author’s sponsorship speech.</p> <p>HB 9804 seeks to establish a veterinary hospital in the Southern Luzon State University (SLSU) Campus in Catanauan, Quezon, to be regulated and supervised by the Director of the Bureau of Animal Industry. The bill aims to provide household pets with proper care and treatment, anti-rabies vaccination, and other services, and to also have a training facility for future veterinarians.</p> <p>SLSU President Doracie Zoleta-Nantes expressed her support for the bill. She said there is no higher education institution in Southern Luzon that offers a course on veterinary medicine. Moreover, she said the proposed law will address the scarcity of veterinary doctors in the province of Quezon, with only five veterinary doctors catering to 39 municipalities and two cities at present.</p>
	HB 10203	Rep. Cabredo	Establishing a college of veterinary medicine in Bicol University in the City of Ligao, Province of Albay to be known as the Bicol University College of Veterinary Medicine and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved, subject to style and amendment, HB 10203 and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Evelina Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon) sponsored HB 10203 on behalf of the author, Rep. Fernando Cabredo (3rd District, Albay), and manifested that the explanatory note attached to the bill be considered as the author’s sponsorship speech.</p> <p>HB 10203 seeks to establish a college of veterinary medicine in Bicol University in Ligao, Albay, to develop professionals adept in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and control of animal diseases in both terrestrial and aquatic animals.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Bicol</p>

Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				<p>University, and the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC).</p> <p>Bicol University President Arnulfo Mascariñas highlighted that veterinary medicine plays an important role in protecting human health by protecting the health of animals. With the increasing number of pet owners and people shifting to animal farming, he underscored the need to produce more veterinary doctors to augment the personnel of both public and private veterinary clinics and facilities in the Bicol Region.</p> <p>CHED Region V Director Freddie Bernal affirmed that Bicol University is capable of running a college of veterinary medicine. Similarly, PASUC President Tirso Ronquillo said that establishing a college of veterinary medicine in Bicol University will address the scarcity of veterinary doctors not just in Bicol but in the whole country as well.</p> <p>Rep. Go suggested that Bicol University should also seek funding support from the Department of Agriculture (DA) considering that the proposed college of veterinary medicine will be conducting research on zoonotic diseases which could help the DA in formulating its policies and programs relative to animal welfare and production.</p>
	HR 1953	Rep. Fortun	Investigation into the death of Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) Cadet 4 th Class Jonash Bondoc under questionable circumstances in the premises of the Academy and the initiation and training policies, practices, processes, and traditions officially or unofficially observed among officials and/or cadets therein	<p>The Committee decided to hold an executive meeting at a later date to continue its inquiry relative to HR 1953.</p> <p>In today's resumption of the inquiry, the Members proceeded to pose questions in connection with the death of PMMA Cadet 4th Class Jonash Bondoc which happened right inside the premises of the PMMA on July 6, 2021.</p> <p>Rep. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), author of HR 1953, asked how the PMMA Board of Trustees, through its PMMA Superintendent, could immediately conclude the investigation on the death of Bondoc, considering that the cause of death was due to traumatic injury in the head based on the autopsy report of the Scene of the Crime Operatives.</p> <p>CHED Commissioner Ronald Adamat confirmed that the PMMA Board of Trustees instructed PMMA Superintendent Joel Abutal to conduct an investigation into the death of Bondoc. He said the report of Abutal indicated that the incident was an isolated case and that no hazing took place. The report also stated that the PMMA strictly adheres to Republic Act 11053 or the Anti-Hazing Act of 2018.</p> <p>The CHED Commissioner also informed the body that in a separate investigation conducted by the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Zambales, the latter already considered the case closed with the filing of a homicide complaint</p>

<p>Continuation... Higher and Technical Education</p>				<p>against the offender, PMMA Cadet 3rd Class Jomel Gloria, who admitted to the crime.</p> <p>Asked if documents such as an autopsy report were also included in the report of Abutal, Adamat answered in the negative.</p> <p>Rep. Go asserted that immediately concluding the investigation and declaring the death as a non-hazing incident without supporting documents was premature.</p> <p>Agreeing with the Chair, Rep. Fortun added that even the PNP's declaration that the Bondoc case is closed is also premature having investigated the case for only two days and without waiting for the conclusion of the investigation conducted by the PMMA. He also said that the findings of the case could have been erroneous noting that the PNP investigator could not even differentiate between the crimes of hazing and homicide, which the Committee found out when it questioned the PNP about it in its previous hearing.</p> <p>According to Rep. Fortun, inflicting injuries to cadets was a "casual occurrence" inside the academy and happens on a regular basis. He remarked that Gloria could possibly be just a victim of the tradition or culture being practiced in the PMMA. He presented a screenshot of the messages exchanged between Bondoc's mother and other parents of PMMA cadets confirming that their children are experiencing physical harm from upperclassmen inside the academy. Rep. Fortun said this exchange of messages took place around September, a few months after the death of Bondoc in July, which means that such practices still continue even after the incident. He urged CHED to look deeper into the incident to prevent any similar violence and harm befalling on cadets in the future.</p> <p>On the measures being undertaken by the PMMA Board to respond to the incident, Adamat said the Board intends to strengthen its monitoring system to prevent the recurrence of such incident. He assured the Committee that CHED is very strict in implementing the provisions of RA 11053 and does not tolerate any incident of manhandling, maltreatment, and brutality among students. He added that erring students are dealt with within the ambit of the law.</p> <p>Regarding the request of the family of Bondoc to be provided with a copy of the report on PMMA's investigation of Bondoc's death and for Bondoc's cellphone to be returned to them, PMMA Superintendent's chief of staff Chuck Dela Cruz replied that he needs to secure clearance first from the Board of Trustees before he can act on the request.</p> <p>However, the CHED Commissioner reacted that releasing the report and the cellphone does not</p>
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Continuation... Higher and Technical Education				<p>need clearance from the Board, adding that there is no policy prohibiting such action. Dela Cruz thus promised to return the cellphone to the family and provide them a copy of the PMMA report, including other official documents relative to the investigation.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to conduct an executive meeting to continue its probe on the incident. A competent psychologist will be invited in the executive session to provide professional explanation on some of the issues raised. The cadets who have knowledge of the incident will also be invited to give their testimonies.</p> <p>The PMMA Superintendent was requested to submit to the Committee a copy of the police report on the death of Bondoc.</p>
Labor and Employment	HR 2210	Rep. Gaité	Inquiry into the illegal implementation of “No Vaccine, No Work” policies in private establishments and government offices	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Enrico Pineda (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), will continue its deliberation on the issues raised relative to House Resolutions 2210 and 2309.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Pineda gave a brief summary of the deliberation on the two resolutions during the previous hearing. He said that the Committee, prompted by the motion of Committee Vice Chair Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), wrote the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) a letter dated December 1, requesting the immediate suspension of its Resolutions 148-B and 149. However, to Rep. Pineda’s dismay, the Committee has yet to receive a reply from the IATF.</p> <p>Under 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>Rep. Pineda said that the Committee Members are of the opinion that the subject IATF resolutions are discriminatory, insofar as the basic human right to earn a living is concerned. He sought explanation on IATF’s failure to answer the letter of the Committee seeking to suspend the implementation of IATF Resolutions 148-B and 149.</p> <p>Health Undersecretary and IATF Secretariat head Charade Mercado-Grande said that she</p>
	HR 2309	Rep. Zarate	Investigation into the reported illegal implementation of “No Vaccine, No Pay” policies in private establishments	

<p>Continuation... Labor and Employment</p>				<p>was asked to attend this meeting only to certify the issuance of the IATF resolutions. She manifested that she was present in all the four meetings conducted by the IATF during which the resolutions were discussed and approved; and she likewise identified the prominent personalities present during those meetings.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda remarked that the Committee and its Members are being taken lightly by the IATF leadership. He plans to write a strongly-worded letter to the IATF expressing the disappointment of the Committee and to compel the attendance of its heads in the Committee's next meeting to be set next week.</p> <p>Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), author of HR 2210, and Rep. Mendoza supported the position of Pineda. Rep. Gaité noted the urgency of the issues at hand, adding that the workers are very fearful of the possible implications of the subject IATF resolutions on their livelihood.</p> <p>Responding to the query of Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS), Mercado-Grande confirmed that the IATF Chair has received and read the letter of the Committee requesting the suspension of the subject IATF resolutions. She added that the same resolutions are now under review.</p> <p>When asked by Rep. Mendoza about the status of the resolutions while under review, Mercado-Grande said the resolutions are currently being implemented.</p> <p>Expressing support for the House Resolutions were resource persons from the Concerned Doctors and Citizens of the Philippines (CDC Ph), Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), GABRIELA Women Party, Crispin B. Beltran Resource Center, and Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR).</p> <p>Independent Health Advocate and Past President of CDC Ph Benigno "Iggy" Agbayani said that mandatory vaccination is not recommended by the World Health Organization. He added that ethical and legal implications may arise in coerced vaccination, because possible adverse effects may occur, including death. According to Agbayani, there are available preventive and treatment options to decrease risks from COVID-19 that do not entail coercion.</p> <p>Likewise, Muntinlupa City Health Medical Officer III Dr. Allan Landrito, also a member of the CDC Ph, advocated against mandatory vaccination and pushed for the stoppage of unnecessary discrimination against the unvaccinated. He recommended instead the implementation of the best yet cheapest form of prevention and therapeutics against COVID-19.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Labor and Employment</p>				<p>KMU Chair Elmer Labog stressed that it is the constitutional right of the people to refuse vaccination for whatever valid reasons they may have.</p> <p>A representative from the Solidarity with Workers Network, who wishes to remain anonymous, brought to the attention of the Committee the “no vaccine, no work” policy implemented by her employer in Bataan. She disclosed that she and other unvaccinated employees were refused entry in their workplace unless they take the RT-PCR test every two weeks at a very high cost of P5,000 per test. She lamented that they cannot afford such amount considering their meager salary of P420 per day. Moreover, she disclosed that they were imposed a fine of P300 upon entering their workplace for failure to wear a faceshield.</p> <p>Rep. Pineda sought the comment of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) on the matter, as he urged the DOLE to champion and spearhead the campaign for the immediate suspension and repeal of the questioned resolutions by the IATF.</p> <p>DOLE Undersecretary Benjo Santos Benavidez claimed that the subject IATF resolutions are aligned with DOLE’s Labor Advisory No. 3, which provides the guidelines on the administration of COVID-19 vaccines in the workplaces. He said that this advisory likewise requires employers to respect the right of workers to security of tenure. Benavidez also explained that the IATF resolutions in fact states that no worker may be dismissed for the reason that he or she has not yet been vaccinated. Nonetheless, he promised to convey to the Labor Secretary the sentiments and directive of the Committee.</p> <p>GABRIELA Women Party, Crispin B. Beltran Resource Center, and CTUHR did not agree with the statement of Benavidez that the subject IATF resolutions are aligned with DOLE’s advisory. Further, they suggested that testing of employees for COVID-19 be made more affordable.</p> <p>On the other hand, Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) Legal Services Manager Robert Maronilla expressed the view that the IATF policy is not against the law. He said that the State is merely exercising its police power with the intention of ensuring the welfare and well-being of not just the workers, but also of the business owners and their respective family members as well. He added that business owners have the right to protect their workplace from COVID-19, which also means protecting the business and the health of their employees and families.</p> <p>Reacting to ECOP’s statement, TUCP Vice President Luis Corral said that invoking the</p>
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Continuation... Labor and Employment				<p>State's police power to ensure public health and safety "should be tempered with humanity and an understanding of human rights and the public good." Corral added that it is about time for the IATF to review its protocols and adopt a twofold strategy of providing free and easily accessible vaccination and mass testing. He proposed that DOLE use the available funds under its National Employment Recovery Strategy Program not just for vaccination of workers, but also to provide free COVID-19 testing.</p> <p>The IATF officials will be required to attend the next meeting of the Committee to respond to the issues raised during the inquiry.</p>
Public Works and Highways	Substitute Bill to HBs 129, 1769, 1924, 2012, 2391, 3820, 4135, 4727, 4995 & 6225	Reps. Zubiri, Villafuerte, Sy-Alvarado, Vargas, Robes, Deputy Speaker Rodriguez, Reps. Espino, Castelo, Agabas, and Delos Santos	Promoting rural health by providing for an accelerated program for the construction of a potable water supply system in every barangay in the country within three years and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee, chaired by Romblon Rep. Eleandro Jesus Madrona, approved the Substitute Bill to the 10 bills, and the corresponding Committee Report.
	Substitute Bills to HBs 282; 283; 590-592; 2524-2530; 3605; 4029-4033; 4037; 6164; 6581-6584; 8250; 8655; 8732 & 9032-9037	Reps. Albano (A.), Mangaoang, Bolilia, Agabas, Dujali, Madrona, Deputy Speakers Oaminal, Singson-Meehan, and Escudero	Converting provincial roads into national roads in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the 33 Substitute Bills and their corresponding Committee Reports.
	Substitute Bill to HB 6065	Rep. Mercado	Mandating the construction of Panaon Island Circumferential Road in the Province of Southern Leyte	The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to House Bill 6065 and the corresponding Committee Report.
	HB 3683	Rep. Villa	Mandating the Department of Public Works and Highways to prioritize the construction of the necessary infrastructure to ensure the accessibility of all tourism sites in the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved House Bill 3683 in consolidation with HB 7145 (Tourism Sites Accessibility Act).
	HB 10158	Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Amending Presidential Decree 1096, otherwise known as the National Building Code (by ensuring that the practice of electronics engineering is embodied in the law)	The Committee approved HB 10158 in consolidation with the Substitute Bill on the proposed Philippine Building Act.
	HB 1697	Rep. Villafuerte	Requiring new commercial, institutional, and residential infrastructure projects in Metro Manila and major cities in the Philippines to install rainwater retention facilities, and imposing penal provisions in case of violations	The Committee agreed to consolidate the nine bills and come up with a substitute bill, taking into consideration the comments and inputs from different agencies and stakeholders.
	HB 2381	Rep. Robes	Institutionalizing a rainwater harvesting system in the City of San Jose Del Monte, Province of Bulacan and appropriating funds therefor	Rep. Madrona said that in case there are similar bills that will be referred to the Committee prior to the filing of the Committee Report, the Secretariat is authorized to include these bills and their authors in the Committee Report.

Continuation... Public Works and Highways	HB 3327	Rep. Tambunting	Requiring all government building construction to have rain harvesting facility	
	HB 3558	Rep. Pancho	Granting incentives for commercial and industrial establishments, and developers who will incorporate rainwater harvesting technology in their businesses	
	HB 4445	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Creating the National Rainwater Harvesting Board under the Office of the President for the purpose of the promotion, development, and utilization of rainwater harvesting technology as a measure to mitigate the effects brought about by climate change and extreme weather phenomena like super typhoons and the El Niño that are the causes of downstream flooding, severe drought, and other problems on fresh water	
	HB 4818	Rep. Momo	Requiring all new subdivisions, condominium communities, malls, government institutions, central business districts, and information technology parks in the Philippines to construct rain harvesting facility	
	HB 5461	Deputy Speaker Savellano	Institutionalizing a rainwater harvesting system for the whole Philippines	
	HB 6741	Rep. Cabochan	Mandating the establishment and maintenance of a rainwater harvesting facility in all new institutional, commercial, and residential development projects in Metro Manila	
	HB 6777	Rep. Barba	Mandating the establishment and maintenance of a rainwater harvesting facility in all new institutional, commercial, and residential development projects nationwide	
	HB 913	Rep. Gonzales (A.)	Converting the Sindalan-Anao Provincial Road connecting the town of Mexico to the City of San Fernando in the Province of Pampanga into a national road, and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved HB 913.
	HB 8378	Rep. De Venecia	Converting the provincial road from the national highway, passing through Barangay Pao in the Municipality of Manaoag, Province of Pangasinan leading to Barangay Poblacion in the Municipality of Pozorrubio, Province of Pangasinan, into a national road and appropriating funds thereof	The Committee approved HB 8378.
	HB 1558, 2706, 3549, 3550, 3551, 3980, 4997, 4998, 4999,	Reps. Baronda, Cuaresma, Arbison, Fuentebella, Bernos, Abueg-	Converting provincial roads into national roads in certain parts of the country and appropriating funds therefor	The Committee approved the 39 bills subject to the submission of requirements set by the Department of Public Works and Highways pertaining to the conversion of provincial roads into national roads.

Continuation... Public Works and Highways	5000, 5001, 5002, 5010- 5016, 5574, 5576, 5639, 6211, 6212, 6523, 7183, 8645, 9570 & 10033- 10043	Zaldivar, Bascug, Dujali, Deloso- Montalla, Sacdalan, Ferrer (J.M.), and Salceda		
Revision of Laws	HB 1097	Rep. Salo	Providing for a system of recognition of churches, sects, religious groups or organizations in the Philippines	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla (2nd District, Zambales), will deliberate further on House Bill 1097.</p> <p>Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), author of HB 1097, said that his bill seeks to establish a system for the recognition and certification of religious organizations or groups in order to protect the public from unscrupulous individuals who prey on unsuspecting believers, and to accord binding and legal effect to their specific acts.</p> <p>Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) - Office of the General Counsel Decongestion Officer Vicente Peñamora expressed support for the bill except for the provision exempting churches, sects, religious groups, or organizations from the payment of registration fees imposed by the SEC. He said the proceeds of the registration fees are being used by SEC to sustain its operations. He added that such exemption from the payment of registration fees may encourage more inauthentic and fraudulent groups to seek registration from SEC just to have a semblance of legitimacy.</p> <p>Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Registration Officer Rodelio De La Fuente committed to submit PSA's position paper on the bill.</p> <p>The Committee will invite in the next meeting more resource persons representing different religious sects or groups in the country.</p>
	HB 2070	Deputy Speaker Abante	Exempting church ministers, priests, rabbis, and imams from securing government license to solemnize marriage, further amending Executive Order 209 (Family Code of the Philippines), Act No. 3815, as amended, (Revised Penal Code), Act No. 3753 (Law on Registry of Civil Status), and National Statistics Office Administrative Order No. 1, series of 2021 (Amendments on the implementing rules and regulations governing the registration of authority to solemnize marriage with the Civil Registrar General of bishops, heads/founders of religions and religious sects, priests, rabbis, imams, religious ministers, tribal heads/leaders/chiefains, community elders, and other designated authorities)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a technical working group (TWG) to discuss further HBs 2070, 9897, and 9928.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Bienvenido Abante Jr. (6th District, Manila), author of HB 2070, will sit as TWG Chair. He underscored that church ministers, priests, rabbis, and imams "derive their authority from divine law and not from secular law," thus his bill seeks to free them from the requirement of securing license from the government to enable them to solemnize marriage.</p> <p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory notes attached to HBs 9897 and 9928 as the sponsorship speeches of the authors.</p> <p>The PSA expressed its support for the bills and committed to submit its official position paper.</p>

Continuation... Revision of Laws	HBs 9897 & 9928	Reps. Yap (E.) and Go (M.)	Increasing the validity of authorization to solemnize marriage of priests, ministers, or rabbis from three to five years, amending for the purpose Republic Act 6514 or the law providing that the authorization to solemnize marriage issued to priests, ministers, or rabbis shall be valid for a period of three years	
	HBs 5032 & 10214	Reps. Salceda and Cua	Rationalizing holidays and special days, amending for the purpose Section 26, Chapter 7, Book 1 of EO 292, otherwise known as the Administrative Code of the Philippines, as amended	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss further HBs 5032 and 10214.</p> <p>Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda (2nd District, Albay), who is also the author of HB 5032, was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>According to Rep. Salceda, his bill seeks to rationalize holidays by limiting it to a total of 18 nonworking holidays and special days (nine regular nonworking holidays; two local nonworking holidays; and seven special nonworking days). Under the bill, he said employees will be given an "allowance" of seven special nonworking days to commemorate, choosing from several special nonworking holidays, such as Chinese New Year, EDSA Revolution Anniversary, and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, based on their cultural, religious, and personal preference.</p> <p>Rep. Salceda explained that currently the total public holidays in the country ranges from 21 to 25 days per year. He said while holidays allow the commemoration of special events and provide people some rest, it also means reduced productivity and "no work, no pay" for some workers, to the latter's prejudice. He said his bill also aims to provide employers a stable and more predictable environment for their business operations and align the number of nonworking days in the country with the ASEAN average to increase competitiveness.</p> <p>On HB 10214, Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory note attached to the bill as the sponsorship speech of the author.</p> <p>Department of Labor and Employment - Bureau of Working Conditions Supervising Labor and Employment Officer Emilia De Guzman expressed support for the bills but recommended the retention of the regular holidays and nationwide special days prescribed in Republic Act 9849, which further amended the Administrative Code of 1997, and December 8 as a special nonworking holiday to commemorate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, pursuant to RA 10966.</p> <p>The Department of Finance will be submitting its official position paper on the bills.</p>
	HBs 8279 & 8448	Reps. Cabatbat and Tambunting	Repealing Presidential Decree 1563, otherwise known as the Anti-Mendicancy Law of 1978	The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss further HBs 8279 and 8448.

Continuation... Revision of Laws				<p>Rep. Argel Joseph Cabatbat (Party-List, MAGSASAKA), author of HB 8279, was designated as TWG Chair.</p> <p>According to Rep. Cabatbat, the Anti-Mendicancy Law of 1978 needs to be repealed because despite this law, mendicancy (begging or seeking alms in the streets) still persists in Philippine society today and that government policies must be recalibrated instead to address poverty, which is the root cause of mendicancy.</p> <p>The Anti-Mendicancy Law prohibits mendicancy and penalizes violators, but it mandates the implementation of government social protection programs for mendicants. The objective of the law is to prevent the commission of mendicancy and protect children from exploitation.</p> <p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory note attached to HB 8448 as the sponsorship speech of the author.</p> <p>Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Social Technology Bureau Officer-In-Charge Helen Suzara expressed support for the two bills but recommended that the provision on the protection of children from exploitation as provided for in the Anti-Mendicancy Law must be retained.</p> <p>Department of the Interior and Local Government Legal and Legislative Liaison Service Attorney Leo Angelo Menguito concurred with the suggestion of the DSWD.</p> <p>Rep. Cabatbat said he agrees with the suggestions of the resource persons and clarified that his bill also provides that the protection given to children under existing laws shall remain to be in effect.</p>
	HB 8288	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending RA 10586, otherwise known as the Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act of 2013 (by providing sufficient manpower complement to effectively implement the law)	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss further HB 8288.</p> <p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory note attached to HB 8288 as the sponsorship speech of the author.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bill were Philippine National Police (PNP) - Highway Patrol Group (HPG) Deputy Director Rommel Francisco Marbil, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Investigation Group Acting Chief Nadine Dumlaog, and Department of Education - Bureau of Curriculum Development Director Samuel Soliven.</p>
	HB 8371	Rep. Villafuerte	Rationalizing the law against gambling and/or betting by providing stiffer penalties, forfeiture and confiscation provisions, and establishing a prima facie presumption for violations thereof, amending for these purposes PD 1602 or the law prescribing stiffer penalties on illegal gambling	<p>The Committee agreed to create a TWG to discuss further HB 8371.</p> <p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory note attached to HB 8371 as the sponsorship speech of the author.</p>

Continuation... Revision of Laws				<p>Expressing their support for the bill were Department of Justice (DOJ) State Counsel Leilanie Fajardo-Aspiras and Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) Assistant Vice President Arnold Ferdinand Salvosa.</p> <p>Salvosa recommended that the proposed law should also cover the modern forms of illegal gambling such as those taking place online or in the internet.</p>
HB 4054	Deputy Speaker Teves	Amending Title IV, Chapter 1, Articles 74, 75, 76 and 77 of RA 8533, or the law amending Title I, Chapter 3, Article 39 of EO 209 (by amending the old and obsolete provisions of the law, particularly the property relations between husband and wife, to conform to the changing demands of the time)		<p>The Committee agreed to refer HBs 4054 and 4833 to the existing TWG that is tasked to deliberate on bills seeking to amend the Family Code.</p> <p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory notes attached to HBs 4054 and 4833 as the sponsorship speeches of the authors.</p>
HB 4833	Deputy Speaker Abante	Amending EO 209, on the property relations between husband and wife, and on support (by protecting the spouse from unjust and unfair situation under the regime of absolute community)		
HB 6273	Rep. Yap (E.)	Amending Article 315 of Act No. 3815, to include willful non-payment of correctly imposed public transportation fees as a mode of committing estafa		<p>The Committee agreed to refer the 17 bills to the existing TWG that is tasked to deliberate on bills seeking to amend the Revised Penal Code (RA 3815).</p>
HB 8176	Deputy Speaker Abante	Amending Articles 266-A, 333, 334, 337, 338, 342, 343, 349, 350 and 351 of Act No. 3815, and RA 8353, otherwise known as the Anti-Rape Law of 1997 (by amending certain provisions of the Revised Penal Code and other penal laws in order to extend with clarity the protection and efficacy of specific provisions of the laws to the lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders, queers, and intersex (LGBTQI) and other similar groups that may hereafter exist)		<p>The author of HB 8923, Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), said his bill seeks to repeal Article 247 of the Revised Penal Code to deter the crime of murder, particularly the murder of a daughter by a parent or the murder of a spouse by the other.</p> <p>Under Article 247, the penalty for a spouse killing his or her other spouse who was caught engaging in sexual intercourse with another person is <i>destierro</i> (being prohibited from entering within a radius of at least 25 kilometers of a designated place). The same provision also applies to parents who kill their daughter, under 18 years of age while the daughter is living with her parents, who is caught engaging in sexual intercourse with another person, under the guise of defense of honor.</p>
HB 8266	Rep. Suansing (H.)	Increasing the value of money and the penalties for malversation of public funds, amending for the purpose Articles 217, 218, 219, 220, 221 and 222 of Act No. 3815		
HB 8542	Rep. Baronda	Increasing the penalties under Article 217 (Malversation of public funds or property; Presumption of malversation) of Act No. 3815, as amended		<p>Rep. Zarate said the penalty of <i>destierro</i> is not considered a penalty given the seriousness of the crime committed. He underscored that by repealing Article 247, it will not only eliminate an unjust and discriminatory provision thereby reforming the country's criminal laws but will also encourage parents and spouses to resolve intra-family problems in a non-violent manner.</p>
HB 8354	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending Article 259 of Act No. 3815, on abortion (by imposing penalties in their maximum and additional penalty of perpetual loss of license to practice their profession by the guilty individuals)		<p>Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory notes attached to the other 16 bills as the sponsorship speeches of the respective authors.</p>
HB 8361	Rep. Villafuerte	Prescribing a higher penalty for persons in authority as accessories, who directly		

Continuation... Revision of Laws			cause or order the destruction or concealment of vital evidence for heinous crimes, amending for the purpose Article 19 of Act No. 3815	
	HB 8406	Rep. Villafuerte	Penalizing any person who induces or causes another to use a fictitious name, or conceals his true name, or usurps the civil status of another person, amending for the purpose Articles 178 and 348 of Act No. 3815	
	HB 8517	Rep. Villafuerte	Increasing the penalty for infidelity in the custody of prisoners, amending for the purpose Articles 223 and 224, Chapter 5, Title 7, Book 2 of Act No. 3815, as amended	
	HB 8520	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending Article 337 of Act No. 3815, eliminating gender bias in qualified seduction and increasing the imposable penalty	
	HBs 8523 & 9232	Rep. Villafuerte and Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Amending Articles 333 and 344, and repealing Article 334 of Act No. 3815, eliminating gender bias in adultery and concubinage	
	HB 8923	Rep. Zarate	Repealing Article 247 (Death or Physical injuries inflicted under exceptional circumstances) of Act No. 3815, as amended	
	HB 9092	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending Article 245 of Act No. 3815, by renaming the felony to 'sexual harassment by public officers' and adding another paragraph to be cited as Paragraph 3 dealing with cases not falling within the coverage of Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the same Article	
	HB 9116	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending Section 48 of Act No. 3815, as amended, to define and penalize the crime of murder committed under extraordinary circumstances	
	HB 9118	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending Article 310 of Act No. 3815, as amended, to increase the penalties in certain instances of qualified theft	
	HB 9946	Rep. Tambunting	Increasing the penalties for the falsification of medical certificates in times of national health emergencies including but not limited to test results and vaccination cards, amending for this purpose Article 174 of Act No. 3815, as amended	
	HB 10358	Rep. Torres-Gomez	Extending the coverage of the law in kidnapping and penalizing hoax kidnapping, amending for the purpose Article 267 of Act No. 3815, as amended	
	HB 9090	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending Article 1723 of RA 386, otherwise known as the New Civil Code	The Committee agreed to refer HBs 9090 and 9119 to the existing TWG that is tasked to

Continuation... Revision of Laws			of the Philippines, on the liability of engineers, architects, or contractors arising from non-observance of plans and specifications or the use of materials of inferior quality	deliberate on bills seeking to amend the Civil Code of the Philippines.
	HB 9119	Rep. Villafuerte	Amending Article 1032 of RA 386, on unworthiness to succeed (by including in the list of people who are disqualified to succeed by reason of unworthiness, parents who induce their sons to lead corrupt or immoral lives)	Rep. Deloso-Montalla manifested that the Committee will adopt the explanatory notes attached to HBs 9090 and 9119 as the sponsorship speeches of the authors.
	HB 2931	Rep. Castelo	Increasing the penalty for the crime of carnapping, amending for the purpose Section 14 of RA 6539, otherwise known as the Anti-Carnapping Act of 1972	The Committee deferred consideration of HBs 2931 and 8412 to confer with the authors the comments of the resource persons during the meeting.
	HB 8412	Rep. Villafuerte	Requiring the immediate return of carnapped vehicles to the lawful owners thereof, amending for the purpose RA 6539	PNP-HPG Deputy Director Marbil expressed support for the bills but informed the body that RA 6539 has already been repealed by RA 10883 (New Anti-Carnapping Act of 2016). The DOJ concurred with the statement of the PNP-HPG, adding that the penalty for the crime of carnapping has also been increased under RA 10883.

FORUM		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Human Rights	Legislators' Forum on Law and Religion, with the theme: "Finding Collaborative Measures in Support of Freedom of Religion or Belief"	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Bayani Fernando (1st District, Marikina City), in partnership with the Senate of the Philippines, Commission on Human Rights (CHR), University of the Philippines (UP) College of Law, and Brigham Young University's International Center for Law and Religion Studies (BYU-ICLRS), held this virtual legislators' forum in line with this year's celebration of the Human Rights Consciousness Week.</p> <p>In his opening remarks, Rep. Fernando affirmed the country's commitment to the observance and respect for human rights and said that the proposed Magna Carta on Religious Freedom Act is already scheduled for deliberation in the plenary. He stated that even with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the government will continue to protect and uphold at all times the fundamental and inalienable rights of every person to freely choose and exercise one's religious belief.</p> <p>Delivering his inspirational message, Senate President Vicente Sotto III stated that the liberty to believe, or not to believe, without fear of discrimination and absent any governmental intervention, is a constitutionally protected freedom. In the hierarchy of fundamental rights, he said the freedom of religion occupies a higher place over others. He stated that the Constitution recognizes the sanctity of freedom of religion and the importance of ensuring that laws should never favor nor unduly discriminate against any particular religion. As legislators, he emphasized that their role is to ensure that laws remain secular, consistent with the principle that separates the church and the state, yet promoting balance and respect between the two institutions. Likewise, he said legislators should continue to advocate legislative measures that will further ensure the enjoyment of the people of their fundamental human rights.</p>

Continuation...
Human Rights

House Speaker Lord Allan Jay Velasco, in his keynote speech, said that as the world slowly recovers from the pandemic, everyone must be deliberate in building and rebuilding an environment that fosters respect for human rights. He also stated that religious freedom is a human right guaranteed and protected by the Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations (UN), and Republic Act No. 11054 or the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. These laws, he said, emphasize the importance of religious belief and how it influences and motivates the outlook of the Filipino people in striving to attain a better and sustainable future.

Speaker Velasco informed the participants that the bill prohibiting racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination was already passed on Third Reading by the House of Representatives. The bill aims to protect and enhance the right of Filipinos to human dignity, remove religious, financial, and social inequalities, and improve their quality of living. It also recognizes the rights of the Muslim and indigenous communities within the framework of national unity and development. Once passed into law, the bill will significantly improve the Filipinos' level of respect for one another and way of living, the Speaker added. Through the unified efforts of the government and the different sectors of society, he believes that the common goal for a better Philippines for generations to come will be achieved. He underscored that the House of Representatives shall continue to actively pursue measures that support freedom of religion or belief and respect for human rights.

CHR Commissioner Gwendolyn Pimentel-Gana presented that the right to freedom of religion is enshrined in both international and domestic human rights laws. She cited the Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief adopted in 1981. Under the Philippine Constitution, she said Section 5 of the Bill of Rights provide that "No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights." She also cited the Revised Penal Code which imposes penalties for every intrusion to this freedom, such as interruption of religious worship and offending religious feelings.

According to Pimentel-Gana, while the freedom to believe is absolute, the right to act on those beliefs are, however, subject to certain limitations, particularly when certain actions already affect and inflict harm on others. She said this is where the State's duty to protect and preserve public safety, order, health, morals or fundamental rights and freedoms of others comes in.

Other speakers during the forum were: BYU-ICLRS Founding Director Cole Durham; BYU law professor Brett Scharffs; and Raul Pangalangan, retired judge of the International Criminal Court. They all agree that the original provisions of the proposed Magna Carta on Religious Freedom Act, including the rights stated in the proposed law, be maintained and not reduced. They were also glad to know that this Magna Carta is about to be passed by Congress, as they expressed appreciation of the efforts of Congress in ensuring that the exercise of religious freedom is protected and upheld.

Deputy Speaker Bienvenido Abante Jr. (6th District, Manila) remarked that legislators are duty bound to pursue the Magna Carta on Religious Freedom Bill, of which he is one of the authors,

<p>Continuation... Human Rights</p>		<p>as it further strengthens the rights of Filipinos to exercise their faith, a right guaranteed by the Constitution. As a pastor, he said this bill means more to him as he spent an entirety of his adult life convincing others of the importance of belief and faith. And now, as a lawmaker, he is in a better position to protect the citizens' right to believe and have faith. He added that many of the rights and freedoms under the Bill of Rights of the Constitution already have enabling laws. The right of workers to organize and form unions, for example, is enhanced by the Labor Code, while the privacy of communication is complemented by the Anti-Wiretapping Law. He stressed that Congress shall continue the work that the framers of the Constitution started, citing other pending bills that are needed to solidify the foundations of the Bill of Rights, such as the Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Bill and the Freedom of Information Bill which he also authored and continuously supported.</p> <p>During the open forum, Deputy Speaker Abante sought Pangalangan's opinion on the proposed divorce law. He said the annulment of marriage is already accepted in the country which is almost equivalent to a divorce law.</p> <p>Pangalangan agreed that the declaration of nullity of marriage is a <i>de facto</i> divorce law. He opined that since the nullity of marriage is accepted in the country, divorce should already be legalized through the enactment of a divorce law.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija) asked the resource persons to comment on how to strike a balance between upholding the people's right in choosing not to be vaccinated and safeguarding public health due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Scharffs replied that it depends on the actual health situation of a country. He explained that if herd immunity is close to being reached or that more than 70% of the population is already vaccinated, then requiring everyone to be vaccinated may not be necessary. However, he said if the health situation is so severe that it could impede the delivery of essential services or adversely affect the economy and the people, then this would justify making vaccination mandatory. Nevertheless, he said governments should still be guided by the existing laws and frameworks on the protection of human rights in order to implement fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory policies.</p> <p>Delivering the closing remarks, Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy President Amina Rasul-Bernardo expressed her appreciation for the support and assistance of institutions that made this forum possible, such as the UP College of Law, CHR, BYU-ICLRS, House of Representatives, and the Senate. She also thanked the resource speakers for sharing their expertise, depth of knowledge, and valuable inputs in today's forum. Finally, she expressed gratitude to the Senate President and the House Speaker for their statements of support for religious freedom. She affirmed that the participation of legislators in this forum reflects the importance of religious liberties in the hierarchy of legislative priorities of Congress.</p>
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