



Committee Daily Bulletin

18th Congress
Third Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. III No. 114
December 9, 2021

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Basic Education and Culture	HB 911	Rep. Baronda	Converting the Nabitasan Elementary School in Barangay Nabitasan, District of La Paz, Iloilo City into an integrated school to be known as the Nabitasan Integrated School and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Pasig City Rep. Roman Romulo, approved House Bill 911 subject to style. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.</p> <p>Iloilo City Rep. Julienne "Jam" Baronda, author of HB 911, said that the Nabitasan Elementary School already submitted and complied with all the documentary requirements for its conversion into an integrated school. She also manifested that the explanatory note attached to her bill shall serve as her sponsorship speech.</p> <p>Based on the explanatory note of the bill, the conversion of Nabitasan Elementary School into an integrated school will give the children living in the District of La Paz, Iloilo City and its neighboring barangays access not only to primary education but also to quality secondary education.</p> <p>Expressing support for the bill were Department of Education (DepEd) Undersecretary Tonisito Umali and DepEd Region VI Quality Assurance Division Chief Donato Delgado. They both confirmed the earlier statement of Rep. Baronda that the school has already complied with the documentary requirements set by DepEd for the conversion of schools.</p>
	HR 2204	Rep. Vargas	Inquiry into the proposed implementation of blended and distance learning options, particularly the limited and controlled face-to-face classes for practical exercises in schools	The Committee will continue its deliberation on the issues raised relative to House Resolutions 2204 and 2387, subject to DepEd's submission of relevant data as requested by the Committee Members.
	HR 2387	Rep. Romulo	Urging the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Health to consider piloting face-to-face classes in urban centers subject to the conditions set forth under DepEd Memorandum No. 071, series of 2021 or the Preparations for the Pilot Face-to-Face Expansion and Transitioning to New Normal	DepEd Assistant Secretary Malcolm Garma informed the Committee about the ongoing pilot implementation of limited face-to-face classes. According to Garma, the DepEd has selected around 277 public schools and 20 private schools to be involved in the pilot implementation nationwide. He said the DepEd has started with the initial 100 public schools last month while the additional 177 schools were supposed to start this week. However, based on the reports from DepEd's regional directors, out of the 177 pilot schools, only 165 were able to start and implement face-to-face classes. As for the private schools, Garma said 18 out of the targeted 20 schools were able to participate in the ongoing pilot implementation.

<p>Continuation... Basic Education and Culture</p>				<p>The DepEd, according to Garma, is planning to terminate the pilot face-to-face classes by the end of December this year. After which, DepEd will make a report on the implementation of the pilot face-to-face classes which will serve as basis for recommending to the Office of the President the possible expansion of the pilot implementation by early next year.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. Romulo, Garma said that expansion would mean more schools and more grade levels that will be involved in the implementation of the face-to-face classes, depending on the COVID situation next year. But Garma stressed that the expansion will push through only if the Office of the President approves it.</p> <p>Some of the House Members inquired if the teachers as well as parents and their children who voluntarily participated in the limited face-to-face classes were obliged to sign a risk waiver. Umali answered that DepEd does not require those involved to sign any waiver.</p> <p>Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City) asked DepEd if it has sufficient budget for the possible transition to face-to-face classes next year. Likewise, she suggested that teachers who voluntarily participated in the limited face-to-face classes be given risk allowance and priority for booster shots because they have high risk of exposure to COVID-19 while in the performance of their duty.</p> <p>Garma confirmed that there will be adjustments in the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of DepEd for next year once the country gradually reverts to face-to-face classes.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Castro suggested that plastic barriers attached to the seats of students be removed. Rep. Romulo also suggested that the DepEd should consult the Department of Health (DOH) on the safety and standard protocols on the use of plastic barriers in schools.</p> <p>The DepEd officials said that the DepEd already consulted with the DOH on the matter, and the advice given was that plastic barriers are not necessary. However, there are schools in the provinces that are using the barrier probably to appease the parents who worry about their children's safety. Nevertheless, they assured the Committee that they will instruct the regional schools to take down the barriers.</p> <p>The Committee requested DepEd to submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear design of the pilot study of face-to-face classes, including the
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Continuation... Basic Education and Culture				<p>following: purpose of the pilot study, basis for choosing a school, parameters for expansion, and the experts who will assess the pilot undertaking which will become the basis for making the recommendations to the President; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list of the additional MOOE for all public schools, as indicated in the proposed 2022 General Appropriations Bill.
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Transportation (Technical Working Group)	HB 317	Rep. Pancho	Providing open pilotage services in the country, creating a Pilotage Board, enhancing the powers of the Philippine Ports Authority and other port bodies in regulating pilotage services and the conduct of harbor pilots	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Navotas City Rep. John Reynald Tiangco, will deliberate further on the four bills. The Secretariat will come up with a substitute bill, incorporating in it the relevant comments and suggestions of the resource persons.</p> <p>Rep. Tiangco stated that the Committee recognizes the importance of pilotage service in the efficient and safe docking of ships, ensuring the smooth delivery of goods to the public. He added that the tasks of harbor pilots (a duly licensed master mariner rendering pilotage service) are not easy considering the required navigation skills, experience, and familiarity of the port. He also said that the common objective of the bills is to ensure the safe and efficient use of the ports in order to avoid economic losses.</p> <p>As defined in House Bill 317, "pilotage service" refers to the act of conducting, navigating, or maneuvering a vessel from anchorage to berth and vice versa.</p> <p>House Bills 317 and 8306 seek to liberalize the pilotage service in the country by allowing other individual harbor pilots or pilotage organizations to likewise render pilotage services especially in critical or busy ports. The scope of the two bills shall apply to all harbor pilots and pilotage organizations or persons rendering pilotage services licensed by the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) and accredited by the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA).</p> <p>Based on Executive Order No. 1088 dated February 3, 1986 – Providing for Uniform and Modified Rates for Pilotage Services Rendered to Foreign and Coastwise Vessels in All Private or Public Philippine Ports – only harbor pilots who are affiliated or members of the United Harbor Pilots' Association of the Philippines (UHPAP) may render pilotage services in the country.</p>
	HBs 1954 & 5457	Reps. Cabochan and Gonzalez (S.)	Regulating harbor pilotage services and the conduct of harbor pilots in all ports in the Philippines	
	HB 8306	Rep. Villafuerte	Providing for a regulatory framework for open harbor pilotage in the country	

<p>Continuation... Transportation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Meanwhile, HBs 1954 and 5457 seek to establish a new regulatory regime covering harbor pilotage services and the conduct of harbor pilots in all ports in the country. The goal is to modernize pilotage services in the country and to bring its regulation to world standards. This is to address the complaints involving unsatisfactory or delayed services rendered by harbor pilots, lack of proper equipment for pilotage, overcharging of pilotage fees, and collection of unauthorized fees.</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bills were the PPA, Philippine Coast Guard, Cebu Port Authority, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Bases Conversion and Development Authority, Port Users Confederation of the Philippines, Inc. (PUCP), Philippine Inter-island Shipping Association (PISA), Association of International Shipping Lines, Inc., and Philippine Ship Agents Association.</p> <p>PPA Port Operations and Services Department Manager Hiyasmin de los Santos informed the body that the PPA is mandated to regulate and supervise pilotage services and the conduct of pilots, as prescribed under Presidential Decree 857. The PPA, she added, abides by EO 1088 in enforcing standardized rates for pilotage services. She said a total of 126 harbor pilots have been accredited by the PPA to date.</p> <p>MARINA Legal Service Director Maximo Bañares Jr. recommended the inclusion in the proposed law of a provision that will clearly define the powers and authority of MARINA over all harbor pilots and pilotage organizations or persons rendering pilotage services.</p> <p>On the other hand, PUCP Vice President Bienvenido Basco called for the scrapping of EO 1088, considering that the current exorbitant rates for pilotage services do not conform to the uniform and modified rates prescribed in the said EO.</p> <p>PISA Executive Director Pedro Aguilar echoed the sentiments of Basco on repealing EO 1088. He also recommended that penalties be imposed on harbor pilots who cause damage to the vessels due to negligence in the performance of their duties. He also supports the setting of the retirement age of harbor pilots to 60 years old as proposed in HB 1954.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Prospero Pichay Jr. (1st District, Surigao del Sur) requested the PPA to submit data on the rates of pilotage services in other Asian countries in order to compare with the ones being charged by harbor pilots in the Philippines.</p> <p>For his part, UHPAP President Arnold Labadan expressed his objection to the</p>
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<p>Continuation... Transportation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>proposed liberalization of pilotage services in the country. He averred that the country needs expert harbor piloting that can only be rendered by qualified harbor pilots accredited by the PPA. He explained that the PPA requires harbor pilots in every port district to be a member of an organization in order to qualify for accreditation. He stressed that the harbor pilots are the ones rendering pilotage services and not the association or organization to which they belong. He also said that UHPAP is a non-stock, non-profit organization and does not engage in pilotage business. Further, he opined that opening the pilotage service to others not accredited by the organization could breed inefficiency and could result in accidents and unsafe pilotage practices in the country.</p> <p>On the issue of monopoly in pilotage services, Labadan clarified that it is the PPA that determines the number of harbor pilots per port district and not the UHPAP. He also mentioned that in Europe and the United States, where there are strict anti-monopoly and antitrust laws, state regulated monopoly in pilotage services is still being enforced and practiced.</p> <p>Rep. Tiangco asked UHPAP if it also offers tugboat services to vessel operators.</p> <p>Aguilar claimed that PISA has information and documents to prove that some harbor pilots also own tugboats or offer tugboat services to vessel operators. He explained that because pilotage services are compulsory in all ports in the country, as mandated in EO 1088, vessel operators are oftentimes pressured by the harbor pilots to avail of the latter's tugboat services. He said this takes away competition as well as the shipping lines' right to choose their own tugboat provider.</p> <p>Labadan admitted that some UHPAP members are also tugboat service providers or operators. However, he maintained that the member's recommendation of a tugboat provider is always based on the capability of the latter to provide a safe and secure service to the vessel in a particular port.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers for the TWG's consideration in drafting the substitute bill.</p>
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