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CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Conference Committee	HB 10153	Rep. Yap (E.)	Appropriating funds for the operation of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines from January 1 to December 31, 2022	<p>The Conference Committee, co-chaired by Rep. Eric Go Yap (Party-List, ACT-CIS), Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, and Senator Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara, Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, approved the reconciled version of House Bill 10153. Thereafter, the Conference Committee Report was also approved subject to style.</p> <p>Aside from Rep. Yap, other House Members present during the Conference Committee meeting were the following: Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (1st District, Leyte); Minority Leader Joseph Stephen "Caraps" Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD); Deputy Speakers Doy Leachon (1st District, Oriental Mindoro), Bernadette "BH" Herrera-Dy (Party-List, BH), Michael Romero Ph.D. (Party-List, 1-PACMAN), Juan Pablo "Rimpy" Bondoc (4th District, Pampanga), Kristine Singson-Meehan (2nd District, Ilocos Sur), Eric Martinez (2nd District, Valenzuela City), and Weslie Gatchalian (1st District, Valenzuela City).</p> <p>Also present in the meeting were Reps. Paolo Duterte (1st District, Davao City), Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental), Franz "Chicoy" Alvarez (1st District, Palawan), Eleandro Jesus Madrona (Romblon), Michael John Duavit (1st District, Rizal), Stella Luz Quimbo (2nd District, Marikina City), Munir Arbison (2nd District, Sulu), Joseph Sto. Niño Bernos (Abra), John Reynald Tiangco (Navotas City), and Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay).</p> <p>On the part of the Senate, aside from Senator Angara, the other conferees were: Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri and Senators Imee Marcos, Cynthia Villar, Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, Risa Hontiveros, Joel Villanueva, and Maria Lourdes Nancy Binay.</p>

COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Justice	HBs 9460 & 9461	Rep. Garbin	Granting Philippine citizenship to Yuancheng Duan and Chen Botao, respectively	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Vicente "Ching" Veloso III (3 rd District, Leyte), suspended its deliberation on the four House Bills until its next meeting.

<p>Continuation... Justice</p>	<p>HBs 10565 & 10566</p>	<p>Minority Leader Paduano</p>	<p>Granting Philippine citizenship to Tang Yong and Hu Jianguo, respectively</p>	<p>At the outset, Rep. Veloso informed the body that the four bills all seek to grant Philippine citizenship to foreign nationals, namely: Yuancheng Duan (HB 9460), Chen Botao (HB 9461), Tang Yong (HB 10565), and Hu Jianguo (HB 10566). He noted that all the applicants have already complied with the requirements of the Committee for granting Filipino citizenship. Further, he said that pursuant to the Rules of the Committee, the applicants were also requested to be present in today's meeting to answer queries that may be propounded by the Committee Members with regard to their respective applications for naturalization.</p> <p>Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr. (Party-List, AKO BICOL) presented the merits of HB 9460. He said that Yuancheng Duan aspires to contribute to the development of the country by providing more opportunities to the Filipino people, if given the chance to become a Filipino citizen.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City) inquired from Rep. Garbin about the relevant achievements, philanthropic activities, and substantial services to the Filipino people that Duan performed to warrant a legislative grant of Philippine citizenship and not go through the regular naturalization process. He observed that Duan arrived in the Philippines only in 2017 and has been residing in the country for less than five years. He explained that under the Revised Naturalization Law (Commonwealth Act No. 473), the applicant must have resided in the Philippines for a continuous period of not less than ten years. Moreover, he mentioned that Duan cannot speak the native tongue as he still communicates through an interpreter.</p> <p>The Revised Naturalization Law requires that the applicant must be able to speak and write English or Spanish and any one of the principal Philippine languages.</p> <p>In reply, Rep. Garbin said that Duan donated food and medical supplies at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, obeyed the country's laws, and paid his taxes as a supervisor of an information technology company. He explained that Duan will not be a burden to the country, considering that he has a stable job. He added that Duan has been trying to learn how to speak Filipino in the past four years, and even enrolled his children in a non-Chinese school for them to learn the Filipino language and culture. As to the requirements for a legislative grant of Philippine citizenship, he said Duan is compliant.</p> <p>However, Deputy Speaker Rodriguez averred that these are not sufficient grounds for granting the bundle of rights and privileges of a</p>
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<p>Continuation... Justice</p>			<p>Filipino citizen to the applicant. He argued that there are other thousands of foreigners who visit the country and also donate various medical supplies.</p> <p>Department of Justice (DOJ) State Counsel Don Rick Ventura concurred with the observations of Deputy Speaker Rodriguez. However, he also noted that Duan appear to have no disqualifications and has met the requirements of the Committee.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodriguez responded that although Congress has the discretion to grant Philippine citizenship, it still needs sufficient and reasonable basis and not just because the applicant has no disqualifications. He said Congress must set the bar high in granting Philippine citizenship as it entails granting the "supreme right of a Filipino."</p> <p>For her part, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Office of Consular Affairs' Passport Division Director Marie Chris Chieng stated that all the applicants for naturalization named in the four House bills have no derogatory record based on DFA's consular database. However, she said the DFA Office of Treaties and Legal Affairs (OTLA) has some comments, which are currently being consolidated and finalized for submission to the Committee.</p> <p>Asked to elucidate on the comments that will be submitted by the DFA-OTLA, Chieng revealed that both Duan and Botao submitted identical letters of intent, thereby raising questions as to their sincerity in their application for naturalization.</p> <p>Rep. Veloso inquired if there is anything more from the comment of the DFA-OTLA that will prevent Congress from granting Philippine citizenship to the applicants.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rodriguez strongly opposed the line of questioning of Rep. Veloso and stated that "the Chair seems to be lawyering for the applicants."</p> <p>In response, Rep. Veloso manifested that he is voluntarily inhibiting himself from the deliberations on these bills to dispel any notion of partiality towards the applicants.</p> <p>Amid the strong objections of Deputy Speaker Rodriguez to the proposed naturalization of Duan on the basis that he lacks the qualifications for naturalization, Rep. Garbin moved to suspend the deliberations on the measures until the next scheduled Committee meeting.</p> <p>Before the meeting was suspended, Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City) was given the opportunity to sponsor HBs 10565 and 10566 on behalf of the author,</p>
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Continuation... Justice				Minority Leader Joseph Stephen “Caraps” Paduano (Party-List, ABANG LINGKOD). He then read the explanatory notes attached to the two bills which he manifested to be considered as the author’s sponsorship speeches.
Women and Gender Equality	HR 2357	Rep. Acosta-Alba	Congratulating the National Federation of Women’s Club of the Philippines on the occasion of its centennial anniversary and commending its contribution to the promotion of the welfare of women in the Philippines, most especially by having led the fight for the attainment of the Filipino women’s right to suffrage	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Ma. Lourdes Acosta-Alba (1st District, Bukidnon), adopted House Resolution 2357, subject to style. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.</p> <p>In her opening remarks, Rep. Acosta-Alba, who is also the author of HR 2357, said that her resolution commemorates the centenary of the National Federation of Women’s Club of the Philippines (NFWCP) and its significant contribution in promoting the welfare of women, most specially for paving the way to the attainment of Filipino women’s right to suffrage. She added that the members of NFWCP are eminent women who pushed the boundaries of women’s leadership and participation to attain their goals. She also said that the NFWCP has demonstrated that women can make a critical and significant change in the society.</p> <p>Expressing support for the measure were Reps. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN), and Dahlia Loyola (5th District, Cavite).</p> <p>Rep. Brosas commended NFWCP, Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), and all women organizations present for advocating equal representation of women in the society. She added that she recognizes the heroic and invaluable contribution of the women sector during the pandemic, emphasizing that there are more women health workers on the frontline.</p> <p>Rep. Elago mentioned that with the upcoming 2022 elections, it is all the more timely to commemorate the achievements of women in terms of gaining the right to suffrage of every Filipina in the country.</p> <p>NFWCP President Linda Gonzalez expressed her gratitude to the Committee Members for recognizing the significance of the resolution. She said that HR 2357 pays tribute to the NFWCP’s 100 years of service in championing the cause of every Filipino woman. Most notable among the accomplishments of the Federation, according to Gonzalez, was the signing of a law granting Filipino women the right to suffrage by the late President Manuel Quezon on September 15, 1937.</p> <p>In addition, NFWCP Treasurer Mary Jane Ortega said that aside from pushing for women’s right to suffrage, some of the most celebrated accomplishments of NFWCP were</p>

Continuation... Women and Gender Equality				<p>the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines; • Establishment of the Correctional Institution for Women, Home for the Aged, and day care centers, among others, and • Celebration of the First National Girls' Week from November 23 to 29, 1935. <p>PCW Chairperson Sandra Montano expressed her support for the measure, as she gives recognition to the invaluable contribution of NFWCP in promoting the welfare of Filipino women and the attainment of Filipino women's right to suffrage.</p>
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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)	HBs 8874, 8931, 9762, 9771 & 10084	Reps. Robes, Benitez, Villafuerte, Deloso-Montalla, and Noel	Strengthening the National Housing Authority (NHA), extending its corporate term, and amending for the purpose Presidential Decree 757 or the law creating the NHA	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte (6th District, Quezon City), will deliberate further on the five bills in its next meeting on January 12, 2022.</p> <p>Rep. Belmonte said that the TWG aims to harmonize the provisions of the bills, using House Bill 8931 as the reference bill.</p> <p>HB 8931 seeks to extend the corporate life of the NHA for another 50 years to allow it to continue its mandate of providing housing to low-income families, and to generate its own funds from housing programs for other markets that have the capacity to pay, as means to cross-subsidize socialized housing. Based on PD 757, the NHA's corporate life will expire in 2025.</p> <p>In today's meeting, the TWG discussed the provisions of HB 8931 that are less contentious as suggested by the Chair; and thereafter adopted various sections of the bill. One of the provisions that the TWG extensively discussed was the last paragraph of Section 14 of HB 8931, which provides that all lands acquired by the NHA for any of its programs and projects shall be automatically converted and/or re-classified in order to facilitate its immediate development.</p> <p>Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Legislative Liaison Officer Jean Ocampo suggested that the last paragraph of Section 14 of HB 9762 be incorporated in the reference bill to reflect that the conversion and reclassification of land for housing projects shall be without prejudice to the right of the beneficiaries under Republic</p>

<p>Continuation... Housing and Urban Development (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>Act 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, as amended.</p> <p>Rep. Belmonte agreed with the DENR's suggestion.</p> <p>Likewise, Department of Agrarian Reform OIC-Adjudication Board Member Rolando Cua suggested the inclusion of a provision in the bill that will protect the agricultural lessees' right to disturbance compensation as provided for under RA 3844 or the Agricultural Land Reform Code. He also recommended that the proposed law carry a provision stating that the conversion of lands awarded under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law shall be allowed only after a period of five years from the date of the award.</p> <p>Rep. Belmonte recommended that the matter be discussed further in the TWG's next meeting, explaining the importance of reconciling the interest of the housing sector, particularly the need to identify and designate lands for housing, with that of the agrarian reform sector, with regard to the policy against the conversion of agricultural lands into other uses.</p> <p>Also for discussion next meeting are the provisions on the powers and functions of the NHA; powers and duties of the General Manager and Assistant General Managers; qualifications of NHA's Board of Directors; organizational structure and staffing pattern; exemption from taxes and regulatory fees; and the financial aspects of the NHA.</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA) said that resource persons from the informal settler families should be invited in the TWG's next meeting to also give their comments and inputs on the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Belmonte requested the resource persons to submit a more detailed position paper that will directly state their comments and suggestions on the contentious provisions of the proposed measure.</p>
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