



Committee Daily Bulletin

18th Congress
Third Regular Session

A publication of the Committee Affairs Department

Vol. III No. 61
September 7, 2021

BUDGET BRIEFINGS		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Appropriations	<p>Briefing on the proposed FY 2022 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the Judiciary, Civil Service Commission (CSC), and the Presidential Communication Operations Office (PCOO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judiciary 	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Eric Go Yap (Party-List, ACT-CIS), listened to the presentations on the proposed FY 2022 budget, plans and programs, and major accomplishments of the Judiciary, Civil Service Commission (CSC), and the Presidential Communication Operations Office (PCOO).</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Ruwel Peter Gonzaga (2nd District, Davao de Oro), sat as the presiding officer during the briefing on the 2022 proposed budget of the Judiciary and CSC.</p> <p>Supreme Court (SC) Administrator Jose Midas Marquez said that under the FY 2022 National Expenditure Program (NEP), the Judiciary is set to receive an amount of P44.98 billion, which decreased by less than 1% from its current budget of P45.31 billion. The proposed budget will be distributed as follows: Supreme Court of the Philippines and the Lower Courts, P39.76 billion; Court of Appeals, P3.40 billion; Sandiganbayan, P1.12 billion; Court of Tax Appeals, P549.69 million; and Presidential Electoral Tribunal, P146.17 million.</p> <p>The SC Administrator also said that the Judiciary's budget under the 2022 NEP is very much lower than its original budget proposal of P67.28 billion. Instead of requesting the restoration of the P22.30 billion variance, Marquez said the Judiciary is just requesting an additional P7.47 billion. He also stated that the reduced budget of the Judiciary under the NEP is a violation of the Constitution.</p> <p>Section 3, Article 8 of the Constitution states that "The Judiciary shall enjoy fiscal autonomy. Appropriations for the Judiciary may not be reduced by the legislature below the amount appropriated for the previous year and, after approval, shall be automatically and regularly released."</p> <p>Marquez explained that the P7.47 billion additional budget for next year that the Judiciary is requesting will ensure that its operations will not be hampered, including the conduct of virtual hearings that have allowed the Courts to function amidst their physical closure during lockdowns. He further said that the additional budget will be used as payment for the salaries of judges-at-large in first and second level trial courts, and for rentals of spaces used as temporary courtrooms. Likewise, it will fund the creation of new positions for the Judicial Integrity Board (JIB), which has been tasked to investigate issues on corruption and other ethics violations within the Judiciary.</p> <p>Moreover, the Court Administrator requested that the language of Special Provisions No. 2 (Special Allowance of Justices and Judges) and No. 7 (Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses of Lower Courts) under the FY 2022 NEP be patterned after the same special provisions in the General Appropriations Act of 2021. He noted that a similar request was granted in the past.</p> <p>Among the lawmakers who expressed their support for the additional budget requested by the Judiciary were Reps. Carlos</p>

<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Service Commission 	<p>Isagani Zarate (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS), Mark Go (Baguio City), and Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA).</p> <p>Rep. Zarate commended the SC for its recent issuance of the rules pertaining to the use of body-worn cameras in the execution or service of search and arrest warrants. He said it is long overdue given the numerous reports of extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and other human rights violations committed in the implementation of these warrants.</p> <p>On the query of Rep. Castro regarding the increase in bar examination fees from P4,500 to P10,000, Marquez explained that administering online applications for bar examinations entails higher expenses because of the use of online platforms. He added that bar examinations for this year will be conducted nationwide in 20 examination sites so that applicants from the Visayas and Mindanao would no longer have to travel all the way to Manila to take the bar examination, which is inconvenient and costly.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City) praised the SC for practicing “judicial activism,” citing SC Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo’s directive for justices and judges to speed up the resolution of cases, the promulgation of the rules on the use of body cameras in the service of warrants, and the curtailment of the power of judges to issue warrants beyond their judicial region.</p> <p>However, the Deputy Speaker criticized the inaction of the SC over the replacement of the Hall of Justice in Cagayan de Oro City that was gutted by fire six years ago. He stressed that until now, no new building is being constructed on the site.</p> <p>Marquez explained that the SC is already discussing the details of the judicial complex project in Cagayan de Oro City, adding that it already has the initial funds for the purpose.</p> <p>Unconvinced of the explanation of the SC Administrator, Deputy Speaker Rodriguez asserted that he will not support the Judiciary’s request for additional budget unless it takes a definitive action on the issue he raised.</p> <p>The Committee terminated the briefing on the FY 2022 proposed budget of the Judiciary.</p> <p>CSC Chair Alicia dela Rosa-Balasaïd said that under the FY 2022 NEP, the CSC is set to receive P1.89 billion, which is 5.83% higher than its current budget of P1.79 billion. By expense class, CSC’s proposed budget will be distributed as follows: personnel services (PS), P1.50 billion; maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P373.29 million; financial expense (FINEX) P9,000; and capital outlay (CO), P20.29 million. She mentioned that the original budget proposal of the CSC for FY 2022 is P2.48 billion, but was cut by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) by P583.96 million, thus the P1.89 billion budget under the FY 2022 NEP.</p> <p>The major thrusts of the CSC for 2022, as presented by Dela Rosa-Baja, will be geared towards the formulation of human resource policies that are responsive to the challenges being faced by the civil servants during the pandemic and post pandemic; enhancement of civil service systems and procedures for efficient public service delivery in support of RA 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service</p>
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<p>Continuation... Appropriations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential Communication Operations Office 	<p>Delivery Act; digital transformation of the CSC's programs; and promotion of human resource excellence level in the bureaucracy through the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management or PRIME-HRM.</p> <p>The CSC Chair also highlighted the significant accomplishments of the CSC in 2020 and 2021. Dela Rosa-Bala reported that in 2020, the CSC was able to exceed its targets in 12 out of 19 indicators under CSC's three major programs, namely: Civil Service Human Resource Governance Program; Civil Service Professionalization and Workplace Cooperation Program; and Administrative Justice Program. The CSC was likewise able to achieve 91.25% accomplishment of its complaints resolution under the Public Assistance subprogram, exceeding its 90% target. For the 1st semester of 2021, the CSC has so far attained 96.83% accomplishment of its complaints resolution under the same subprogram.</p> <p>Relative to budget utilization, Dela Rosa-Bala reported that the CSC was able to utilize P1.59 billion of its P1.61 billion budget or 92% utilization rate in 2020. As of June 2021, she said the CSC's 2021 budget utilization rate already reached 89.83%, utilizing P816.93 million of the P909.4 million which was already covered by notices of cash allocation (NCA).</p> <p>On the query of Baguio City Rep. Mark Go on where the CSC would have utilized the P583.96 million slashed by the DBM from its FY 2022 proposed budget, Dela Rosa-Bala explained that the funds should have been earmarked for the following: development of an online civil service examinations; capability-building of bureaucracies and civil servants; creation of an Information and Communications Technology Office to facilitate digitalization; establishment of regional offices; and improvement of CSC buildings.</p> <p>Rep. Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA) raised his concern on the fate of national government personnel who will be affected by the full devolution of basic services from the national government to the local government units (LGUs) by 2022 based on Executive Order 138. The planned full devolution is in line with the Supreme Court's Mandanas ruling which will result in LGUs having a huge increase in their share of all national taxes effective 2022. He requested the CSC to look into the number of government personnel who stand to lose their jobs as a consequence of the devolution. Dela-Rosa agreed to look into the matter.</p> <p>Rep. France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS) manifested her support for the restoration of the proposed FY 2022 budget of the CSC as originally requested.</p> <p>The Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Manuel Jose "Mannix" Dalipe (2nd District, Zamboanga City), sat as the presiding officer during the deliberations on the PCOO's proposed budget for FY 2022.</p> <p>PCOO Secretary Jose Ruperto Martin Andanar said that under the FY 2022 NEP, the PCOO is set to receive an amount of P1.91 billion, which is 18% higher than its current budget of P1.62 billion. By expense class, the 2022 budget will be distributed as follows: PS, P874.10 million; MOOE, P721.48 million; and CO, P315.39 million.</p> <p>Andanar said the PCOO is the lead communications arm of the government that provides relevant news to the public and</p>
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Continuation...
Appropriations

amplifies the legacy of the President and the executive branch's accomplishments especially amid the pandemic. Among the accomplishments of the agency were as follows: launch of the *Laging Handa* – a regular television program that reports on matters related to disaster and the current pandemic; full operation of the Mindanao Media which will serve as the main broadcast hub in the Mindanao region; and construction of the Visayas Media hub in Cebu, which will be a government broadcast hub in the Visayas.

Andanar also took the opportunity to ask the support of Congress for the passage of the proposed Freedom of Information Act, Media Workers Welfare Act, and the People's Broadcasting Corporation Act.

Reps. Lawrence "Law" Fortun (1st District, Agusan del Norte), France Castro (Party-List, ACT-TEACHERS), Ferdinand Gaité (Party-List, BAYAN MUNA), and Sarah Jane Elago (Party-List, KABATAAN) inquired about the PCOO's hiring of 375 contractual personnel in year 2020 that was questioned by the Commission on Audit (COA) in its audit report.

PCOO Undersecretary Kris Ablan replied that the 375 contractual personnel include those who rendered short-term services. He said the number has been reduced because some were already absorbed in the PCOO with permanent positions. The PCOO was asked to submit a list of its contractual personnel in 2020.

Reps. Fortun, Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay), and Mark Go (Baguio City) expressed concern on the weak media presence of Radyo Pilipinas – a government-owned radio station that is operated by the Philippine Broadcasting Service (PBS), an agency attached to the PCOO.

PBS' Bureau of Broadcasting Services (BBS) Director Rizal Giovanni Aportadera Jr. admitted that Radyo Pilipinas needs to improve its broadcasting services to widen its reach and gain higher ratings. However, he said that the government radio station ranks number 7 among the Top 10 radio stations in the country. On its social media presence, Aportadera said that Radyo Pilipinas started its Facebook page in 2017 and now has 1.5 million followers.

On the query of Rep. Ma. Lourdes Arroyo (5th District, Negros Occidental), Aportadera said the equipment of PBS-BBS are decades-old and need to be replaced. He disclosed that PCOO proposed a higher budget for CO purposely to upgrade its facilities, but it was significantly reduced. The PBS-BBS will submit a list of the transmitters that can be rehabilitated with the approved budget for 2022.

Reps. Fortun, Arroyo, and Go expressed support for an increase in the proposed budget of the PCOO.

Meanwhile, Reps. Castro and Argel Joseph Cabatbat (Party-List, MAGSASAKA) asked about the status of funds that were transferred to the PCOO from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) to promote the Philippine Identification System or the National ID System.

Ablan said that the PCOO has no liquidation report yet on such funds because the National ID System is still ongoing. He explained that the rollout and implementation of the National ID System was interrupted because of the pandemic.

Continuation... Appropriations		Rep. Jose "Bonito" Singson Jr. (Party- List, PROBINSYANO AKO) expressed concern on the repercussions of accepting media equipment donated by the Chinese government. Ablan assured that the donation from China passed the scrutiny of national security agencies and will not compromise the country's national security. Ablan also said that the donation will not in any way affect the credibility of news reporting by government media network.
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Energy	Substitute Bill to HB 8762	Rep. Macapagal Arroyo	Strengthening the Philippine National Oil Company, further amending for the purpose PD 334, as amended, otherwise known as the Charter of the Philippine National Oil Company	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), approved the Substitute Bill to House Bill 8762 subject to amendment. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Hector Sanchez (Catanduanes), head of the technical working group (TWG) that crafted the substitute bill, briefly discussed the salient features of the proposed law which will further amend Presidential Decree 334 or the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) Charter.</p> <p>Rep. Sanchez said that amending the PNOC Charter will make the PNOC more responsive and flexible in its operations involving energy exploration, exploitation, and development. The proposed law, he further said, will afford the government's oil company with a degree of flexibility to meet energy challenges not merely as a passive government-owned and controlled corporation but a business entity making profits for the government.</p> <p>In addition, Rep. Sanchez said that the substitute bill mandates the PNOC to submit to Congress its annual budget for the latter's approval.</p> <p>In one of the previous meetings of the Committee on the proposed law, PNOC President Reuben Lista requested that the PNOC be exempted from the requirement of submitting its annual budget to Congress for approval. According to Lista, the long and stringent process of the annual budget deliberations will cause delay in the implementation of PNOC's projects. He reasoned that anyway, Congress has the power to review PNOC's financial status anytime it deems necessary.</p>
	Substitute Bill to HB 9544	Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Creating the Philippine Renewable Energy Corporation (PREC), defining its powers and functions, and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee approved the Substitute Bill to HB 9544. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.</p> <p>Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Presley de Jesus (Party-List, PHILRECA), head of the TWG that</p>

Continuation... Energy				<p>crafted the substitute bill, briefly discussed the key features of the proposed law. According to him, the proposed law will abolish the existing PNOC-Renewables Corporation (PNOC-RC) and its power and functions shall be transferred to the proposed PREC.</p> <p>Under the substitute bill, the PREC "shall promote and undertake research, development, utilization, manufacture, sale, marketing, distribution and commercial application of new, renewable, non-conventional and environment-friendly energy sources including biomass, geothermal, solar, hydro, ocean, wind and other natural, non-fossil fuel. It shall apply new and efficient energy conversion and utilization technologies for commercial application and promote their efficient utilization."</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HB 9544, thanked the Committee for the prompt approval of the proposed law.</p>
	Substitute Resolution to HR 1776	Rep. De Jesus	Compelling the National Electrification Administration (NEA) Board of Administrators to strictly adhere/comply with the provisions of NEA Memorandum No. 2017-035, on the selection of general managers of electric cooperatives, particularly in the case of the Benguet Electric Cooperative, and to take the necessary actions and appropriate solutions to fulfill the NEA's mandate as specified in PD 269 (or the NEA Electrification Administration Decree), as amended by RA 10531 (or the NEA Reform Act of 2013), as a supervisory agency of electric cooperatives or a government agency with supervisory powers and functions over electric cooperatives	The Committee approved the Substitute Resolution to House Resolution 1776. The corresponding Committee Report was likewise approved.
Health	HB 6290	Deputy Speaker Yu	Providing for the establishment of a district hospital in the Municipality of Ramon Magsaysay, First Legislative District of the Province of Zamboanga Del Sur to be known as Ramon Magsaysay District Hospital	The Committee, chaired by Rep. Angelina "Helen" Tan, M.D. (4 th District, Quezon), approved House Bills 6290, 8135, and 8262 subject to style and amendment and compliance with the requirements set by the Department of Health (DOH) on the establishment of hospitals.
	HB 8135	Rep. Arbison	Creating a 25-bed capacity municipal hospital in the Municipality of Lugus, Sulu and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 8262	Rep. Sanchez	Establishing a 100-bed capacity district hospital in the Municipality of Caramoran, Province of Catanduanes to be known as Caramoran Medical Center and appropriating funds therefor	
	HB 9530	Rep. Bordado	Providing for the establishment of a Bicol-South Luzon Sub-National Reference Laboratory and appropriating funds therefor	

Continuation... Health	HB 994	Deputy Speaker Romero	Amending RA 8203, otherwise known as the Special Law on Counterfeit Drugs, to foster the imposition of all existing policies and guidelines, providing stiffer penalties and sanctions	The Committee directed the Secretariat to come up with a substitute bill.
	HBs 1912 & 4779	Reps. Salo and Tan (A.)	Strengthening the regulatory system in the country to combat counterfeit pharmaceutical products, declaring the manufacture, importation, distribution, sale or offer for sale, or possession of counterfeit pharmaceutical products as an offense involving economic sabotage, providing penalties for violations thereof, repealing for the purpose RA 8203	<p>Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), author of HB 1912, underscored the need to enact a new law in lieu of the 26-year-old Special Law on Counterfeit Drugs (Republic Act 8203) in order to update and strengthen the regulation against counterfeit pharmaceutical products. He said much has changed in the pharmaceutical industry and the advances in technology and transition to digital space also pave the way for the growth of internet sales of pharmaceutical products, including counterfeit ones. Thus, his bill seeks to strengthen the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to effectively fulfill its mandate, provide a more comprehensive list of prohibited acts that will be considered as economic sabotage, and impose higher administrative and criminal penalties.</p> <p>On her part, Rep. Tan, who is also the author of HB 4779, said her bill seeks to enact a law that will be more responsive to the increasingly complex nature of pharmaceutical markets and pharmaceutical crimes. She explained that the purpose of RA 8203 was effectively nullified by a Supreme Court ruling in 1997, wherein the definition of counterfeit drug/medicine has been challenged. Under RA 8203, “an unregistered imported drug product, except drugs brought in the country for personal use as confirmed and justified by accompanying medical records,” is covered by the definition of counterfeit drug.</p> <p>Rep. Tan stated that in the Roma Drug versus GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) case, the former was accused of violating RA 8302 for not registering GSK products which were procured under parallel importation. She said that the SC ruled in favor of Roma Drug, taking the position that the drugstore did not violate RA 8203. The SC cited a later law, RA 9502 (Universally Accessible Cheaper and Quality Medicines Act of 2008), which “clearly reveals an intention of the legislature to abrogate RA 8203 because of irreconcilable inconsistencies between the two.”</p> <p>Because of this ruling, Rep. Tan said the FDA can no longer invoke RA 8203 in cases against unregistered pharmaceutical products including those obtained through parallel importation.</p> <p>FDA OIC-Deputy Director General for Field Regulatory Operations Office Emilio Polig Jr. expressed support for the bills. He stressed the need to elevate the national government’s drive against counterfeit pharmaceutical products which are easily being sold online in this age of globalization and digital technology.</p>

Continuation... Health				The stakeholders present in the meeting committed to submit their official position papers on the bills.
	HBs 9160 & 10059	Reps. Tan (A.) and Vergara	Strengthening the traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM) system, amending for the purpose RA 8423, otherwise known as the Traditional and Alternative Medicine Act (TAMA) of 1997	<p>The Committee directed the Secretariat to come up with a substitute bill for the two bills.</p> <p>Rep. Tan, author of HB 9160, stressed the need to strengthen the TAMA law by increasing its safeguards to adequately ensure the safety, standardization, efficacy, quality, availability, and preservation of services that are made available to the public. She said this will likewise protect indigenous societies owning traditional medicines and practices from the exploits of commercial use. In addition, she said the bill aims to promote and advocate the use of traditional, alternative, preventive and curative healthcare modalities that have been proven safe and effective, encourage scientific research, and develop an alternative healthcare system that has direct impact on public healthcare. Thus, she affirmed that the proposed measure would enable the State to attain its ultimate goal of providing the people with a wider range of cost-efficient health services.</p> <p>Under HB 9160, the Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC) will have exclusive authority to unify all the regulations concerning T&CM and shall facilitate the establishment of a one-stop-shop for the provision of licenses, certificates and the likes for the practitioners and operators.</p> <p>The PITAHC is a government-owned and controlled corporation attached to the DOH that was created by virtue of the TAMA law. Its powers and functions include planning and carrying out research and development activities in the areas of traditional and alternative health care, and formulation of standards and guidelines for the manufacture, marketing, and quality control of different traditional and alternative health care materials and products for approval and adoption by the FDA.</p> <p>Rep. Rosanna “Ria” Vergara (3rd District, Nueva Ecija), author of HB 10059, emphasized that the health and well-being of the people is of paramount concern given the ongoing fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, she also underscored the need to strengthen the country’s traditional and alternative healthcare system in order to provide a wider range of health services especially for those with difficult health-related conditions.</p> <p>PITAHC Director General Annabelle Pabiona-De Guzman favors the proposal to grant PITAHC with quasi-judicial powers and increased regulatory powers which include the grant of licenses for the practice of T&CM modalities and the operation and maintenance</p>

Continuation... Health				<p>of T&CM facilities; and issuance of standards and requirements for the registration of T&CM products. She said this will truly enable the PITAHC to avert unsafe practices and products relative to T&CM.</p> <p>Other resource persons present during the meeting committed to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
Social Services	Substitute Bill to HB 4469	Rep. Panotes	Institutionalizing the granting of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Alfred Vargas (5th District, Quezon City), approved the Substitute Bill to House Bill 4469, and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Diego “Nonoy” Ty (1st District, Misamis Occidental), Chair of the technical working group (TWG) that was tasked to craft the substitute bill to HB 4469, said that the proposed law seeks to make permanent the AICS Program of the DSWD to ensure continuous assistance to Filipinos in crisis. He explained that the program will still be a national government program under the DSWD which will serve as a resource augmentation support to the existing social services being offered by local government units. He added that a congressional review of the implementation of the AICS program shall commence three years after the effectivity of the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Ty also said that the views and comments of all the stakeholders were considered during the deliberation of the substitute bill in the TWG meetings.</p>
	Substitute Resolution to HR 1402	Rep. Brosas	Urging the DSWD to fast-track the release of available funds to help families in typhoon-stricken areas, particularly the funds intended for the AICS Program in the form of P10,000 pesos emergency cash aid to typhoon victims	<p>The Committee approved the Substitute Resolution to House Resolution 1402, and the corresponding Committee Report.</p> <p>Rep. Arlene Brosas (Party-List, GABRIELA), author of HR 1402, urged the immediate adoption of the resolution so that the DSWD will be pushed to fast-track its assistance to typhoon victims, who are in a direr situation because of the effects of the pandemic. She emphasized that the unspent funds of the DSWD from its 2020 and 2021 budgets should be utilized to grant P10,000 emergency cash aid to each family affected by the recent typhoons.</p> <p>According to Rep. Brosas, the DSWD had an unspent fund of P781 million from its 2019 budget, and was returned to the National Treasury. For 2020, she said the DSWD’s unspent fund is P8.2 billion which can only be obligated and utilized until December 31, 2021. She also said that the DSWD has unspent funds from its allocation under the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act (Bayanihan 2) law, which expired last June 30. She underscored that the expired funds could have gone a long way in helping families in typhoon-stricken areas. Thus, her resolution</p>

Continuation... Social Services				urges the DSWD to immediately utilize its available funds to benefit the typhoon victims before the validity of such funds expires.
	HB 4821	Rep. Guico	Creating the "Home for the Homeless" and appropriating funds therefor	<p>The Committee agreed to consolidate HB 4821 with HB 7379, which is now being deliberated on at the TWG level.</p> <p>HB 7379, authored by Siquijor Rep. Jake Vincent Villa, seeks to establish welfare homes for destitute persons.</p> <p>Rep. Vargas said the TWG, which is headed by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), will be tasked to come up with a substitute bill for the two bills.</p> <p>Rep. Ramon "Mon-Mon" Guico III (5th District, Pangasinan), author of HB 4821, said that his bill seeks to establish a temporary shelter for the homeless, destitute persons, or those who suffer abuse from their family. The center shall be called "Home for the Homeless" and shall be under the supervision of the DSWD Secretary.</p> <p>Based on HB 4821, the objective of the center is to assess the issues of homeless and destitute persons and endorse them to proper government agencies, such as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority for livelihood training; National Housing Authority for housing assistance; Department of Health for medical and dental assistance; and National Center for Mental Health for assistance to those suffering from mental illness.</p>

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES				
COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Civil Service and Professional Regulation (Technical Working Group)	Draft Substitute Bill to HBs 6248, 8452, 9484 & 5886	Reps. Silverio, Romualdo, Tambunting, and Nograles (J.F.F.)	Professionalizing paralegal practice in the Philippines, creating for this purpose a Professional Regulatory Board of Paralegals, appropriating funds therefor	<p>The technical working group (TWG), presided by Rep. Raymond Democrito Mendoza (Party-List, TUCP), terminated its discussion on the draft substitute bill.</p> <p>The draft substitute bill will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>Resource persons from the following agencies presented their views on the bill during the period of discussion: Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), University of the Philippines Law Center, Legal Education Board (LEB), and Commission on Higher Education (CHED).</p> <p>PRC's Professional Regulatory Board – Secretariat Division officer-in-charge Omaimah Gandamra recommended the amendment of Section 5 of the bill to remove</p>

<p>Continuation... Civil Service and Professional Regulation (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>the following proposed functions or services from the scope of practice of a paralegal: representation on behalf of a party in small claims cases, and representation on behalf of a party in barangay conciliation proceedings. Gandamra said that the limited legal know-how of paralegals may unduly delay the settlement of barangay conciliations and small claims.</p> <p>Agreeing with Gandamra, UP Law Center's Training and Convention Division head Marwil Llasos added that the provision on representation in small claims cases may infringe on the power of the Supreme Court (SC) to promulgate rules under Section 5, Article 8 of the Constitution. He cited as an example the provision on plea bargaining under the Dangerous Drugs Act which was declared unconstitutional as this infringes on the power of the SC. "So this might invite the attention of several minded persons to question that provision before the SC and it might be declared unconstitutional," Llasos added. He also explained that the provision in the bill allowing paralegals to represent a party to barangay conciliation proceedings may need a substantial amendment of the Local Government Code with respect to the very idea of the <i>Katarungang Pambarangay</i> law, which has been in effect since 1978, where parties must be personally present and not represented by anybody to facilitate amicable settlement.</p> <p>Both Llasos and Aaron Dimaano, LEB Executive Officer, recommended that the preparation, adoption, issuance or amendment of the syllabus or table of specifications for the paralegal licensure examination shall be made in consultation with the LEB and the UP Law Center.</p> <p>Gandamra affirmed that the existing policies, standards and guidelines issued by the CHED are the bases of the table of specifications for the paralegal licensure examination.</p> <p>CHED's Programs Development Division chief Buenaventura Macatangay confirmed that the Bachelor of Science in Legal Management degree is under the jurisdiction and supervision of CHED. Nonetheless, he agreed with the recommendation of the LEB and the UP Law Center.</p> <p>Other recommendations made by the resource persons to further improve the proposed law are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the short title of the bill to "Philippine Paralegal Act;" • Define the terms "paralegal services," "practice of law," and "paralegal practice," among others; • Expand the scope of the practice of
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Continuation... Civil Service and Professional Regulation (Technical Working Group)				<p>paralegal service to include interviewing clients; fact finding, gathering, and retrieving information; custodianship, archival and retrieval of evidence; drafting and analyzing legal documents; representing clients in appropriate cases; and providing legal support services to the public, lawyers, clients, and other stakeholders;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in the qualifications of the chairperson and members of the Professional Regulatory Board for Paralegals that they must not have been convicted of crimes involving moral turpitude; and • Set the licensure examination for the paralegal profession at least once a year.
Special Committee on Senior Citizens (Technical Working Group)	HBs 65, 1313, 1504, 1753, 2212, 4406, 5137, 6997, 7803, 8529 & 9238	Rep. Yap (V.), Deputy Speaker Gatchalian, Reps. Garbin, Villafuerte, Aragonese, Yap (E.), Olivarez, Datol (dec.), Delos Santos, and Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Protecting senior citizens from violence, defining elder abuse, and prescribing penalties for violation thereof	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Ron Salo (Party-List, KABAYAN), will deliberate further on the 17 bills. The Secretariat was directed to prepare a substitute bill, taking into consideration the comments and suggestions of the resource persons during the meeting.</p> <p>Rep. Salo underscored the importance of the bills, which seek to protect senior citizens from abuse and other forms of violence. He spoke of the need to establish a protective mechanism that is proactive and evidence-based and the need to empower barangays to be able to effectively provide assistance to senior citizens who are victims of abuse and violence.</p> <p>Rep. Alfred delos Santos (Party-List, ANG PROBINSYANO), author of HB 7803, said his bill aims to address the growing cases of elderly abuse in the country by penalizing the various forms of elder abuse, institutionalizing various protective mechanisms for elders, and securing the rights of elders especially during the pendency of abuse cases .</p> <p>Expressing their support for the bills were the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), National Economic and Development Authority, National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC), National Anti-Poverty Commission - Senior Citizen Sectoral Council (NAPC-SCSC), Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Philippine National Police, National Bureau of Investigation, Public Attorney's Office (PAO), and Philippine Association of Retired Persons.</p> <p>PAO Public Attorney Maria Joy Karen Adraneda-Filio said that PAO is open to rendering free legal services to senior citizens who have been victimized by abuse and violence.</p>
	HBs 1629, 4973 & 8539	Reps. Sy-Alvarado, Nieto, and Villafuerte	Ensuring that older or disabled persons are protected from institutional, community and domestic violence and sexual assault and improving outreach efforts and other services available to older or disabled persons victimized by such violence	
	HBs 3696 & 9283	Reps. Castelo and Tambunting	Establishing a senior citizens' grievance desk in every barangay	
	HB 3836	Rep. Panotes	Instituting mechanisms to protect the elderly against abuse, exploitation and abandonment or neglect, establishing a Home for the Elderly in every region, providing penalties for violation thereof and appropriating funds therefor	

Continuation... Special Committee on Senior Citizens (Technical Working Group)				<p>NAPC-SCSC representative Salvacion Basiano suggested that barangay councils be given the task of conducting rescue operations for abused senior citizens. She recommended that the salaries of barangay <i>tanods</i> and barangay health workers be increased commensurate to this additional task.</p> <p>DILG Assistant Secretary for Community Participation and Barangay Affairs Roosque Calacat recommended that the proposed law should delineate the kind of assistance that barangays should provide.</p> <p>For his part, CHR Legal, Legislative, and Linkages Division Chief Erwin Caliba recommended that a provision on human rights education particularly involving older persons be included in the proposed law. He also suggested that specific government agencies should be assigned to monitor and gather data on cases involving abuse of senior citizens. Further, he said the CHR should be included among the agencies that will craft the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the proposed law.</p> <p>The resource persons were requested to submit their respective position papers on the bills.</p>
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AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Agriculture and Food	Briefing by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) on their respective proposed budget for FY 2022 under the National Expenditure Program (NEP)	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga (1st District, Quezon), listened to the presentation of the DA and the NIA on their respective proposed budget for FY 2022.</p> <p>DA Budget Division Chief Telma Tolentino informed the body that the FY 2022 proposed budget of the DA is P91.01 billion which is just about 1% higher than its current year's appropriation of P90.06 billion. She added that the original budget proposal of the DA is P231.76 billion.</p> <p>By expense class, Tolentino said the 2022 budget of the DA will be distributed as follows: maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE), P57.18 billion; capital outlay (CO), P27.50 billion; and personnel services (PS), P6.33 billion.</p> <p>Based on the budget briefer of the DA, the Office of the Secretary (OSEC) and the attached agencies of the DA will get a budget of P72.01 billion while its attached corporations will get a budget of P18.99 billion.</p> <p>On the part of the NIA, Senior Deputy Administrator Abraham Bagasin said the FY 2022 proposed budget of the NIA is P32.08 billion which is 1.18% lower than the current year's appropriation of P32.46 billion. By expense class, he said the 2022 proposed budget of the NIA will be distributed as follows: CO, P24.65 billion; PS, 4.68 billion; and MOOE, P2.75 billion.</p> <p>Ifugao Rep. Solomon Chungalao noted the significant decrease in</p>

<p>Continuation... Agriculture and Food</p>		<p>the budget for farm-to-market road (FMR) projects of the DA from P11.72 billion in 2021 to just P4.98 billion for 2022.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) posited that the DA may not have validated several proposed FMR projects which prompted the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to reduce the budget for 2022.</p> <p>DA Undersecretary Ariel Cayanan explained that the DA originally requested a budget of P71.44 billion for its 2022 FMR projects but the DBM only approved the amount of P4.98 billion. Thus, he urged the lawmakers to help restore the original budget proposal of the DA for its 2022 FMR projects.</p> <p>Rep. Enverga requested the DA to submit the list of all FMR projects that are proposed to be funded under its original budget proposal amounting to P71.44 billion for 2022.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Virgilio Lacson (Party-List, MANILA TEACHERS) asked for an update on the hog repopulation program of the DA or the Integrated National Swine Production Initiatives for Recovery and Expansion (INSPIRE) program.</p> <p>Cayanan replied that the implementation of the INSPIRE program is ongoing. He said the program, which started this year and will end by 2023, aims to hasten the recovery of the hog industry from the impact of the African Swine Fever infestation. Among the components of the program are the restructuring and modernization of backyard swine farming, increase in breeder base population, enforcement of strict biosecurity measures, and extension of concessional and flexible loan terms for both backyard and commercial hog raisers.</p> <p>With regard to the increasing prices of fertilizers in the country, Rep. Noel Villanueva (3rd District, Tarlac) asked what measures are being undertaken by the DA to provide relief to the farmers.</p> <p>Cayanan explained that the rise in the price of fertilizers is due to the disrupted global supply network wherein other countries have higher demands for fertilizers. He said such high demand for fertilizers by big markets abroad would naturally increase global prices, and consequently increase the prices of fertilizers in the local market. To ease the burden on farmers, he said the DA is currently providing them with discount vouchers for the purchase of fertilizers.</p> <p>In the interest of time, Rep. Estrellita Suansing (1st District, Nueva Ecija) requested the DA to just submit a more detailed report of its FY 2022 proposed budget which should include a breakdown of foreign-assisted projects as well as the projects under the high-value crops program of the DA.</p>
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