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TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP MEETING ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/ DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Social Services (Technical Working Group)	Substitute Bill to HBs 4821 & 7379	Reps. Guico and Villa	Establishing welfare homes for people experiencing homelessness and destitution	<p>The technical working group (TWG), chaired by Rep. Sabiniano Canama (Party-List, COOP-NATCCO), approved the Substitute Bill to House Bills 4821 and 7379, subject to style and amendment.</p> <p>The Secretariat was instructed to draft the final version of the substitute bill incorporating in it the inputs and recommendations given by the Members and resource persons. Thereafter, the proposed law will be presented to the mother Committee for its consideration and approval.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. Canama pointed out the importance of enacting the proposed law. He explained that based on the data from the Philippine Statistics Authority, poverty incidence among the population in 2018 was estimated at 16.6%, which translates to 17.6 million Filipinos who lived below the poverty threshold estimated at P10,727 per month, on the average, for a family of five. Out of these 17.6 million Filipinos, about 4.4 million are identified to be homeless, Rep. Canama added.</p> <p>The proposed law mandates the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the local government units (LGU) concerned, to establish welfare homes in places where they are needed for the care and rehabilitation of people experiencing homelessness and destitution (PEHD).</p> <p>Siquijor Rep. Jake Vincent Villa, author of HB 7379, expressed his appreciation to all those who gave their time and effort in crafting the substitute bill, including the Committee Chair, Rep. Alfred Vargas (5th District, Quezon City), Rep. Canama, the Secretariat, and stakeholders.</p> <p>Also expressing support for the substitute bill were Reps. Shirlyn Bañas-Nogralas (1st District, South Cotabato), Michael Gorriceta (2nd District, Iloilo), and Ruth Mariano-Hernandez (2nd District, Laguna).</p> <p>In today's meeting, the TWG discussed all the sections of the bill. The Members and resource persons from the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), Department of Budget and Management</p>

<p>Continuation... Social Services (Technical Working Group)</p>			<p>(DBM), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Housing Authority, Department of Health, and the National Council on Disability Affairs presented their comments and suggestions to further improve the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Bañas-Nogales suggested that the definition of PEHD be revised to clearly state that the criteria for classifying a person as PEHD shall be those who have no means of subsistence and no place of residence.</p> <p>The TWG agreed with the suggestion of Rep. Bañas-Nogales, hence PEHD shall now be defined as “any person found in public place, who has no visible means of subsistence or is unable to give a satisfactory account of himself or herself and has no place of residence.”</p> <p>On Section 5 of the substitute bill, DSWD’s Program Management Bureau Director Wilma Naviamos suggested that aside from the DSWD and LGUs, duly registered and accredited non-government organizations (NGOs) also catering to destitute and homeless families be authorized to bring or endorse PEHDs to the proposed welfare homes. The Chair requested Naviamos to submit her proposed language in Section 5.</p> <p>Further, Naviamos suggested that the composition of the Board of Visitors under Section 7 should also include two representatives from the concerned LGU, including the local health officer. DHSUD lawyer Cristine Pascual-Bello proposed that the other representative from the LGU should be the city/municipal social welfare officer.</p> <p>The proposed law mandates that the DSWD Secretary shall appoint a Board of Visitors in each city or province where a welfare home is located. The Board shall advise and make recommendations to the Secretary on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the residents and other related matters referred to the Board by the Secretary.</p> <p>On Section 12, CHR Information Officer Vince Gamboa suggested that the transfer of PEHDs from a welfare home to another should be fully documented. He added that the PEHD and his or her next-of-kin should be consulted prior to the transfer. The TWG adopted Gamboa’s suggestion.</p> <p>Meanwhile, DBM OIC-Director for Budget and Management Bureau-C Jane Abella objected to the proposed law’s appropriations provision, explaining that it is inconsistent with the DBM’s policies and processes in the preparation of the annual national budget.</p> <p>The appropriations provision of the substitute bill states that an amount equivalent to at least</p>
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<p>Continuation... Social Services (Technical Working Group)</p>				<p>two years of operations of a welfare home shall be appropriated.</p> <p>Naviarnos said that the DSWD can provide the amount needed for the establishment of welfare homes during the first year of implementation of the proposed law. She informed the Committee that the DSWD is contemplating on establishing six pilot welfare homes in priority areas in the country, and the Department can make a computation of the estimated amount for such undertaking, which the TWG can use as reference.</p> <p>Abella suggested that it is better not to mention a specific amount in the appropriations provision because the DBM still conducts an evaluation of the budget of the agencies during the annual budget process.</p> <p>On the contrary, Rep. Mariano-Hernandez averred that it is better to specify the amount in the substitute bill as this will give the House Committee on Appropriations, which will review the bill's funding provision, a clear idea of the budget required to implement the proposed law.</p> <p>Rep. Canama agreed with the suggestion of Rep. Mariano-Hernandez. Nevertheless, Rep. Canama noted the comments of DBM on the matter.</p> <p>The DSWD was requested to submit the estimated budget requirement for the establishment of the six pilot welfare homes for the guidance of the TWG in crafting the proposed law's appropriations provision.</p> <p>Other agreements reached during the meeting were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supervising social worker/welfare home head or officer shall be deemed a public officer as defined in Article 203 of the Revised Penal Code. • The six pilot welfare homes shall be identified in the proposed law's Implementing Rules and Regulations. • Section 16 of the bill which pertains to the discharge of PEHDs will be incorporated in Section 9 (Discharge from Welfare Home) and in other related sections. (Under the proposed law, any person admitted to a welfare home may be discharged, after a certain period of time, by the DSWD Secretary upon the recommendation of the proposed Review Committee.)
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