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COMMITTEE MEETINGS ON HOUSE MEASURES

COMMITTEE	MEASURES		SUBJECT MATTER	ACTION TAKEN/DISCUSSION
	NO.	PRINCIPAL AUTHOR		
Creative Industry And Performing Arts (Special Committee)	HR 2035	Rep. De Venecia	Inquiry into the state of the Philippine visual arts and other related industries	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Christopher de Venecia (4th District, Pangasinan), terminated its discussion on House Resolution 2035 after conducting several meetings on the matter.</p> <p>At the outset, Rep. De Venecia, who is also the author of HR 2035, said that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the activities and exposed the vulnerabilities of the visual arts industry. Despite this, the industry still managed to stay afloat by taking advantage of the digital technology through online galleries and museums that feature the artists' works of art. Likewise, the Chair said that the Committee's series of meetings on the resolution have been a great opportunity for the lawmakers to hear the concerns of the stakeholders in the visual arts sector.</p> <p>In today's meeting, resource persons from the government and the private sector gave their respective presentations and comments on the industry's collaboration with local government units (LGUs), issues regarding the visual artists' welfare, and correlation between visual arts and tourism in the country. They are from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Social Security System (SSS), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP), Rights Action Philippines (RAP), Artists' Welfare Project, Inc. (AWPI), and Baguio Arts and Crafts Collective, Inc. (BACCI).</p> <p>On LGUs' collaboration with the visual arts industry, LCP Junior Policy Officer Magaly Monterde reported that in 2017, the LCP has initiated the Philippine Creative Cities Manifesto. According to Monterde, 27 member-cities have so far signed and supported this manifesto and the number is increasing as the LCP conducts more information campaign and dialogues with its members.</p> <p>The Manifesto outlines the core tenets and intents of the Philippine Creative Cities Network (PCCN) to nurture and leverage the country's creative industries towards inclusive, innovative, and sustainable growth. The PCCN was designed to improve the representation of the country in the UNESCO</p>

<p>Continuation... Creative Industry And Performing Arts (Special Committee)</p>				<p>Creative Cities Network and to harness the potential of the creative industries in facilitating economic recovery amidst the pandemic. (Source: LCP website)</p> <p>Monterde also informed the Committee that based on the survey conducted by the LCP in 2018 and 2019, majority of the cities nationwide expressed their willingness to conduct cultural mapping and undertake measures for the development of their visual arts sector. However, the cities' lack of technical capability and the inadequate assistance from the national government remain to be the bottlenecks in such an undertaking. Monterde promised to submit an in-depth report on the initiatives of the LGUs with regard to the development of the visual arts sector in the localities.</p> <p>RAP Chairman Rey Dulay expressed the organization's sentiment on the function of the local culture and arts councils (LCACs) in terms of promoting the welfare of local artists, who in most cases are left to thrive on their own.</p> <p>Pursuant to the Department of the Interior and Local Government's (DILG) Memorandum Circular 2017-133, the LCACs are mandated to help protect and promote local cultural heritage and arts by providing support activities and funding assistance to local artists.</p> <p>In his presentation, Dulay said that LCACs should provide tangible support to local artists particularly in the preparation of project proposals; having trained cultural organizers and coordinators who will assist the artists in promoting arts and culture in their communities; and creation of art centers that will showcase the artists' works of art.</p> <p>Rep. Francisco "Kiko" Benitez (3rd District, Negros Occidental) said that the creation of LCACs is not mandatory but the DILG incentivizes the establishment of the same. He then asked if LCP is open to the idea of mandating the creation of LCACs and if there are efforts among its members to create art districts within the highly urbanized cities.</p> <p>Monterde said that a consensus among the members of LCP is necessary before deciding on the proposed mandatory creation of the LCACs. She further explained that as of now, the tasks of the council are usually undertaken either by the local tourism offices or the Mayor's office due to lack of funding and personnel limitation. With regard to the creation of art districts in highly urbanized cities, Monterde replied that it is being considered subject to the availability of funding and prioritization by the local chief executive.</p>
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<p>Continuation... Creative Industry And Performing Arts (Special Committee)</p>				<p>AWPI Executive Director Jennifer Lee Bonto said that while most LGUs intend to establish their own LCACs, they are usually confronted with lack of technical capability to establish the same. Bonto, however, pointed out that it may only take a member of the local city council to push for the establishment of an LCAC as in the case of the Cities of Baguio, Marikina, and Malabon, among others.</p> <p>Rep. De Venecia instructed the Committee Secretariat to request the DILG to submit a list of LGUs that have successfully established their LCACs. Likewise, the Chair requested RAP and AWPI for a list of model cities or municipalities that have convened their LCACs and are active in helping their local artists.</p> <p>Rep. De Venecia said that the Committee will conduct a research on how to improve the concept of LCACs.</p> <p>On issues concerning the welfare of the visual artists, Grace Baldoza, chief of the DOLE's Bureau of Local Employment's Labor Market Information, Research, and Career Guidance Advocacy, reported that the industries under the creative sector increased employment from 40,839 in 2016 to 41,189 in 2019. However, at the onset of the pandemic in 2020, a drop in employment rate has been observed. The arts, entertainment, and recreation were among the five industries that experienced a significant number of job losses.</p> <p>DOLE Bureau of Working Conditions' Medical Officer IV Marco Antonio Valeros recommended putting in place a mechanism that will allow the participation of visual artists in collective bargaining to improve their working condition including access to health insurance and social security benefits.</p> <p>SSS Professional Sector Department Acting Head Carlo Villacorta apprised the Committee about the SSS' coverage for workers in the visual arts industry. He said that visual artists may be classified as either employed, whose registration and contributions should be handled by their employer, or unemployed, who registers and makes their contributions to the SSS by themselves. As of June 2021, there are only 237 visual artists registered with SSS, Villacorta said. Hence, he said that the SSS has reached out to 59 associations/organizations in the visual arts industry to inform them about the availability of SSS coverage.</p> <p>Replying to the query of Rep. De Venecia, PhilHealth representative Jenny Escueta said that under the Universal Health Care or UHC Law (RA 11223), everyone, including the visual artists, are automatic members of</p>
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<p>Continuation... Creative Industry And Performing Arts (Special Committee)</p>				<p>PhilHealth and are therefore entitled to avail themselves of PhilHealth benefits if they get sick or hospitalized.</p> <p>As regards the correlation between the visual arts industry and the country's tourism sector, TPB's Acting Deputy Chief Operating Officer Teresita Landan said that both industries indeed go hand in hand as she mentioned that the banner programs of TBP all promote culture and arts. Landan added that TBP, an attached agency of the Department of Tourism, supports eligible projects like high-impact tourism events/festivals that promote local culture and heritage, and provides marketing strategies and branding innovations, among others.</p> <p>BACCI President Raymundo Rovillos affirmed that TBP has been supporting projects related to visual arts, adding that BACCI itself has been receiving such assistance. Rovillos also cited the importance of promoting the visual arts industry and helping the visual artists given their significant contribution to the local economy, just like the experience of Baguio City where his group is based.</p> <p>Rep. De Venecia observed that many of the visual artists are unaware of the support from TBP as well as the social protection benefits from SSS and PhilHealth. Hence, he suggested that the agencies concerned should undertake measures to educate and inform the virtual artists about the government assistance that they can avail themselves of.</p> <p>Rep. De Venecia expressed his gratitude to the resource persons from the government and private sectors for their valuable insights and recommendations aimed at improving the state of the visual arts industry in the country. He gave assurance that the Committee will do its part to help strengthen the industry through legislation and the establishment of linkages between artists and the government agencies concerned.</p>
<p>Veterans Affairs and Welfare</p>	<p>Substitute Resolution to HR 1873</p>	<p>Rep. Mendoza</p>	<p>Commending Justice Manuel R. Pamaran for his exemplary service to the country as an intelligence operative of the guerilla movement during World War II, as Presiding Justice of the Sandiganbayan, and as President of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines</p>	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Geraldine Roman (1st District, Bataan), adopted the Substitute Resolution to House Resolution 1873.</p> <p>Based on the Substitute Resolution, the late Justice Manuel Pamaran was a World War II veteran who selflessly served the country during its darkest hours. He was also a Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice from 1978 to 1986 with an "upstanding and fearless adjudication." In 2018, he was appointed as President of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP), the umbrella organization of all veterans' organizations in the country. During his stint in VFP, he introduced systemic reforms that greatly benefited the veterans and their dependents; pushed for the reallocation</p>

Continuation... Veterans Affairs and Welfare				of the 10% share from VFP membership dues from the head office to the VFP's field offices; and led the VFP Veterans Center in attaining stronger financial status through a steady increase in revenues.
	Substitute Resolution to HR 1912	Deputy Speaker Rodriguez	Expressing the gratitude and appreciation of the House of Representatives to the National Historical Commission of the Philippines for approving the installation of a historical marker to honor the late World War II patriot and Kagay-anon Antonio Julian C. Montalván	<p>The Committee adopted the Substitute Resolution to HR 1912.</p> <p>Deputy Speaker Rufus Rodriguez (2nd District, Cagayan de Oro City), author of HR 1912, thanked the Chair and the members of the Committee for the adoption of his resolution. He said that the final version of the measure has greatly improved in form and substance.</p> <p>Based on the Substitute Resolution, Montalván was a medical doctor who served as the personal medic of Col. Wendell Fertig, head of the organized guerilla resistance in Mindanao during World War II (WWII). After which, Montalván was recruited by Senator Jose Ozamiz as a spy against the Japanese. The group of which Montalván was a member helped establish coastal radio relay stations in Mindanao, Visayas, and Southern Luzon. He was arrested by the Japanese in Tayabas after completing an assignment as courier between Manila and Mindanao, detained and tortured, and later executed by decapitation in 1944. Philippine historian Ambeth Ocampo describes him as a WWII hero of Mindanao.</p>

AGENCY BRIEFING		
COMMITTEE	SUBJECT MATTER	DISCUSSIONS
Energy	Briefing by the Department of Energy (DOE) and Department of Finance (DOF) on the implication of the proposed suspension of the excise tax on oil and review of RA 8479 or the Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998	<p>The Committee, chaired by Rep. Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo (2nd District, Pampanga), listened to the presentations of the DOE and DOF on the implication of the proposed suspension of the excise tax on oil and on whether there is a need to review or amend Republic Act 8479.</p> <p>In his opening statement, Rep. Arroyo cited the recurrent spikes in the prices of oil in the country as the reason for calling this meeting and requesting the DOE and the DOF to share their insights on what possible solutions or remedial legislative action may be taken to address the problem. In particular, the Committee wants to determine the feasibility of the proposals to urgently suspend the increase in excise tax on oil as prescribed under RA 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law and to amend RA 8479 in order to strengthen the powers of the DOE.</p> <p>Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi thanked the Committee for heeding the request of the DOE to revisit RA 8479 and to discuss the possible suspension of the increase in the excise taxes on oil. He maintained that a legislative action is needed to address the increasing fuel prices.</p> <p>DOE Assistant Secretary Gerardo Erguiza Jr. said that the DOE is requesting Congress to amend the TRAIN Law to allow government to intervene in situations when there are prolonged oil price spikes such as suspending the collection of excise taxes and</p>

<p>Continuation... Energy</p>	<p>to amend RA 8479 to include a provision that will require oil firms to unbundle the cost of retail products to determine the true and passed-on cost.</p> <p>Erguiza explained that the suspension of excise tax on fuel is not a new concept since it is provided in the TRAIN Law. Section 43 of the TRAIN Law provides that “For the period covering 2018 to 2020, the scheduled increase in the excise tax on fuel as imposed in this Section shall be suspended when the average Dubai crude oil price based on Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) for three months prior to the scheduled increase of the month reaches or exceeds US\$80 per barrel.”</p> <p>DOE Oil Industry Management Bureau Director Rino Abad added that the period of the suspension of the increase in the excise tax under Section 43 of the TRAIN Law has already lapsed, thus the DOE recommends that this provision be amended to allow such suspension at this time.</p> <p>On the contrary, DOF’s Strategy, Economics, and Results Group Director Euvimil Nina Asuncion said that the DOF does not support the suspension of taxes on fuel as well as the value-added tax (VAT) because this will result in significant forgone revenues and will be detrimental to the recovery and long-term growth of the economy. Likewise, the proposed suspension of excise tax and VAT will defeat the purpose of the TRAIN Law in making the tax system more equitable. A better way to address the increase in fuel prices, according to Asuncion, is to provide quick and targeted support to the vulnerable sectors. She averred that providing a targeted subsidy to the transportation sector will be more equitable than removing all fuel excise taxes which may only subsidize the higher income households.</p> <p>Rep. Arroyo inquired what immediate steps the DOE and DOF have taken to address the increases in fuel prices.</p> <p>Erguiza informed the Committee that the DOE has been in consultation with various oil companies on the matter and has requested them to give discounts to the public transport sector, food delivery industry, and the fisheries sector.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Asuncion stated that the DOF has pushed for the grant of cash-subsidy to the transport sector through the <i>Pantawid Pasada</i> Program now being implemented by the Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB). She added that the Department of Budget and Management will release P1 billion to LTFRB for the cash assistance program benefitting 178,000 bonafide public utility vehicle drivers, at P5,000 each, for the remaining months of the year.</p> <p>All the Members present during the meeting supported the DOE’s proposal to suspend the excise tax on oil within a given period of time.</p> <p>The DOE and DOF were asked to submit the documents requested by the Members.</p> <p>The Chair also instructed the DOE and DOF to continue discussing the matter between themselves and come up with an agreement in a week’s time.</p>
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