



LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE
KEY POINTS OF PLENARY PROCEEDINGS
Second Regular Session, 19th Congress

Session No. 31
Wednesday, 22 November 2023

1. Senate Bill No. 2439

An Act Institutionalizing the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System, Mandating its Use in Policy and Decision-Making, Designating the Agencies Responsible for its Implementation, Providing Institutional Arrangements Among Responsible Agencies, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor : Sen. Legarda, Loren B.
Cosponsors : Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.
Sen. Pia S. Cayetano

Approved on Third Reading

2. House Bill No. 1028

An Act Converting the Sawang-Macalas Road in the Municipality of Romblon, Province of Romblon, Into a National Road and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Approved on Third Reading

3. House Bill No. 1029

An Act Converting the Road Stretching From Barangay Tuguis, Municipality of Odiongan to Barangay Tugdan, Municipality of Alcantara, All in the Province of Romblon, Into a National Road and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Approved on Third Reading

4. House Bill No. 1030

An Act Converting the Road Stretching from Sitio Boliganay, Barangay Panique, Municipality of Odiongan to Sitio Kabaliwan, Barangay Bachawan,

Municipality of San Agustin, All in the Province of Romblon, Into a National Road and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Approved on Third Reading

5. House Bill No. 1031

An Act Converting the Sablayan-Agpanabat-Bagacay Road, a Section of the Romblon Circumferential Road, Into a National Road And Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Approved on Third Reading

6. House Bill No. 7234

An Act Re-Numbering the Cebu First, Second, Third and Fourth District Engineering Offices to Conform and Correspond, Respectively, with the Numbering of the Legislative Districts in the Province of Cebu Thereby Repealing Republic Acts Numbered 9043 and 9218

Sponsor: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Approved on Third Reading

7. House Bill No. 7508

An Act Creating a District Engineering Office in the Second Legislative District of the Province of Southern Leyte, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Approved on Third Reading

8. House Bill No. 7577

An Act Creating an Additional District Engineering Office in Zamboanga City, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.

Approved on Third Reading

9. Manifestation of Senator Poe

Senator Poe thanked Senator Legarda for leading the passage of the PENCAS bill. She stated that as chairperson of the Committee on Economic Affairs, she is guided by the principle that economic development must go hand in hand with environmental sustainability.

Likewise, the Senator appreciated the bill's emphasis on data transparency and accountability including the people's right to information on the accounts generated through PENCAS.

According to Senator Poe, the measure will serve as an indicator for increased transparency in the government including crafting of legislation for a more comprehensive FOI measure.

Senator Legarda likewise thanked Senator Poe for allowing her to create a subcommittee and for her support and sincere appreciation for the work done.

Manifestation of Senator Cayetano (P)

Senator Cayetano (P), chairman of the Committee on Sustainable and Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking, manifested her support for the PENCAS bill. She emphasized the need to ensure that the concepts of sustainability do not remain just concepts. They need to be embodied in every agency in the government, particularly the finance agencies and budgeting agencies.

In addition, the Senator opined that the bill is quite technical and will take time to understand every detail intended to be achieved but it is a step in the right direction.

Manifestation of Senator Villanueva

Senator Villanueva expressed his gratitude to the good sponsor and the chairperson of the Economic Affairs Committee because the measure is close to his heart.

The Senator stated that part of this measure ensures that there will be transparency and access to information. He lauded the efforts of the Senate President Pro Tempore and thanked his colleagues for passing this very important legislation.

Manifestation of Senator Legarda

Senator Legarda expressed her gratitude to the chairperson of the Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking Committee Senator Cayetano (P) for her support.

The Senator mentioned that she placed Senator Cayetano (P) in the bicameral conference group so that there will be an SDG in a legal lens when the measure is to be amended or enhanced.

Senator Legarda, likewise, thanked the Majority Leader for prioritizing the measure and her colleagues for unanimously passing the Philippine Environmental Natural Resource Accounting bill.

10. Proposed Senate Resolution No. 865

Resolution Congratulating and Commending Aleia Aielle Aguilar for Honoring the Country with a Gold Medal at the Abu Dhabi World Festival Jiu-Jitsu Championships at the Mubadala Arena in the United Arab Emirates on 2 November 2023

Sponsor: Sen. Juan Miguel "Migz" F. Zubiri

Manifestation of the Senate President that the full text of his Sponsorship Speech be inserted into the Record.

Adopted, subject to style—Resolution No. 865

11. Senate Bill No. 2449 under Committee Report No. 137.

An Act Providing for Organizational Reforms in the Philippine National Police, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 6975, Otherwise Known as the "Department Of The Interior And Local Government Act Of 1990", as Amended, And Republic Act No. 8551, Otherwise Known as "Philippine National Police Reform And Reorganization Act of 1998"

Sponsor: Sen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa
Cosponsors: Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.
Sen. Joseph Victor G. Ejercito

Interpellation of Senator Tolentino

Senator Tolentino inquired about the rationale behind the need for the reorganizational reforms within the Philippine National Police.

In reply, Senator Dela Rosa stated that there is an urgent need to get congressional approval for the organizational reforms in the PNP through the adoption of the current organizational structure of the PNP in cognizance of the evolving extent and character of criminality, including the menace in illegal drugs, kidnapping, cybercrimes, and terrorism.

According to the Senator, without the legal impetus to the new PNP offices, the PNP will deal with a serious obstacle to government's crime prevention campaigns which will affect the organization's gains on economic development and good governance in addressing the changing landscape of criminality.

Senator Tolentino requested that he be furnished with documents that would provide foundational backgrounds. He inquired about the number of times the National Bureau of Investigation was reformed through legislation, and the number of times other jurisdictions have reformed their police organizations like NYPD or the Los Angeles Police Department.

In reply, Senator Dela Rosa said that he will furnish Senator Tolentino with some research regarding the changes and structures of other police organizations in other jurisdictions. As regards the Philippine National Police, this will be the third measure that the organization will be tackled in general.

Senator Tolentino inquired about the main objectives of the Senate Bill No. 2449 to which Senator Dela Rosa replied:

- To provide the legal and organizational impetus to the PNP to further sustain the enhancement of its strategic and operational capabilities;
- To institutionalize the PNP and provide legal entity to newly created PNP offices and units to exist and operate without the imprimatur of the Congress;
- To legalize the PNP existence of the national operational support units including the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Civil Security Group, PNP Anti-Cybercrime Group, Maritime Group, Highway Patrol Group, among others.
- To have a clear legislative mandate to ensure the effective discharge of their duties; and
- To resolve the issue on the status of the PNPA cadets to consider them as members of the PNP and be entitled to the salaries and benefits of an active police personnel. This will put them on the same status and category of those cadets of the Philippine Military Academy, among others.

Asked about the number of the PNP personnel at the moment, Senator Dela Rosa replied that there are 227,344.

On the query about the maximum personnel component of the PNP in the proposed measure, Senator Dela Rosa replied that it will remain the same.

On whether there was a cap in the last amendment, Senator Dela Rosa stated that as far as manpower is concerned, the ideal police to population ratio is 1:500.

Senator Tolentino stated that according to the PSA, the population will be closed to 115 million Filipinos this year. Utilizing that ratio of 1:500, Senator Tolentino inquired how many personnel are needed. In reply, Senator Dela Rosa said 230,000. At present, Senator Tolentino said that the PNP has already 227,300 personnel, but this number includes the non-uniform personnel, according to Senator Dela Rosa.

With the approval of Senate Bill No. 2449, Senator Tolentino believed that the gap, which is currently 2,600, as supplied by Senator Dela Rosa, will be addressed.

Senator Tolentino inquired whether the National Police Commission is authorized by law to create new entities or task forces, or ad hoc units.

In reply, Senator Dela Rosa read Section 13 of RA 8551, "The Authority of the Commission to Reorganize the PNP. - Notwithstanding the provisions of Republic Act No. 6975 on the organizational structure and rank classification of the PNP, the Commission shall conduct a management audit, and prepare and submit to Congress a proposed reorganization plan of the PNP not later than December 31, 1998, subject to the limitations provided under this Act and based on the following criteria."

Through RA 8551 and this proposal if enacted into law, Senator Tolentino stated that the previous issuances of the NAPOLCOM will now be institutionalized, to which Senator Dela Rosa agreed.

On the query on what would prevent the current and future NAPOLCOMs from creating new entities within the Philippine National Police, Senator Dela Rosa said there is none as the NAPOLCOM may create these organizations based on the demands of the times. However, the problem would lie on the funding, since these organizations are not covered by law.

Senator Tolentino stressed that it should be Congress that has the power to create units that are more permanent in nature, unlike the task force or ad hoc.

Senator Dela Rosa agreed that the mandate of creating PNP units is reserved to Congress. However, the previous Congress has not passed legislations for the creation of these units. But with the advent of the new modus operandi, new crime situation, and new threats emerging, the NAPOLCOM has to act in order to make the PNP responsive to these emerging threats. But the Senator stated that it is still subject to legislation by Congress because of the funding requirement.

Inquired on whether there is no unwritten rule within the Philippine National Police that once a temporary unit is created or an ad hoc unit is created, the same will be considered as dissolved after the lapse of certain period. Senator Dela Rosa replied in the negative.

Senator Tolentino suggested to incorporate an amendment to put a timeline to which Senator Dela Rosa agreed.

As recalled by Senator Tolentino during the Commission on Appointments' deliberation on Chairperson Karlo Nograles, the chairman of the CSC Commission promised to recognize through a Civil Service resolution the status of PNPA cadets as government employees upon entrance to the academy, similar to the status of the PMA.

Senator Dela Rosa agreed and cited that one of the objectives of this bill, is to treat PNPA cadets as regular members of the Philippine National Police.

On the question on whether it is part of the measure to strengthen the checks and balances within the PNPA, Senator Dela Rosa answered in the affirmative, stating that organizational reform is designed to instill the time-honored core values of service, honor, and justice. In addition, the PNP

sustains its institutionalized delegation of authority and fully operationalized directorial staff system.

On the status of the creation of area commands, Senator Dela Rosa stated that it is included in the measure. At present, there are five area police commands which were not included in the provisions of RA 6975 or RA 8551; thus, there is a need to institutionalize them.

As to the role of the area police commanders (APC) vis-à-vis the regional directors and the regional commanders, Senator Dela Rosa said that the area police commands shall be established in clustered police regional offices. The APC shall orchestrate, supervise, and control the conduct of inter-regional operations against insurgency, terrorism, and other internal security threats, among others. They shall conduct search, rescue, and relief operations in times of calamities and other emergencies within their respective jurisdiction. Likewise, they shall support the police regional offices in the conduct of inter-regional anti-criminality operations and investigation.

As regards to who has operational jurisdiction over regional mobile forces (RMFs), Senator Dela Rosa said it belongs to area commanders. But the authority should be given first by the Chief PNP, Senator Tolentino added. On a normal day without the grant of authority, Senator Dela Rosa stated that it is the regional director.

Senator Tolentino inquired if there is a provision in the bill that would involve the Filipino youth, considering there are calls to have a police version of the ROTC and a call for some segments of the youth to be part of a management traffic program, among others.

In reply, Senator Dela Rosa stated that the bill is silent about that issue, but at the proper time, some amendments may be introduced. The Senator fully agrees that if there is an army ROTC, an air force ROTC, and a naval ROTC, we can have police ROTC as well.

12. Senate Bill No. 2491 under Committee Report No. 171

An Act Establishing a National Apprenticeship Program

Sponsor: Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

Sponsorship Speech of Senator Estrada

Senator Estrada stated that the bill aims to institutionalize a new system for a National Apprenticeship and to elevate the present standards for the training and development of apprentices in a bid to promote skills acquisition and youth employment.

Likewise, it seeks to tackle the persistent problem of job-skills mismatch, address demand in emerging industries and provide a highly skilled, competent, and certified Filipino workforce through a form of education and highly technical training.

Among the key provisions in this proposed measure include:

- An apprentice, who must be 15 years old and above, must pass a set of aptitude tests designed by TESDA to determine the readiness for apprenticeship;
- The apprenticeship period is based on the duration of training required in the TESDA Training Regulation and on the complexity of the highly technical skills to be learned by the apprentice;
- During the apprenticeship period, the apprentice will receive an allowance which shall not be below 75% of the applicable minimum wage rates;
- A certified apprentice who would be hired by the same enterprise for the same occupation requiring the same skills and qualifications will no longer be required to undergo the probationary period;
- Upon completion of the apprenticeship, a training certificate shall be issued to the apprentice by the authorized enterprise. The apprentice shall also undergo TESDA's national assessment and certification for qualifications with TESDA-promulgated Training Regulations; and
- Certified apprentices shall be awarded equivalent unit credits in the formal system of education that can be used in pursuing tertiary degree courses subject to the guidelines on equivalency and the Recognition of Prior Learning of the TESDA, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Department of Education, among others.

The Sponsor stated that apprenticeship programs do not only pave the way for gainful employment, but also serve as a vital source of skills acquisition and talent development, which will equip individuals with the necessary skills. It will likewise address the skills gap that threatens the country's competitiveness in a global economy.

Since 2013, the Sponsor narrated, he has been an advocate for an Enhanced Apprenticeship Program for the youth so the country can have a highly competent and skilled workforce to meet the demands of various sectors. He stressed the need to pay close attention to technical-vocational education and training as a way of investing in human capital.

According to the Asian Development Bank, the newly emerging industrial technologies are rapidly changing the nature of work and, consequently, the demand for skills. These developments pose a significant challenge for developing nations that have traditionally relied on industrialization as a path towards economic growth.

The Sponsor stressed the need to better equip our new generation of workers with updated skills and training to enable them to land lucrative jobs and to meet the demand for highly technical and emerging industries through a national apprenticeship mechanism.

According to Senator Estrada, the bill will provide greater emphasis on enterprise-based training and make training continuously relevant to the industry needs with rapidly changing technology.

Manifestation of Senator Villanueva that his cosponsorship speech be inserted into the *Record*

12. House Bill No. 5820 under Committee Report No. 105

An Act Separating the Sitios of Kainggian, Butac, Coscosnong, Longboy, Bangcag, and Botigue from Barangay Man-Atong in the Municipality of Suyo, Province of Ilocos Sur, and Constituting them into a Distinct and Independent Barangay to be Known as Barangay Butac

Sponsor: Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito

House Bill No. 5822 under Committee Report No. 104

An Act Separating the Sitios of Kimbuaya, Longboy, Bulala, Kinapian, Indadangan, Kumanibe and Macaag from Barangay Suyo Proper in the Municipality of Suyo, Province of Ilocos Sur, and Constituting Them into a Distinct and Independent Barangay to be Known as Barangay Kinapian

Sponsor: Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito

Omnibus Sponsorship Speech of Senator Ejercito

Senator Ejercito stated that the measures propose the creation of two tribal barangays in the Municipality of Suyo, namely: Barangay Kinapian and Barangay Butac.

The creation of Barangay Kinapian will separate the Sitios of Kimbuaya, Longboy, Bulala, Kinapian, Indadangan, Kumanibe, and Macaag from Barangay Suyo Proper. On the other hand, Barangay Butac will separate the Sitios of Kainggian, Butac, Coscosnong, Longboy, Bangcag, and Botigue from Barangay Man-Atong.

According to the Sponsor, the proposed Barangay Kinapian and Barangay Butac are qualified as tribal barangays. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), certified that a large majority of the population of the proposed Barangay Kinapian and Barangay Butac are indigenous people belonging to the Bago and Kankana-ey ethnic groups.

Senator Ejercito emphasized the indispensable role of barangays in achieving national development. Thus, the passage of these measures will support the objective of empowering the barangays and eventually promote their welfare through the seamless provision of fundamental services.

13. House Bill No. 7315 under Committee Report No. 156

An Act Separating the Jose Abad Santos National High School-Tabayon Extension in Barangay Tabayon, Municipality of Jose Abad Santos, Province of Davao Occidental from the Jose Abad Santos National High School, Converting it into an Independent National High School to be Known as the Tabayon National High School, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Win Gatchalian

House Bill No. 8399 under Committee Report No. 157

An Act Separating the San Pablo National High School - Sacbulan Extension in Barangay Sacbulan, Municipality of San Pablo, Province of Zamboanga Del Sur from the San Pablo National High School, Converting it Into an Independent National High School to be Known as the Sacbulan National High School, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Win Gatchalian

Omnibus Sponsorship Speech of Senator Gatchalian

Senator Gatchalian stated that these two local bills aim to separate extension or annex schools to become independent schools. The two extension or annex schools that are sought to be separated from their mother schools are the Jose Abad Santos National High School-Tabayon Extension in Barangay Tabayon, Municipality of Jose Abad Santos, Province of Davao Occidental, and the San Pablo National High School-Sacbulan Extension, Barangay Sacbulan, Municipality of San Pablo, Province of Zamboanga del Sur.

The Senator stressed that it is imperative to acknowledge the narratives of the determined learners who confront formidable challenges in their quest for education and a brighter future.

According to the Sponsor, the proposed measures seek to change the lives and the future of our learners. By enacting these measures, these extension or annex will be able to manage their own maintenance and other operating expenses. Likewise, they can establish their own personnel services itemization and the plantilla of their personnel.

Senator Gatchalian expressed that the passage of these bills is a step towards ensuring that education is accessible, that young dreams are nurtured, and that the future of our nation is bright.

14. House Bill No. 8701 under Committee Report No. 158

An Act Establishing a Senior High School in Progressive Village 3, Barangay Bayanan, City of Bacoor, Province of Cavite, to be Known as the Progressive Senior High School, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Win Gatchalian

House Bill No. 8702 under Committee Report No. 159

An Act Establishing an Elementary School in Progressive 15, Barangay Molino 2, City of Bacoor, Province of Cavite, to be Known as the Progressive Elementary School, and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Sponsor: Sen. Win Gatchalian

Omnibus Sponsorship Speech of Senator Gatchalian

Senator Gatchalian stated that two local bills are aimed at establishing two schools in the City of Bacoor, Province of Cavite: The Progressive Senior High School and the Progressive Elementary School.

According to Senator Gatchalian, despite the invaluable roles these educational institutions play in the community, they lack the proper recognition and the mandate to institutionalize their operations with full budgetary support from the national government.

The Senator acknowledged that access to quality basic education is a fundamental right that every child should enjoy, and these schools are critical in realizing such right to education.

In enacting these measures, the two schools will have additional funding, equipment and ability to focus on the local needs of the students and workers. In addition, they will be more effective in addressing the challenges they face which is key to better improve the quality of the educational system.

The session was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.