



Policy Brief

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Rightsizing the Government: Balancing Efficiency and Oversight

1. Introduction

In the Philippines, public administration employs more than 70% of the public sector workforce, significantly higher than global and regional averages ranging from 24% to 48%. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach, such as rightsizing the government. However, the question remains: Should Congress delegate its legislative authority to the President or assert its own powers in the process of rightsizing or reorganizing the government, taking into account the administrative, political, and institutional implications?

The Philippine government is the country's largest and most complex institution, employing over 2.46 million individuals as of 2022. Its size reflects the government's critical role as a provider of public goods, redistributor of income, and implementer of public policies (Mueller 2003, 506). Despite its importance, however, the Philippine government has long faced criticism for being dysfunctional and wasteful (Reyes 2016, 244). Accusations of inefficiency are common, with many perceiving it as having a bloated bureaucracy that hinders its effectiveness.

To address this issue, the proposed Rightsizing the National Government Act has been identified as a priority legislative measure in the 19th Congress. The bill seeks to grant President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. the authority to reorganize the Executive Branch by dividing, consolidating, abolishing, or creating agencies through presidential directive, with limited legislative oversight. In the Senate, five bills— Senate Bills (SB) Nos. 890, 1474, 1779, 2126, and 2502—have been filed and are currently pending in the committee. Meanwhile, in the House of Representatives, House Bill (HB) No. 7240 was approved on March 14, 2023, and has been forwarded to the Senate for concurrence.

To contribute to the ongoing discourse on this public sector reform in the Philippines, this paper aims to (1) provide a brief background and analysis of the size and expansion of the government, examining factors such as public employment statistics or bureaucracy indicators; (2) briefly discuss the recent and proposed public policies on rightsizing or reorganization; (3) highlight and analyze the policy issues on the proposed measure of delegating broad reorganization authority to the President; (4) identify and recommend approaches or possible courses of action that can be considered in the policy decision-making process.



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2. Indication of a Bloated Government

The state, the government, or the public sector is widely regarded as the largest or single most important employer in nearly all countries (ILO 2025; World Bank 2021, 15). Globally, public sector employment accounts for approximately one-third of the total workforce, with low-income countries having nearly half of their formal sector workers employed in the public sector (Rom et al. 2022; Hasnain et al. 2021).

One crucial aspect associated with the size of public sector employment is the concept of a "bloated government." This term suggests that the government may exhibit an excessive number of employees and administrative structures, resulting in inefficiencies, inflated costs, and bureaucratic complexities. Such inefficiencies can directly impact citizens through delays in service delivery, overlapping responsibilities among agencies, and misallocation of resources away from critical areas like education and healthcare. Determining the right size of government employment requires a country-specific evaluation of various factors, e.g., political and economic context, the level of development, and the preferences and priorities of the population (Mueller 2003; Schiavo-Campo et al. 1997; Meltzer and Richard 1981). Public employment statistics would provide some indication if the Philippine public sector is over-, under-, or adequately staffed (World Bank 2021, 14)

This section will examine public sector employment figures in the Philippines, using data from the inventory of government human resources by the Civil Service Commission (CSC). A comparative analysis will also be made using a global data set that allows for cross-national comparisons, shedding light on how public sector employment figures in the Philippines compare to global averages and neighboring countries.

Table 1. Inventory of Government Human Resources (IGHR) by Position Classification, 2024

Classification	2024	%
Career	1,844,434	62%
Non-Career	193,022	6%
JO/COS	939,771	32%
TOTAL	2,977,227	

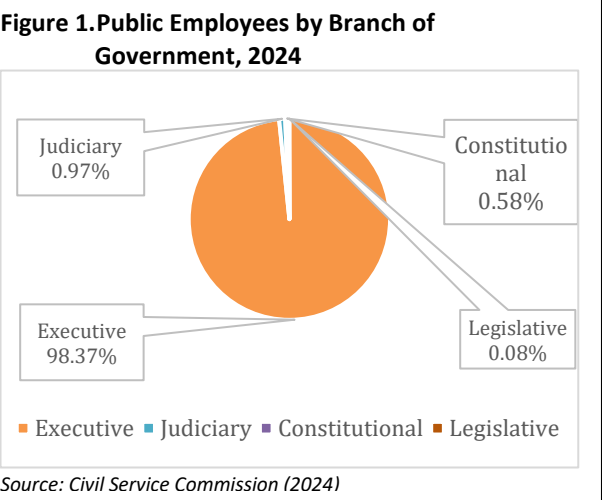
Source: Civil Service Commission (2024)

2.1. Inventory of Government Human Resources (IGHR)

The IGHR provides a comprehensive source of statistical data on the size, distribution, and general profile of the government workforce. This yearly inventory captures the actual occupancy of positions, offering a snapshot of the government's human resource landscape.

As of June 2024, the Philippine government comprises 2,977,227 civil servants or government employees. This includes 1,844,434 career service personnel, 193,022 non-career service personnel, and 939,771 personnel who were hired under Job-Order (JO) and Contract of Service (COS) status (Table 1). This does not include 460,310 military and uniformed personnel and 1,317 civilian employees with 3rd level or positions in the Career Executive Service.

The executive branch employs 98.37% of these 2.98 million employees, while the judiciary employs 0.97%. The legislative branch and constitutional bodies together employ less than 1% of the total government workforce (Figure 1).



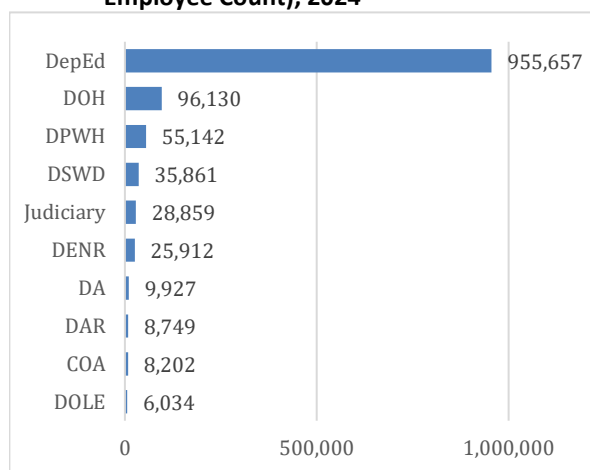
By major subdivision, the national government employs 52.90% of the total civil servants (Table 2). They are distributed across 187 national government agencies

Table 2. Inventory of Government Human Resources by Region, 2024

Region	NGA	LGU	Others	Total
I	68,213	41,867	10,515	120,595
II	56,893	37,940	6,518	101,351
III	133,759	101,531	16,824	252,114
IV	189,568	191,152	19,422	400,142
V	99,312	60,694	9,871	169,877
VI	107,727	106,281	14,229	228,237
VII	90,285	110,890	11,701	212,876
VIII	89,207	80,308	8,458	177,973
IX	63,049	50,688	6,596	120,333
X	65,800	62,074	7,030	134,904
XI	71,978	63,341	5,928	141,247
XII	69,383	44,671	11,130	125,184
NCR	335,011	89,669	108,947	533,627
CAR	34,349	26,922	5,641	66,912
CARAGA	54,021	54,258	5,458	113,737
BARMM	46,423	27,428	4,267	78,118
TOTAL	1,574,978	1,149,714	252,535	2,977,227
%	52.90%	38.62%	8.48%	100%

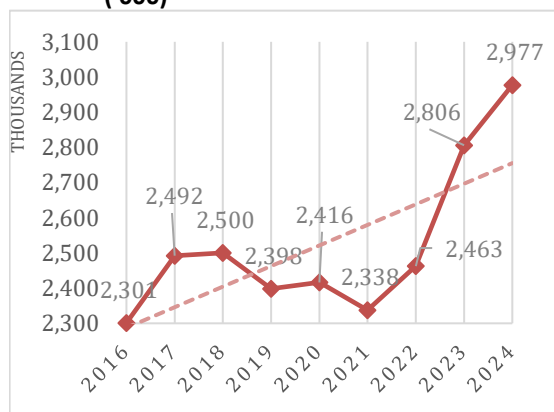
Source: Civil Service Commission (2024)

Figure 2. NGA Employees by Agency (Top 10 Highest Employee Count), 2024



Source: Civil Service Commission (2024)

Figure 3. Total Government Employees, 2016-2024 ('000)



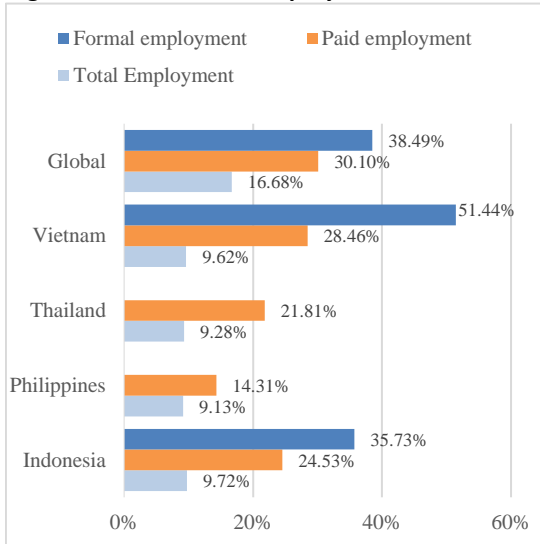
Source: Civil Service Commission (2024)

(NGAs), consisting of 26 departments or department-level agencies, 130 attached agencies, and 30 other executive offices (DBM 2022, 22). On the other hand, the local government units (LGUs), encompassing 81 provinces, 145 cities, 1,489 municipalities, and 42,029 barangays, employ 388.62% of civil servants in the country (Table 2). The remaining 8.48% of civil servants are employed by other entities, such as government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), and local water districts (LWDs). Disaggregated data from the CSC would reveal that GOCCs employ 107,515 personnel (3.61%), SUCs employ 119,266 (4.01%), and LWDs employ 25,754 (0.87%). Table 2 also shows that the National Capital Region (NCR) has the largest allocation of civil servants among the regions.

Figure 2 shows the agencies with the top ten highest employee count. At the forefront is the Department of Education (DepEd), with more than 900,000 employees, nearly 90% of whom are dedicated to teaching-related positions. The Department of Health (DOH) follows with more than 90,000 employees in 2024.

The number of public sector employees in the Philippines increased by 29% from 2016 to 2024, with a peak of 2.98 million employees in 2024. However, there was a sharp decline in 2019-2021 due to employment and agency monitoring issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2024 figures have now surpassed pre-pandemic levels (Figure 3). According to the CSC, the growth rate of public sector employment has been outpacing the population growth rate, which serves as an indicator for the demand for public goods and services (Krieger and Meierrieks 2019, 3; NEDA 2007, 19). This suggests that the government may be expanding its workforce too rapidly, raising concerns about a bloated government. The increase in the internal revenue allotment (IRA) share of LGUs, as mandated by the Mandanas ruling, could also be a contributing factor, as LGUs now have more financial resources to support a larger workforce. In 2014, the CSC reported that the ratio of government employees to the total population was 1:90 in 1970, and by 1990, the ratio had reached 1:52. The latest population projections from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (2021) shows that the ratio of government employees to the population is 1:38 in 2024.

Figure 4. Public Sector Employment as a Share of:



Source: Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators (WWBI) 2023.

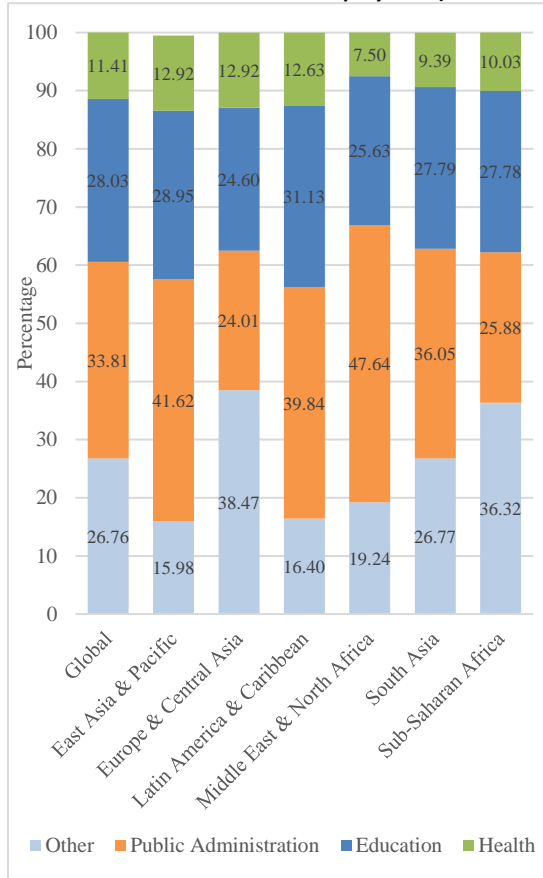
Note: Data for Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8 are based on Version 3.0 of the dataset, released in August 2022. The dataset generally covers data from 2000 to 2020, with microdata sourced from the World Bank's I2D2 database (Revision 7).

2.2. Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators (WWBI)

The WWBI data set provides valuable insights into the size, composition, and compensation of public sector workforces in 202 countries, offering a comprehensive perspective on global public sector employment trends.

Globally, public sector employment accounts for approximately 16.68% of total employment and 30.10% of paid employment (Figure 4). Analyzing specific countries, we find that in the Philippines, public sector employment represents around 14.31% of the paid workforce. Comparatively, Indonesia has a higher proportion at 24.53%, while Thailand stands at 21.81%. Despite these variations, the Philippines has a lower reliance on public sector jobs, with public sector employment constituting 9.13% of total employment, below the global average of 16.68%. Neighboring countries like Vietnam (9.62%), Thailand (9.28%), and Indonesia (9.72%) exhibit almost similar figures. These comparisons highlight the relatively leaner public sector workforce in the Philippines compared to both its neighbors and the global average.

Figure 5. Employment by Industry of the World (Share of Public Sector Paid Employment)



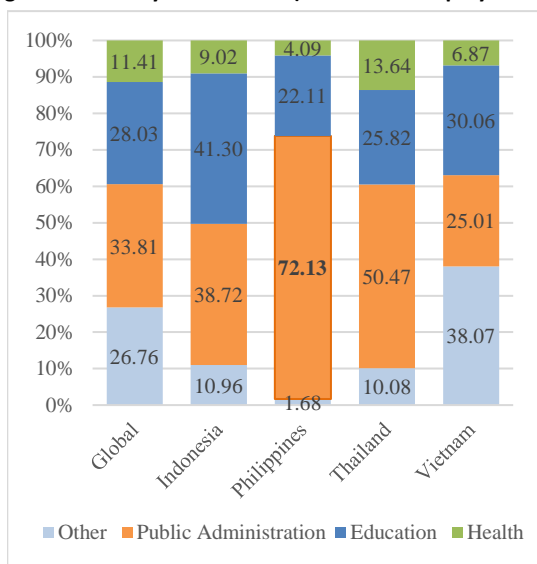
Source: Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators (2023)

However, a deeper examination of the public sector composition reveals a significant concentration of roles in public administration across most countries. Public administration, which encompasses general government administration, defense, justice, police, foreign affairs, and social security management, emerges as the most significant component of the public sector workforce (Figure 5).

On a global average, public administration employs 33.81% of the public sector workforce. The education and healthcare sectors closely follow, employing 28.03% and 11.41% of the workforce, respectively. Together, these three industries account for over 70% of all public sector employees. The remaining public sector employment falls under the "Other" category, including activities like construction, infrastructure, public utilities, and workers in state-owned enterprises not classified under public administration, education, or healthcare provision (WWBI 2023, 16).

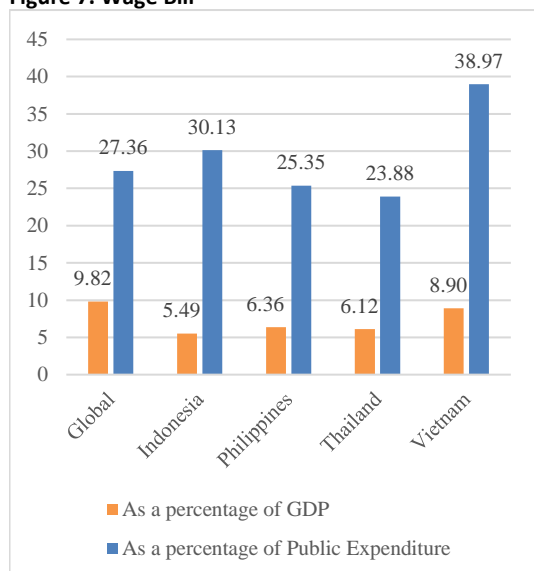
In the case of the Philippines, 72.13% of the public sector workforce is employed in public administration (Figure 6). This means that nearly three-quarters of government employees in the country are primarily involved in managing the government itself, such as budgeting, planning, and overseeing different agencies, rather than providing direct

Figure 6. Industry Distribution (Paid Public Employment)



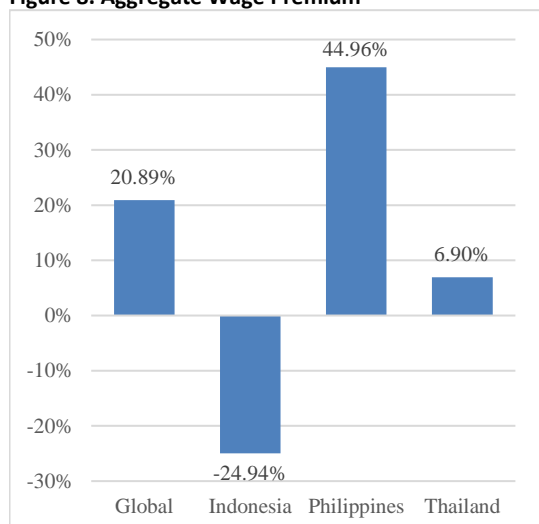
Source: Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators (2023)

Figure 7. Wage Bill



Source: Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators (2023)

Figure 8. Aggregate Wage Premium



Source: Worldwide Bureaucracy Indicators (2023)

services to the public, like healthcare or education. This figure surpasses the global and regional averages by a wide margin. In contrast, education employs 22.11% of public sector workers, healthcare represents a mere 4.09%, and other industries comprise 1.68%. This distinct composition of the Philippine public sector, characterized by a pronounced emphasis on public administration, becomes particularly evident when viewed alongside the workforce distribution in neighboring ASEAN countries, where sectors like education and healthcare tend to employ a larger proportion of government personnel.

Contrasting with this distribution, public administration in Indonesia employs 38.72% of the public sector workforce, while education engages a slightly larger share at 41.30%, followed by healthcare at 9.02%, and other industries at 10.96%. Similarly, Thailand also stands out with public administration employing 50.47% of the public sector workforce, followed by education at 25.82%. Healthcare represents 13.64%, and other industries make up 10.08%. In Vietnam, public administration employs 25.01% of the public sector workforce, with education being the largest employer at 25.01%. Healthcare employs 6.87%, and other industries have the highest share at 38.06% (Figure 6).

The wage bill in the public sector serves as a crucial indicator of government spending on employee salaries and benefits worldwide. Globally, the wage bill constitutes 9.82% of GDP and 27.36% of public expenditure, reflecting a significant allocation of resources to compensate public sector employees (Figure 7). Analyzing Southeast Asia, Indonesia allocates 5.49% of its GDP and 30.13% of public expenditure to the wage bill, indicating a relatively lower investment than other regional countries. The wage bill in the Philippines and Thailand accounts for 6.36% and 6.12% of their respective GDPs, with 25.35% and 23.88% of their public expenditure dedicated to employee compensation. On the other hand, Vietnam demonstrates a higher wage bill, with it representing 8.90% of its GDP and a substantial 38.97% of public expenditure.

Moreover, the public sector not only provides relatively higher wages for certain types of workers but also offers a wage premium compared to similar positions in the private sector. Globally, the average wage premium stands at 20.89%, i.e., public sector workers earn 20.89% more than their counterparts in the private sector. However, in Indonesia, there is a wage deficit of 24.94%, suggesting that wages are

comparatively lower than other productivity factors. Thailand experiences a more modest wage premium of 6.90%, indicating slightly higher wages than other productivity factors. In striking contrast, the Philippines demonstrates a substantial wage premium of 44.96%, signifying significantly higher wages than other productivity factors (Figure 8).

The WWBI shows that public administration jobs are prevalent in the Philippines, despite the country's reduced reliance on public sector employment. This and the high wage premium suggest that the government structure may be inefficient and imbalanced. In particular, the data points to an overly expanded public administration and understaffed public education and healthcare workforces. This underscores the need for comprehensive public sector reform to address these issues.

3. Existing and Proposed Rightsizing Authority

Rightsizing is a dynamic public sector reform strategy that aims to achieve the optimal size and composition of government and public enterprise workforce (Wandera 2013, 15 In Decky Subarja and Rajab 2022, 96). It is also referred to as public restructuring, administrative reforms, rationalization, reengineering, reorganization, and more recently, optimization (Brillantes and Lorenzo 2021, 1; Estocado-Dulpina 2020, 3). It involves evaluating and adjusting the number of public sector employees to align with the actual needs and priorities of the government. By streamlining government functions and resources, rightsizing seeks to enhance institutional capacity to improve public service delivery, increase citizen trust through greater transparency and accountability, and promote government efficiency by eliminating redundancies and focusing on core functions. It encompasses various measures, such as the creation, abolition, consolidation, or division of government agencies and public corporations. The specific application and extent of these measures, however, are contingent on the scope of rightsizing authority granted by Congress.

3.1. Rationalization of the GOCC Sector

In 2011, Congress enacted RA No. 10149, the GOCC Governance Act, a landmark legislation that aimed to rationalize the GOCC sector by promoting transparency, accountability, and efficiency in its operations. The law emphasized the need to align the size and structure of the government with its goals and available resources, echoing the concept of rightsizing as a cornerstone of effective governance. RA No. 10149 applies to all GOCCs, Government Instrumentalities with Corporate Powers/ Government Corporate Entities, and government financial institutions, including their subsidiaries, but excluding the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, SUCs, cooperatives, LWDs, economic zone authorities, and research institutions.

The Governance Commission for GOCCs (GCG) was established and attached to the Office of the President to oversee the law's implementation. The GCG has the power to oversee the selection of directors, monitor performance, rationalize the sector, and establish compensation standards. It can recommend to the President that GOCCs be streamlined, reorganized, merged, or privatized to rationalize the sector. The GCG has made significant strides in rationalizing the sector, reducing the number of covered GOCCs from 123 in 2016 to 118 in 2021 (GCG 2021, 6). This reduction was achieved through the strategic abolition, privatization, and merger of certain GOCCs. Before the enactment of the law, the number of GOCCs in the Philippines stood at 157, down from a peak of 303 in 1984 (Drilon 2011, 2).

Reforms in the GOCC sector have led to higher incomes, improved efficiency, and less reliance on subsidies. The GOCCs, for example, remitted PHP 90.8 billion in dividends to fund efforts to address and mitigate the pandemic. Also, there has been a 431% increase in the 10-year total dividend remittance from GOCCs, comparing 2002-2011 and 2012-2021, from PHP 68.71 billion to PHP 364.52 billion (GCG 2021).

3.2. Reorganization of the Office of the President

After the 1987 Constitution, most public policies associated with government rightsizing pertain to executive issuances on reorganizing the Office of the President. The issuance of such executive, administrative, or memorandum orders by the President is an exercise of a delegated legislative authority or power granted by Section 31, Chapter 10, Title III, Book III of the Administrative Code of 1987, which provides for the continuing authority of the President to reorganize the Office of the President, “to achieve simplicity, economy and efficiency.” This legal framework is firmly established in jurisprudence.

During his term, President Fidel Ramos initiated efforts to “reengineer” and “reinvent” the government. In 1993, he implemented EO No. 149, which aimed to streamline the Office of the President. Monsod (2015, 14), however, observed that there was a steady increase in the number of agencies attached to the Office of the President between 1992 and 1998, with the addition of 70 agencies. In 1992, President Ramos also issued Memorandum Order 27, mandating that all heads of various government agencies streamline their operations and organizations. According to Virata (1993, 35), this resulted in the abolition of 4,987 positions and the closure of nine embassies and three consular offices, saving the national government a reported sum of PHP 227.2 million in personnel services as of 31 May 1993.

In 1999, President Joseph Estrada continued the efforts to reengineer the government through EO No. 165, aiming to optimize the functioning of the government system. Monsod (2015, 14) also highlighted a sharp increase in the number of agencies attached to the Office of the President between 1999 and 2000, totaling 49 agencies.

Similarly, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo issued EO No. 72 and EO No. 366, which called for a Rationalization Plan, seeking to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the government structure. According to Monsod (2015, 14), she abolished 118 ad hoc

executive offices between 2001 and 2004, but another 51 were created during a political crisis in 2005-2007. In a study by Estocado-Dulpina (2020, 7), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) reported that 20,937 regular positions were dissolved in implementing the Rationalization Plan, amounting to PHP 4.247 billion of savings.

During Benigno "Noy" Aquino's administration in 2010, EO No. 18 was issued to rationalize the Office of the President. This measure aimed to improve the operations and structure of the presidential office. In 2016, President Duterte emphasized the need to reengineer the Office of the President and eventually rightsize the bureaucracy through EO No. 1. This executive order underscored the imperative of optimizing the functioning of the presidential office and the broader government.

For the current administration, President Marcos has already abolished the following agencies: (1) Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission (EO No. 1, s. 2022), (2) Office of the Cabinet Secretary (EO No. 1, s. 2022), and (3) Office of the Presidential Spokesperson (EO No. 2, s. 2022). He also called for the reorganization of the following: Presidential Communications Office (EO No. 16, s. 2023), Inter-Agency Task Force on Zero Hunger (EO No. 27, s. 2023), Economic Development Group (EO No. 28, s. 2023), Strategic Action and Response Office (EO No. 38, s. 2023), National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (EO No. 54, s. 2024), and the Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (EO No. 60, s. 2024), among others.

While these past initiatives demonstrate a recurring effort to reorganize the Office of the President, a significant concern remains regarding the lack of comprehensive impact assessments to evaluate their effectiveness. This absence of thorough evaluations makes it difficult to determine the actual outcomes and effects of these reorganizations, raising questions about whether the intended goals of efficiency and economy were achieved. The lack of understanding about the results of past reorganization efforts has fueled skepticism about the motives behind new rightsizing proposals and hinders the ability to learn from past experiences.

3.3. Proposed Legislative Measures on Rightsizing the National Government

In contrast to the President's authority to reorganize the Office of the President via executive issuances, rightsizing the broader government structure demands legislative action, prompting the introduction of several rightsizing bills. In the 17th Congress, five bills were filed on rightsizing the national government. The latest iteration, SB No. 1395, was left pending on second reading by the end of that Congress. Meanwhile, the 18th Congress saw only one bill regarding the same subject as filed by then Senator Vicente Sotto III.

In the 19th Congress, five bills have been filed in the Senate and are pending in the plenary. These are SB Nos. 890 (as amended by substitution), 1474, 1779, 2126, and 2502. In the House of Representatives, HB No. 7240 was passed on third reading in 2023. The salient features of these bills on "Rightsizing the National Government Act" or "Government Optimization Act" include the following:

Declaration of Policy: The state aims to promote and maintain effectiveness, efficiency, and economy in the government, enhance institutional capacity to improve public service delivery, and achieve societal and economic development goals.

Coverage: The proposed measure will apply to all agencies of the Executive Branch, including departments, bureaus, offices, commissions, boards, councils, and other entities attached to or under their administrative supervision. It excludes GOCCs covered by Republic Act (RA) No. 10149. HB No. 7240 differs from the Senate versions of the rightsizing bill as it excludes from its coverage the following: (1) teaching and teaching-related positions in schools, (2) medical and allied-medical positions in hospitals and other medical facilities, as well as (3) military and uniformed personnel (MUP). The Senate versions have variations in their exemptions, e.g., SB Nos. 890 and 2502 do not include the healthcare workers in their list of excluded positions.

Rightsizing Principles: The national government will implement a Rightsizing Program based on certain

principles, including determining the role, scope, and level of governance, encouraging private sector engagement, defining responsibilities between the national government and LGUs, adopting a whole-of-government approach, simplifying government operations, streamlining and digitalizing government systems and processes, rationalizing rules and procedures, and designing organizational structures based on required skills and competencies.

Authority of the President: The President is granted the authority to rightsize or optimize the operations of Executive Branch agencies, including functional shifts/modifications, organizational actions such as reorganization, merger, consolidation, transfer, abolition (and creation, under HB No. 7240, SB Nos. 890, 1779, and 2502), and other necessary actions, while considering the welfare of affected employees and implementing an Organizational Development Program.

Committee on Rightsizing the Executive Branch: A committee is created to oversee the implementation of the Rightsizing Program. It comprises the Executive Secretary as Chairperson, the Secretary of the DBM as Co-Chairperson, the Socio-economic planning Secretary, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Chair, and the Director General of the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) as members. Sub-committees will assist in the performance of its functions.

Powers and Functions of the Committee: The Committee is empowered to develop policies, frameworks, strategies, and mechanisms for the program's implementation. It conducts studies, develops organizational structures, prepares change management programs, safeguards employee welfare, monitors implementation, engages experts/consultants, and formulates implementing rules and regulations.

Submission of Plans and Issuances: The Committee submits the rightsized organizational structures and executive issuances to the President within 250 days. Agency heads then prepare and submit detailed organizational structures and staffing to the DBM within 90 days after the President's approval.

Retirement Benefits and Separation Incentives: Personnel affected by the Rightsizing Program are entitled to retirement benefits and separation incentives. Retirement benefits can be availed under existing laws, and separation incentives are provided based on years of government service.

4. Further Delegation of Legislative Authority and Other Policy Issues

The primary policy issue of the proposed legislative measures on rightsizing is that it requires the delegation of broad legislative authority (DBM 2022, 37), beyond the continuing authority of the President to reorganize the Office of the President and the statutory authority provided under the GOCC Governance Act (GR No. 197422). The rightsizing bills lack a feature that allows Congress to check on the President's power to reorganize the executive branch. Another significant issue is that HB No. 7240's coverage of the rightsizing bill excludes teachers, health workers, and MUP, while some Senate versions exclude teachers and MUP only.

4.1. Broad Presidential Reorganization Authority

The customary process for creating, abolishing, consolidating, or dividing agencies within the Philippine government is through an act of Congress (1987 Constitution, Article VI). The President may have some flexibility in pursuing reorganization goals through statutory delegations of authority, executive orders, department memos, management policies, and other means (Administrative Code of 1987, Chapter 10, Section 31). However, achieving major reorganization objectives necessitates explicit statutory authority granted by Congress (GR 166620; Larkin and Seibler 2017, 1). The rightsizing bills aim to provide this statutory authority, also known as presidential reorganization authority.

Presidential reorganization authority refers to the significant statutory power that the Philippine Congress has occasionally granted to the President before the 1987 Constitution. One such example is contained in RA No. 997 or the Reorganization Act of 1954, which has been described as the first

comprehensive measure to reorganize the government (Gonzalez and Deapera 1987, 260). The presidential reorganization authority allows the President to issue directives that divide, consolidate, abolish, or create agencies within the Executive Branch, with limited legislative oversight. Its purpose is to enable periodic enhancements to the government's organizational efficiency through substantial and comprehensive modifications to its structure, which may be impractical to implement solely through the parliamentary process.

While reorganization (or rightsizing) can be necessary for improving governance and achieving efficiency in government operations, the broad scope of presidential reorganization authority raises specific issues that must be carefully addressed. In the past, as Congress deliberated on granting presidential reorganization authority, former presidents have exercised their residual reorganization powers to initiate actions unilaterally. According to Rose-Ackerman et al. (2011, 284), past Presidents have often utilized the justification of "administrative efficiency" to justify their actions of transferring functions between agencies, establishing new agencies, and granting specific agencies autonomy over certain economic matters such as investments and contracts. However, these actions effectively circumvent the constitutional authority of the legislature to enact laws that restructure or establish new governmental institutions, as well as the legislature's power to allocate funds for such restructured institutions. As a result, the unilateral nature of these actions significantly diminishes the legislature's influence over government operations and the formulation of policies (Rose-Ackerman et al. 2011, 284). In the current Congress, some Senators have expressed caution regarding plans to delegate such power to the President in reorganizing or rightsizing the government, emphasizing the need to safeguard legislative powers. They have raised concerns that the proposed National Government Rightsizing Program might encroach upon the powers of Congress by suggesting the abolition of government entities established through legislative enactments.

4.2. Lack of Legislative Veto

A mechanism for limited congressional oversight has been commonly integrated in previous instances of presidential reorganization authority. This is often referred to as a "legislative veto." This process allows reorganization plans implemented under this authority to be invalidated by an act of Congress within a designated timeframe following their issuance. For example, under RA No. 997, Section 6 (a), a 30-session day period was established, granting either House of Congress the power to disapprove reorganization plans presented by President Magsaysay through a simple resolution. In 1956, President Magsaysay submitted 61 plans to Congress, with 53 receiving endorsements. The House of Representatives rejected 20 plans, while the Senate only rejected four (Gonzalez and Deapera 1987, 260).

This process provided an advantage to the President's plan since, in the absence of congressional action, the plan would automatically be implemented. Unlike in the usual legislative process, the responsibility for taking action on these versions of presidential reorganization authority fell on the opponents rather than the plan's supporters (CRS 2012, 2).

The current rightsizing bills do not grant Congress legislative veto powers upon delegating reorganization authority to the President. Instead, these bills focus on establishing a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee responsible for overseeing, monitoring, and evaluating the implementation of the National Government Rightsizing Act. This provision can be found in Section 14 of SB Nos. 1474, and 2126, as well as Section 17 of SB No. 1779 and HB No. 7240. Furthermore, another section of the rightsizing bills only requires the President to submit a report to Congress detailing the program's outcomes upon its completion (Section on Report to Congress).

It could be argued that the absence of a legislative veto in presidential reorganization authority reduces a significant check on executive power by directly removing the legislature's ability to disapprove of

proposed changes within a specified timeframe. This could potentially lead to an imbalance in governmental powers, as the President would have greater latitude in restructuring the executive branch without the immediate threat of congressional invalidation, potentially even affecting entities established by legislative action.

4.3. House Bill Coverage Exclusion and Lack of Hospitals and Health Workers

Rightsizing does not necessarily imply downsizing or reducing the overall size of public sector employment. Instead, it seeks to ensure that the government operates efficiently and effectively by aligning its organizational structure, workforce, and resources with the country's needs and demands. The decision, therefore, to exclude the health workers from the coverage of HB No. 7240 raises important issues and considerations, given that the Philippines faces a significant challenge in terms of the availability of hospitals and healthcare workers, which impacts the country's healthcare system. According to the National Health Facility Registry (NHFR) (2023), out of a total of 1,351 hospitals in the country, only 461 are government-owned hospitals. This translates to an alarming ratio of one government hospital for every 244,887 citizens.

Furthermore, the ratio of government-owned hospital beds to the population falls significantly short of the target set by the Philippine Health Facility Development Plan 2017-2022. As of 2023, the ratio stands at 1:2,129 based on the NHFR (2023), while the target is one hospital bed for every 800 citizens (1:800). The top five provinces with the worst hospital bed to population ratio are all located in Mindanao, with some ratios reaching 1:16,548 (Basilan).

Additionally, the number of rural health units (RHUs) and urban health centers (UHCs) critical in providing primary care services is inadequate. With only 2,606 RHUs and UHCs across the Philippines (National Health Facility Registry 2023), the current ratio is one facility for every 43,320 citizens, almost double the DOH target of 1:20,000 (PCIJ 2019).

Moreover, the lack of government physicians in healthcare facilities is another pressing concern. As of 2018, there are only 14,107 physicians in the public sector, with 74% deployed in government-owned hospitals. The distribution of physicians is uneven, with Luzon having the highest number of doctors, while Mindanao faces a shortage (PCIJ 2019). Overall, the number of health workers in the Philippines remains below the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended ratio of 23.3 health workers per 10,000 people to deliver essential health services (Abrigo and Ortiz 2019, 9). According to (Dayrit et al. 2018, 144), the country's estimated health worker density was 18.9 per 10,000 people as of 2017, significantly lower than the WHO recommendation. The inclusion of health workers in the coverage of the proposed rightsizing legislation is therefore crucial to address the scarcity of healthcare facilities and workers in the country and ensure the delivery of adequate and accessible health services to all citizens.

4.4. Focusing on Non-Teaching Personnel

While the Philippine government aims to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in public service through the proposed rightsizing bill, its specific exclusion of teaching and teaching-related positions in elementary, secondary, tech-voc, and state universities and colleges (SUCs) raises significant policy considerations. This exclusion, as clarified during the consultative meeting on SB No. 890 on January 7, 2025, means that the rightsizing or optimization efforts within the Department of Education (DepEd) will primarily focus on non-teaching items.

The consultative meeting established that the exclusion of teaching positions was a deliberate decision, driven by the goal of ensuring that teachers primarily perform their assigned teaching duties, recognizing that they are often burdened with administrative and auxiliary functions due to a shortage of non-teaching personnel. This approach comes against the backdrop of a recognized shortage of teachers in the Philippines, driven by population growth and the K-12 system. This shortage is particularly acute in remote and economically

disadvantaged areas and specific subjects like science, mathematics, English, and special education.

In response to the non-teaching burden, DepEd and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) have initiated efforts to create new plantilla positions for non-teaching personnel to alleviate the burden on teachers. There are plans to create 10,000 non-teaching positions in 2025 and another 10,000 in 2026. The right-sizing bill, in this context, can be seen as a parallel effort to optimize the non-teaching organizational structure of DepEd, ensuring that non-teaching tasks are handled by appropriately designated personnel.

However, it is crucial to emphasize that the exclusion of teaching positions from the current right-sizing bill does not directly address the fundamental issue of teacher shortage. Teacher unions, such as the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), continue to advocate for creating more teaching plantilla positions to meet the demands of the growing student population and improve the student-teacher ratio.

5. Recommended Approaches for Congressional Consideration

Congress has several options regarding the delegation of reorganization authority to the President. It can choose not to delegate the authority or delegate it with or without modifications to the scope. Congress may include expedited congressional procedures related to reorganization proposals. Additionally, it has the option to assert its own statutory reorganization authority, allowing more active involvement in the process. The decision on how to proceed may impact the balance of power and effectiveness of the reorganization process, suggesting the need for careful consideration of governance and accountability implications.

The decision on how to proceed will directly impact ordinary citizens through improvements such as faster service delivery, streamlined processes, and better use of taxpayer money. This necessitates careful consideration of governance and

accountability implications, ensuring that any reforms benefit the Filipino people.

5.1. Grant the Authority with Amendments

Congress has the option to amend the scope of potential reorganizations by incorporating a revised provision on the "Authority of the President of the Philippines to Rightsize the Operations of the Executive Branch."

For example, Section 6 (b)-1 of HB No. 7240 currently empowers the President to "create new agencies, offices, positions, as needed, to strengthen the capacity of government agencies in fulfilling their mandate." These agencies encompass departments, bureaus, offices, commissions, boards, councils, and similar entities, as mentioned in Section 4. However, some Senate versions of the rightsizing bills (i.e., SB Nos. 1474 and 2126) do not include this specific authority to establish new agencies. To reconcile the discrepancy, it is recommended that this provision of creating new agencies be limited to hospitals or schools in the future substitute bill or bicameral committee report.

Congress can also employ specific limitations to the President's authority for rightsizing. Some examples of these limitations are as follows: (1) No new executive department shall be created or no existing executive department shall be renamed; (2) No agency shall be continued beyond the period authorized by law for its existence or beyond the time when it would have terminated if the reorganization had not been made, unless such continuation is specifically authorized by law; (3) No function shall be continued beyond the period authorized by law for its exercise or beyond the time when it would have terminated if the reorganization had not been made, unless such continuation is specifically authorized by law; (4) No agency shall be authorized to exercise a function that is not expressly authorized by law at the time the plan is transmitted to Congress; (5) No new agency that is not a component or part of an existing executive department or independent agency shall be created; and (6) The term of an office shall not be increased beyond that provided by law for that office (CRS 2012, 47). By incorporating these limitations,

Congress can establish a more defined and balanced framework for the President's authority to rightsize the Executive Branch.

Moreover, Congress can explore the possibility of including a legislative veto provision in the bill, granting Congress the authority to review and potentially reject executive actions concerning reorganization. In this scenario, once the President proposes a plan for rightsizing the Executive Branch, Congress would have the opportunity to vote on whether to approve or disapprove the proposal, ensuring that the reorganization aligns with the needs of the Filipino people.

To enhance the effectiveness and accountability of this process, mechanisms for engaging civil society, local governments, and other stakeholders should be integrated into the review process. This could involve requiring the President to submit reports detailing consultations with these groups and how their concerns have been addressed. Additionally, the legislative veto could be tied to assessing the measure's potential effects on service delivery, particularly in critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and rural development. By requiring a detailed analysis of these impacts before a vote, Congress can ensure that the rightsizing initiative improves government operations and better outcomes for citizens.

To safeguard the constitutionality of the legislative veto, an alternate procedure can be introduced alongside the reorganization authority. This procedure would involve presenting a joint resolution in both the House and Senate upon receiving a reorganization plan. As a joint resolution, its enactment would require approval from the President to become law. By following this approach, the legislative veto would adhere to the Constitution's bicameralism and present requirements for lawmaking, ensuring a constitutionally sound process for executive and legislative collaboration on reorganization matters (GR 166715; GR 208566).

Finally, while the right-sizing bill aims to streamline the bureaucracy, its exclusion of teachers and

healthcare workers necessitates a broader policy discussion to achieve an optimal government structure. Addressing the ongoing shortages in these sectors and ensuring quality service delivery across all regions may require separate legislative and budgetary measures beyond the current initiative's scope and a reconsideration of the exclusion provisions. A more comprehensive approach would enable Congress to optimize the Executive Branch's operations effectively, leading to better resource allocation and improved public services.

5.2. Assert Congressional Statutory Reorganization

Even without explicit statutory authority, the President has the prerogative to establish a task force or commission to examine internal issues within the executive branch and propose recommendations for congressional consideration. Subsequently, Congress can exercise its statutory reorganization authority by directly enacting legislation on rightsizing, which may involve creating, merging, streamlining, or abolishing various agencies and offices. This approach allows for a collaborative effort between the executive and legislative branches in addressing organizational concerns and implementing necessary changes within the government structure.

An example of a successful rightsizing legislation is RA No. 10625, which established the PSA in 2013. This merger of four data-producing agencies into a single comprehensive entity aimed to improve the quality and timeliness of official statistics while generating data collection efficiencies. Over the years, the PSA has achieved significant milestones, including enhancing the timeliness of national and regional accounts, supporting accurate financial activities, and implementing cost-saving tax reform programs. The agency has also demonstrated its commitment to transparency by opening up national statistical data, including microdata. Furthermore, the PSA has innovated its survey methods to incorporate geotagging and geospatial analytics, facilitating improved data analysis. Currently, the agency is coordinating the implementation of a new national identification system, which is expected to yield substantial cost savings equivalent to 2% of the country's GDP over five years, approximately

US\$6.09 billion based on 2016 GDP estimates from the World Bank (Espey 2018, 1).

Another rightsizing legislation is RA No. 11201, which established the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) in 2019. This agency was formed to address the country's growing housing needs and urban development concerns. Like the PSA, DHSUD is the result of the merger of existing agencies such as the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), the National Housing Authority (NHA), the Social Housing Finance Corporation (SHFC), and the Community Mortgage and Development Finance Corporation (CMHC).

In the 18th Congress, policymakers have filed bills proposing new departments such as the Department of Disaster Resilience, the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the Department of Water Resources Management, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Sports. Most of these proposals have been refiled in the current Congress. However, there is a need to study these proposals further, considering the growing concern over the proliferation of government agencies and the strain it places on government resources.

The Senate also has outstanding bills on the abolition of the Optical Media Board (SB No. 1904), the Procurement Service of the DBM (SB Nos. 1802 and 1123), and the Philippine International Trading Corporation (SB No. 1122), among others.

Another rightsizing legislation that can be pursued is the merger of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), which was proposed by former Senator Francis Pangilinan in 2020 as part of a rightsizing initiative to enhance extension services for farmers and fisherfolk. During the Senate's plenary deliberations for the 2021 national budget, Sen. Pangilinan emphasized the importance of strong agricultural extension services, citing the success of countries like Thailand and Malaysia. He suggested that merging the DA and DAR would be a rightsizing approach to manage extension

services better and optimize resources (Senate 2020).

5.3. Eliminate Redundancy and Duplication of Functions

By revisiting agency charters, Congress can also eliminate redundancy and duplication of functions between and among sectoral and multisectoral agencies, which poses an ongoing challenge within the organizational structure of the Philippine government. The issue arises when multiple government agencies share similar or overlapping mandates, leading to redundancy, inefficiency, and potential gaps in policy implementation.

Sectoral agencies in the Philippine government are tasked with specific sectors or areas, such as health, education, agriculture, transportation, and finance. These agencies are designed to address their respective sectors' unique needs and challenges. Examples of sectoral agencies include the DOH, DepEd, DA, and Department of Transportation (DOTr). On the other hand, multisectoral agencies are established to tackle cross-cutting issues that affect multiple sectors. They aim to foster collaboration, coordination, and policy coherence across different sectors. They include, for example, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Climate Change Commission (CCC), and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC). The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) are additional examples of multisectoral agencies that play significant roles that extend beyond specific sectors, covering diverse areas of the economy.

The duplication of functions between the DA and the DOST is a specific example of overlapping responsibilities within the Philippine government. Both the DA and DOST, through their respective units like the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), engage in research and development (R&D) efforts related to agriculture, fisheries, and rural development. This duplication of R&D activities

can lead to redundant projects, duplicated research efforts, and inefficient use of resources. For instance, both agencies may independently fund similar research studies, establish separate laboratories or facilities, and conduct parallel initiatives in areas like crop improvement, pest management, food processing, and post-harvest technologies (see David et al. 1999, 21-25; Bacongus 2022, 4).

Agricultural R&D functions should be appropriately placed under the authority of the department responsible for agriculture, as agriculture is inherently connected to the science and practice of farming. By definition, agriculture encompasses the cultivation of crops, the rearing of animals, and the production of food, fiber, and other agricultural products. It involves various scientific principles, techniques, and innovations that advance farming practices and improve agricultural productivity. Given the close relationship between agriculture and scientific knowledge, it is logical for the department responsible for agriculture to have jurisdiction over agricultural R&D functions. This ensures that research efforts align with the specific needs and challenges of the agricultural sector, leading to targeted innovations, improved farming methods, and enhanced agricultural outcomes (David et al. 1992, 20-31).

The DPWH also presents challenges as it implements infrastructure projects lodged under different sectoral agencies' budgets. This practice compromises the accountability of sectoral agencies like the DA for sectoral infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads. A 2021 Commission on Audit (COA) report showed that the DPWH failed to establish the viability of 3,440 infrastructure projects worth PHP 245.021 billion, resulting in delayed completion or non-implementation. These projects include school buildings and farm-to-market road projects across the country, including 437 projects amounting to PHP 10.939 billion.

Unlike the Philippines' centralized approach with the DPWH, the United States adopts a more decentralized system, where sectoral agencies and departments have specific infrastructure-related responsibilities within their respective domains. For

example, the US Department of Transportation (DOT) is responsible for developing and maintaining transportation infrastructure, including roads, highways, bridges, airports, and railways. This decentralized approach allows for sector-specific expertise and tailored approaches to infrastructure development across the diverse needs and characteristics of different regions in the US.

5. Conclusion

The persistent challenge of rightsizing the bureaucracy has long occupied a central place in the narrative of Philippine public administration. Public sector employment statistics reveal that the Philippine government maintains a substantial workforce, with a notable concentration of employees in public administration. While rightsizing is widely acknowledged as a vital strategy for enhancing government operations' efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness, the specific measures proposed in the 19th Congress have brought forth critical policy issues that demand careful deliberation, particularly concerning the extent of legislative authority delegated to the President.

In navigating these complex issues, Congress is confronted with several policy options. As the 19th Congress deliberates on these crucial decisions, it is imperative to recognize that the chosen path will have profound and far-reaching implications for governance, accountability, and, most importantly, the quality and efficiency of public services delivered to the Filipino people. Enacting rightsizing measures with appropriate safeguards will streamline processes, eliminate redundancies, and ultimately lead to a more effective and responsive government bureaucracy. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Congress to proceed with diligence and foresight, carefully weighing the merits and potential consequences of each approach to ensure that any reforms ultimately rebound to the benefit of the nation and its citizens.

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