

## Leaders in the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress

Prior to President Benigno Aquino III's fourth State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA), both the House of Representatives and the Senate elected their respective leaders. Rep. Feliciano Belmonte Jr. (*Quezon City, 4th district*) was given a fresh mandate as speaker of the 292-member House of Representatives, while Senator Franklin Drilon took over as president of the Senate.

Besides the recently-closed 15th Congress, Speaker Belmonte also led the House, although briefly, during the remainder of the 11th Congress, following the assumption of office of then President Gloria Arroyo in January 2001.

Senate President Drilon, likewise, had his first shot at the Senate leadership in the 11th Congress due to a term-sharing agreement with Sen. Blas Ople, following the death of then Senate President Marcelo Fernan. Drilon was supposed to serve for the last part of the 11th Congress, if not for his withdrawal from the administration coalition of then President Joseph Estrada, leading to his removal from the position in November 2000. The following month, the Senate, acting as an Impeachment Court, began the trial of President Estrada, with Belmonte as the lead prosecutor.

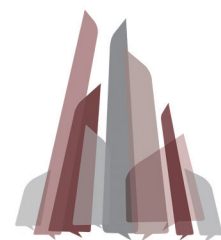
Senate President Drilon and Speaker Belmonte are vice-chairmen of the ruling Liberal Party, where President Benigno Aquino III sits as its chairman. Under Belmonte's leadership, the House managed to consistently pass the annual national budget on time. Drilon, on the other hand, being the chairman of the finance committee, complemented the budget deliberations in the House and defended it in the Senate. Several other key and controversial pieces of legislation were passed by the 15th Congress, such as rescheduling the ARMM elections and the Reproductive Health Act. Later on in the 15th Congress, Drilon took over the committee on ways and means in order to pass the measure restructuring excise taxes on alcohol and tobacco products.

### In the Senate

The second-highest official in the Senate is the president pro tempore, who presides over the sessions in the absence of the Senate president. Elected to this post was Sen. Ralph Recto (Liberal Party), succeeding Sen. Jinggoy Estrada (PMP) who now belongs to the minority bloc.

The new Senate majority floor leader is Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano (NP), who was the minority leader during the 15th Congress. The majority leader in the Senate also concurrently sits as chairman of the committee on rules, which is in charge of the calendar and order of business. Cayetano, replaced Sen. Vicente Sotto III (NPC), who in turn is now the deputy to the minority floor leader, former Senate President Juan Ponce-Enrile (PMP).

The Senate president pro tempore, and both the majority and minority floor leaders sit as ex-officio members of all the permanent committees. As such, they can participate in debates, make formal motions, and can exercise voting rights as well.



The following lists the permanent committees in the Senate with their respective chairpersons (as of 31 July):

<b>COMMITTEES</b>	<b>CHAIRPERSON</b>
Accountability of Public Officers & Investigations (Blue Ribbon)	Sen. Teofisto Guingona III
Accounts	
Agrarian Reform	Sen. Gregorio Honasan II
Agriculture and Food	Sen. Cynthia Villar
Amateur Sports Competitiveness	
Banks, Financial Institutions & Currencies	
Civil Service and Government Reorganization	Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV
Climate Change	Sen. Loren Legarda
Constitutional Amendments, Revision of Codes and Laws	Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago
Cooperatives	Sen. Lito Lapid
Cultural Communities	Sen. Loren Legarda
Economic Affairs	Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito
Education, Arts and Culture	Sen. Pia Cayetano
Electoral Reforms and People's Participation	Sen. Aquilino Pimentel III
Energy	
Environment and Natural Resources	Sen. Loren Legarda
Ethics and Privileges	
Finance	Sen. Francis Escudero
Foreign Relations	Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago
Games and Amusement	Sen. Juan Edgardo Angara
Government Corporations & Public Enterprises	Sen. Cynthia Villar
Health and Demography	Sen. Teofisto Guingona III
Justice and Human Rights	Sen. Aquilino Pimentel III
Labor, Employment & Human Resource Development	Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada
Local Government	Sen. Ferdinand Marcos Jr.
National Defense and Security	Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV
Peace, Unification and Reconciliation	Sen. Teofisto Guingona III
Public Information and Mass Media	Sen. Grace Poe
Public Order and Dangerous Drugs	Sen. Grace Poe
Public Services	Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.
Public Works	Sen. Ferdinand Marcos Jr.
Rules	Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano
Science and Technology	Sen. Ralph Recto
Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development	Sen. Maria Lourdes Nancy Binay
Tourism	Sen. Lito Lapid
Trade and Commerce	Sen. Paolo Benigno Aquino IV
Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement	Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito
Ways and Means	Sen. Juan Edgardo Angara
Youth, Women and Family Relations	

Source: [www.senate.gov.ph](http://www.senate.gov.ph), MBC research

## In the House

The second-highest-ranking officials in the House are the six deputy speakers. In the absence of the speaker, especially during marathon sessions, either one of them may preside over the plenary. The deputy speakers are:

- 1) Rep. Henedina Abad (*LP/Batanes, lone district*)
- 2) Rep. Georgidi Aggabao (*NPC/Isabela, 4th district*)
- 3) Rep. Sergio Apostol (*LP/Leyte, 2nd district*)
- 4) Rep. Pangalian Balindong (*LP/Lanao del Sur, 2nd district*)
- 5) Rep. Carlos Padilla (*NP/Nueva Vizcaya, lone district*)
- 6) Rep. Roberto Puno (*NUP/Antipolo City, 1st district*)

Like Speaker Belmonte, Rep. Neptali Gonzales II (*LP/Mandaluyong City, lone district*) was elected anew to the majority leader position and, consequently, the chairmanship of the House committee on rules. Meanwhile, Rep. Ronaldo Zamora (*UNA-PM/San Juan City, lone district*) won the tightly contested minority leader post over Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez (*LAKAS/Leyte, 1st district*).

According to the Rules of the House in the 15th Congress, the speaker, the six deputy speakers, the majority leader, the eight deputy majority leaders, the minority leader, and the five deputy minority leaders, including the chairperson of the committee on accounts or their deputized members shall have a voice and can vote in all committees.

The following lists the standing and special committees in the House with their respective chairpersons (as of 31 July):

<b>STANDING COMMITTEES</b>	<b>CHAIRPERSON</b>
Accounts	Rep. Eleandro Jesus Madrona ( <i>NP/Romblon, lone district</i> )
Agrarian Reform	Rep. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. ( <i>LP/Iligan City, lone district</i> )
Agriculture and Food	Rep. Mark Llandro Mendoza ( <i>NPC/Batangas, 4th district</i> )
Appropriations	Rep. Isidro Ungab ( <i>LP/Davao City, 3rd district</i> )
Aquaculture and Fisheries Resources	Rep. Benhur Salimbangon ( <i>NUP/Cebu, 4th district</i> )
Banks and Financial Intermediaries	
Basic Education and Culture	Rep. Carmen Cojuangco ( <i>NPC/Pangasinan, 5th district</i> )
Civil Service and Professional Regulation	Rep. Andres Salvacion Jr. ( <i>LP/Leyte, 3rd district</i> )
Constitutional Amendments	Rep. Mylene Garcia-Albano ( <i>LP/Davao City, 2nd district</i> )
Cooperatives Development	Rep. Cresente Paez ( <i>PL-COOP NATCCO</i> )
Dangerous Drugs	Rep. Vicente Belmonte Jr. ( <i>LP/Iligan City, lone district</i> )
Ecology	Rep. Amado Bagatsing ( <i>UNA-KABAKA/Manila, 5th district</i> )
Economic Affairs	Rep. Enrique Cojuangco ( <i>NPC/Tarlac, 1st district</i> )
Energy	
Ethics and Privileges	Rep. Jorge Almonte ( <i>LP/Misamis Occidental, 1st district</i> )

Foreign Affairs	Rep. Al Francis Bichara (NP/Albay, 2nd district)
Games and Amusements	Rep. Elpidio Barzaga Jr. (NUP/Cavite, 4th district)
Good Government and Public Accountability	Rep. Oscar Rodriguez (LP/Pampanga, 3rd district)
Government Enterprises and Privatization	Rep. Jesus Sacdalan (LP/North Cotabato, 1st district)
Government Reorganization	Rep. Romeo Acop (LP/Antipolo City, 2nd district)
Health	Rep. Eufanio Eriguel (NPC/La Union, 2nd district)
Higher and Technical Education	
Housing and Urban Development	Rep. Alfredo Abelardo Benitez (LP/Negros Occidental, 3rd district)
Human Rights	Rep. Carlo Lopez (LP/Manila, 2nd district)
Information and Communications Technology	Rep. Joel Roy Duavit (NPC/Rizal, 1st district)
Interparliamentary Relations and Diplomacy	Rep. Raul Del Mar (LP/Cebu City, 1st district)
Justice	Rep. Niel Tupas Jr. (LP/Iloilo, 5th district)
Labor and Employment	Rep. Karlo Alexei Nograles (NUP/Davao City, 1st district)
Legislative Franchises	Rep. Marcelino Teodoro (LP/Marikina city, 1st district)
Local Government	Rep. Pedro Acharon Jr. (NPC/South Cotabato, 1st district)
Metro Manila Development	Rep. Winston Castelo (LP/Quezon city, 2nd district)
Mindanao Affairs	Rep. Arnulfo Go (NUP/Sultan Kudarat, 2nd district)
Muslim Affairs	Rep. Tupay Loong (NUP/Sulu, 1st district)
National Cultural Communities	Rep. Nancy Catamco (LP/North Cotabato, 2nd district)
National Defense and Security	Rep. Rodolfo Biazon (LP/Muntinlupa, lone district)
Natural Resources	Rep. Francisco Matugas (LP/Surigao del Norte, 1st district)
Overseas Workers Affairs	Rep. Walden Bello (PL-AKBAYAN)
People's Participation	Rep. Benjamin Asilo (LP/Manila, 1st district)
Population and Family Relations	Rep. Rogelio Espina (LP/Biliran, lone district)
Poverty Alleviation	
Public Information	
Public Order and Safety	
Public Works and Highways	Rep. Ronald Cosalan (LP/Benguet, lone district)
Revision of Laws	Rep. Marlyn Primicias-Agabas (NPC/Pangasinan, 6th district)
Rules	Rep. Neptali Gonzales II (LP/Mandaluyong City, lone district)
Rural Development	Rep. Manuel Agyao (LP/Kalinga, lone district)
Science and Technology	Rep. Victor Yu (NPC/Zamboanga del Sur, 1st district)
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Development	
Social Services	Rep. Arturo Robes (LP/San Jose Del Monte City, lone district)
Suffrage and Electoral Reforms	

Tourism	Rep. Rene Relampagos (LP/Bohol, 1st district)
Trade and Industry	Rep. Mark Villar (NP/Las Piñas City, lone district)
Transportation	
Veterans Affairs and Welfare	Rep. Herminia Roman (LP/Bataan, 1st district)
Ways and Means	Rep. Romero Federico Quimbo (LP/Marikina City, 2nd district)
Welfare of Children	Rep. Aurora Cerilles (NPC/Zamboanga del Sur, 2nd district)
Women and Gender Equality	Rep. Linabelle Ruth Villarica (LP/Bulacan, 4th district)
Youth and Sports Development	
<b>SPECIAL COMMITTEES</b>	
Bases Conversion	
Bicol Recovery and Economic Development	
East Asean Growth Area	
Food Security	Rep. Agapito Guanlao (PL-BUTIL)
Globalization and WTO	
Land Use	Rep. Kaka Bag-ao (LP/Dinagat Islands, lone district)
Millennium Development Goals	
North Luzon Growth Quadrangle	Rep. Maximo Dalog (LP/Mountain Province, lone district)
Peace, Reconciliation and Unity	Rep. Hadjiman Hataman-Salliman (LP/Basilan, lone district)
Reforestation	
Southern Tagalog Development	Rep. Isidro Rodriguez Jr. (NPC/Rizal, 2nd district)

Source: www.congress.gov.ph, MBC research

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