

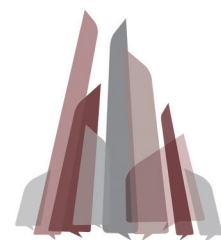
## First regular session adjourns

Since the opening of session in 22 July 2013, the 16th Congress has passed nine laws so far:

1. **RA 10632** – Postponing the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Elections
2. **RA 10633** – General Appropriations Act of 2014 (national budget)
3. **RA 10634** – Supplemental Appropriations for 2013 in response to natural and man-made calamities and disasters
4. **Joint Resolution 1 (HJR 7/SJR 5)** – Extending the validity of the Calamity and Quick Response Fund in the 2013 national budget
5. **RA 10635** – Establishing the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) as the single Maritime Administration responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the 1978 International Convention on Standards, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
6. **RA 10636** – Granting Philippine citizenship to Andray Blatche
7. **RA 10637** – Granting franchise to Cotabato Light and Power Company
8. **RA 10638** – Extending the corporate life of the Philippine National Railways (PNR)
9. **RA 10639** – Mandating the telecommunications service providers to send free mobile disaster alerts during disasters and calamities

Meanwhile, several measures are nearing enactment after being approved by both Houses:

1. Prescribing the printing of picture-based health warnings on tobacco products (HB 4590/SB 27)
2. Promoting the development of micro, small and medium enterprises or the “Go Negosyo Act” (HB 4595/SB 2046)
3. Liberalizing the entry and scope of operations of foreign banks (HB 3984/SB 2159)
4. Strengthening consumer protection in the purchase of brand new motor vehicles or the “Lemon Law” (HB 4082/SB 2211)
5. Further strengthening the government's anti-drug campaign (HB 2285/SB 2273)
6. Declaring 27 July 2014 as a special non-working holiday to commemorate the 100th founding anniversary of the Iglesia ni Cristo (HJR 12)



**Summary of Legislative Action, First Regular Session of the 16th Congress****(22 July 2013 to 11 June 2014)**

	House of Representatives	Senate
No. of session days	71	83
Bills filed	4,651	2,281
Resolution filed	1,230	717
No. of Committee Reports	328	55
Bills approved on third reading	207 (93 national bills)	4
Bills approved on second reading	19 (4 national bills)	5

The 16th Congress went on sine die adjournment after its last session day on June 11. The second regular session will open on July 28, coinciding with President Aquino's fifth State of the Nation Address (SONA). Meanwhile, respective committees are authorized to conduct hearings while on recess.

Expected to be taken up once session resumes is the Bangsamoro Basic Law. Another priority is the measure mandating full completion of the land acquisition and distribution (LAD) component of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). This was certified by the President as urgent for immediate action last June 11. The respective committees in both Houses have reported out a bill extending the abovementioned component of CARP which will be up for plenary action when session resumes. To recall, CARP expires on June 30.

## Updates on PBG-JFC recommended priorities

Last June 2013, the Philippine Business Groups (PBG), together with the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines (JFC), submitted a letter to President Aquino recommending eight priority measures for consideration by the 16th Congress. Along with the letter are several annexes providing greater details on each of the eight issues, which includes key recommendations that are products of several consultation meetings among the business groups.

The eight priority measures for consideration in the 2013 letter include:

1. Accelerate transportation infrastructure and address the high cost of logistics
2. Promote anti-trust and competition policy
3. Address smuggling and improve trade facilitation
4. Retain the Mining Act, complemented by implementing a competitive fiscal regime
5. Resolve the high cost and inadequacy of supply of power
6. Reform the judicial system
7. Rationalize fiscal incentives
8. Revisit the restrictive provisions in the Constitution and in other laws

The listed areas were also the subject of the PBG-JFC dialogue with the Economic Development Cluster of the cabinet. Both the cabinet officials and the business leaders agreed to conduct quarterly meetings to serve as a forum for discussing urgent concerns and proposing possible solutions. In the first meeting last 12 July 2013, the business community presented the eight issues, while the second meeting last 17 December 2013 saw the pertinent cabinet officials presenting their current undertakings and plans on addressing the concerns of the private sector.

**STATUS OF LEGISLATION RELEVANT TO THE RECOMMENDED PRIORITY MEASURES**

(as of 11 June)

Measures	House of Representatives	Senate	Remarks
<b>Accelerate transportation infrastructure and address the high cost of logistics</b>	HBs 2022, 2906, and 3951 – PIC	SB 459 – PIC	Amending the BOT Law
	HB 2994 – PIC	SB 2145 – PIC	Right of way
	HBs 1789, 2146, 2563, 2623, and 2863 – PIC	SB 1359 – PIC	Cabotage
	HB 315 – PIC	SB 26 – PIC	Transportation Code/ Sustainable Transportation
<b>Promote anti-trust and competition policy</b>	HBs 211, 388, 453, 1133, 1281, 2672, 3366, 4090, 4320, 4346, 4446, and 4587 – PIC	SBs 41, 473, 1027, 1210, 1293, and 1453 – PIC	A committee report (SB 2282) consolidating the various SBs was filed on 16 June, while the House committee is finalizing a substitute bill
<b>Address smuggling and improve trade facilitation</b>	HBs 5, 10, 3339, and 3504 – PIC	SB 168 – PIC	Customs Modernization
	HBs 166, 1348, 1461, 1583, 3107, and 3536 – PIC	SBs 442, 456, 741, 882, 1253, and 2082 – PIC	Anti-smuggling
<b>Retain the Mining Act, complemented by implementing a competitive fiscal regime</b>	HBs 171, 984, 2486, and 4387 – PIC	SB 43 – PIC	Mineral Resources Development
	HBs 171, 984, and 2486 – PIC	SB 457 – PIC	Excise tax increase/ revenue-sharing
<b>Resolve the high cost and inadequacy of supply of power</b>	HBs 256, 351, 709, 3633, 3676, 3847, 3958, 4389, and 4479 – PIC	SBs 207, 2167, and 2059 – PIC	Amending EPIRA
<b>Reform the judicial system</b>	HBs 1730 and 2712 – PIC	SBs 443 and 1732 – PIC	Reorganizing the Judiciary
	HBs 1691, 2205, 3246, 3809, and 4582 – PIC HB 4653 – P2R	SBs 396, 605, 1148, 1606, 1725, and 2141 – PIC	Amending the Ombudsman Act <i>*on preventive suspension power</i>
	HB 139 – PIC	SB 2138 – A3R	Reforming the Sandiganbayan
<b>Rationalize fiscal incentives</b>	HBs 130, 302, 1788, and 2765 – PIC	SBs 35, 987, 2048 – PIC	Investments and Incentives Code
	HB 2492 – PIC	SBs 469 and 1187 – PIC	Tax Incentives Management and Transparency Act

Measures	House of Representatives	Senate	Remarks
Revisit the restrictive provisions in the Constitution and in other laws	RBH 1 – P2R	RBH 1 - PIC	Constitutional Assembly
	HRs 13 and 94 – PIC		Opposing CHA-CHA
	HB 2818 – PIC	SB 1424 – PIC	Amending the Foreign Investment Act
	HB 4401 - PIC		Condominium Law
		SB 1731 – PIC	Amending the Foreigner's Lease Act
		SB 2121 – PIC	Liberalizing retail trade
	HB 3984 – A3R	SB 2159 – A3R	Liberalizing entry of foreign banks

Note:

PIC – Pending in Committee

A2R – Approved on Second Reading

P2R – Pending Second Reading

A3R – Approved on Third Reading

In February 2014, the representatives of the different business associations participated in a dialogue with the leadership of the Senate (February 11) and with the House of Representatives (February 12). Senate President Franklin Drilon and Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. were accompanied by the respective legislators who chair the relevant committees in each chamber. This meeting with Congress has been a yearly dialogue, with the February 2014 meetings providing the venue for raising several other issues, aside from the eight included in the 2013 letter.

## STATUS OF OTHER ISSUES AND CONCERNS

(as of 11 June)

Measures	House of Representatives	Senate	Remarks
Apprenticeship	HBs 1594 and 2227 – PIC	SB 136 – P2R	
Bangsamoro Basic Law			The proposed bill is expected to be submitted in July
BSP Charter Amendments	HBs 860, 1692, 2485, 2999, 3021, and 3112 – PIC	SBs 618, 889, 1852, 1865, and 2109 – PIC	
Common Carriers Tax (CCT) / Gross Philippine Billings Tax (GPBT)		SB 2123 – PIC	Exempting the transport of cargo by international carriers from CCT and GPBT
Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program	HB 4296 – P2R	SB 2278 – P2R	Mandating the completion of the land acquisition and distribution (LAD) component of CARP.  Certified urgent by the President for immediate action on 11 June 2014.

<b>Freedom of Information</b>	HBs 19, 26, 34, 94, 149, 347, 485, 843, 1082, 1450, 1646, 1940, 2003, 2067, 2946, 3004, 3131, 3147, 3183, 3237, 3385, 3643, 3746 and Petition No. 1 – PIC	SB 1733 – A3R	TWG is finalizing a substitute bill in the house
<b>Government Procurement Reform</b>	HBs 148, 1432, 3110, 3208, 3933, and 3986 – PIC	SBs 76, 433, 477, 478, 782, 1069, 1509, 1657, and 2120 – PIC	
<b>Whistleblower and Witness Protection</b>	HBs 135, 145, 150, 348, 1587, 1632, 2069, 2493, 2831 – PIC	SBs 165, 189, 425, 1286, 1614, 1932 – PIC	Whistleblower Protection
	HBs 145, 224, 796, 1628, 1689, 2069, 3692 – PIC	SBs 165, 189, 425, 1286, 1614, 1932 – PIC	Witness Protection

The **CongressWatch Report** is a regular publication of the Makati Business Club. Its main mission is to promote accountability and transparency of elected government officials. For inquiries, suggestions, and additional information, please call CongressWatch at telephone nos. 751-1143 to 45 or email [patrick.chua@mbc.com.ph](mailto:patrick.chua@mbc.com.ph).

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