

POLÍTIKA

CRITICAL ISSUES OF PHILIPPINE POLITY

2ND QUARTER

Political Governance

The 2025 midterm elections marked a shift in the Philippines' political landscape, with voters prioritizing accountability and issue-based governance over traditional loyalties. Transparent leadership and reform-oriented policies are crucial for rebuilding public trust and fostering stability

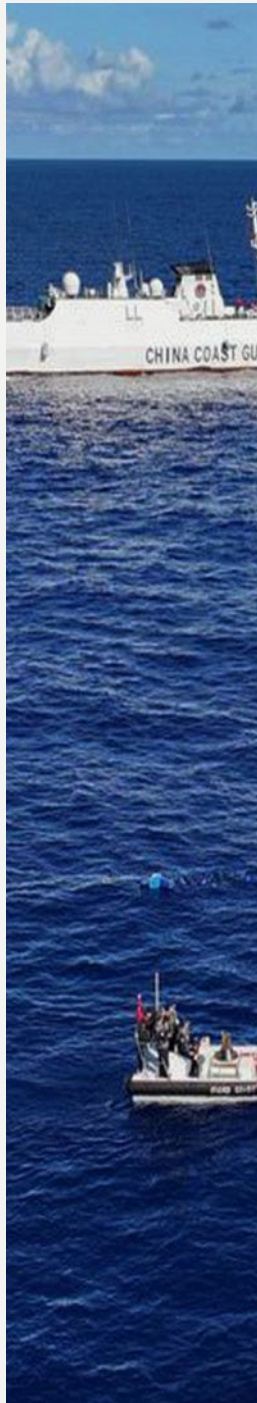
Philippine Foreign and Security Policy

The Marcos Jr. administration has recalibrated foreign and security policy, emphasizing sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea and modernizing defense capabilities. Public support remains strong for initiatives like AFP modernization, joint military exercises, and assertive diplomacy

Legislative Developments

The Marcos Jr. administration under the 19th Congress passed 18 laws and key reforms, which demonstrates a commitment to economic growth, transparency, and national security. Their success depends on effective implementation and public trust

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OVERVIEW

A comprehensive analysis of the Philippines' socio-political, economic, and legislative landscape following the 2025 midterm elections suggests momentum building toward a consequential 2028 national elections. This landscape further implies the presence of reforms, initiatives, and movements for transformative governance and national empowerment. Three factors can be cited, which contribute to or facilitate the creation of this unique environment.

Firstly, the post-election Philippines, including socio-political challenges, public priorities, and pathways to democratic resilience, highlights the evolving political environment that is marked by a maturing electorate that prioritizes issue-based governance, accountability, and performance-driven leadership. Persistent challenges such as inflation, poverty, and unemployment remain critical, while progress has been noted in disaster response, agricultural support, and defending territorial integrity. Political instability, including the impeachment case against Vice President Sara Duterte and controversies surrounding former President Rodrigo Duterte, underscores the urgent need for transparency and civic education to rebuild public trust. These dynamics set the stage for the 2028 national elections, where issue-driven campaigns are expected to dominate.

Secondly, the recalibration of the Philippines' foreign and security policy under the auspices of the Marcos Jr. presidency strongly emphasizes sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea and the strengthening of defense partnerships. Through initiatives like the Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept (CADC) and expanded alliances with nations such as the U.S., Japan, and Australia, the administration has projected credible deterrence and bolstered regional stability. Public support for these measures remains strong, with Filipinos backing defense modernization and joint military exercises. By leveraging transparency and international cooperation, the administration has also positioned the Philippines as a proactive player in regional security, while addressing external risks through strategic partnerships and assertive diplomacy.

Thirdly, the legislative developments over the past three years highlight a productive period for Congress. An examination of the legislative achievements for the past three years underscores 18 enacted laws focused on economic recovery, transparency, and national security. Together, these legislative efforts reflect a commitment to addressing Filipinos' urgent national and personal concerns while laying the groundwork for long-term growth and resilience.

This context of socio-political challenges, foreign policy recalibration, and legislative progress lays the foundation for a political risk-to-opportunity outlook for the remaining years of the current administration. By identifying risks such as inflation, political instability, and external threats, and converting them into opportunities for growth, unity, and resilience, the Marcos Jr. administration has the potential to transform challenges into pathways for progress.

Together, these shifts suggest that the Philippines is at an inflection point, poised between entrenched challenges and the promise of reform-driven leadership.

Titled "Navigating Risks, Unlocking Opportunities: The Philippines' Path to Transformative Governance," this second quarter issue of POLITIKA for 2025 serves as a critical lens for understanding how governance can navigate risks and unlock opportunities in the lead-up to the 2028 national elections.



I. POLITICAL GOVERNANCE

The 2025 midterm elections manifest a pivotal moment in the Philippines' political landscape, showcasing a maturing electorate that prioritized accountability, transparency, and performance-driven leadership over traditional loyalties to political families and entrenched power structures. Voters demonstrated a clear shift toward issue-based governance, favoring reform-oriented candidates who focused on delivering tangible results and addressing pressing community needs. This transformation signals a growing demand for leaders who prioritize substance over personality, paving the way for a more inclusive and responsive democracy.

Despite this shift, the Marcos Jr. administration continues to grapple with persistent economic challenges such as inflation, poverty, and unemployment. While progress has been noted in areas like disaster response and agricultural support, public approval of the administration's performance has fluctuated, reflecting the urgent need for targeted solutions to address these socio-economic issues effectively. The administration's ability to navigate these challenges will be crucial in maintaining public trust and fostering stability in the years ahead.

The June 2025 survey results of Pulse Asia Research, Inc. further affirm the administration's progress in key performance areas, particularly in addressing long-standing issues. Approval ratings for responding to calamities remained strong at 63%, while protecting overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) sustained its upward trajectory at 62%. The administration's efforts to support farmers continued to resonate positively, with approval for providing assistance to farmers increasing to 53%, a significant improvement from earlier years. Moreover, approval for controlling inflation rose to 18%, marking a 15-point increase from March 2025, signaling gradual progress in addressing economic challenges. While disapproval for some issues like reducing poverty and fighting graft remained high, the administration's ability to achieve substantial gains in approval for critical areas highlights its commitment to addressing urgent national concerns. The June 2025 results underscore the administration's capacity to adapt and improve its performance, even amidst persistent challenges.

Table 1
Comparative Performance Ratings of the National Administration on Selected National Issues: **PHILIPPINES**
(March and June 2025)

Selected National Issues	Approval		Change*	Undecided		Change*	Disapproval		Change*
	Mar 25 (A)	Jun 25 (B)		Mar 25 (C)	Jun 25 (D)		Mar 25 (E)	Jun 25 (F)	
Responding to the needs of areas affected by calamities	51	63	+12	29	16	-13	20	21	+1
Protecting the welfare of OFWs	51	62	+11	30	19	-11	19	19	0
Providing assistance to farmers including selling their products	31	53	+22	35	21	-14	34	26	-8
Defending the integrity of Philippine territory against foreigners	39	48	+9	35	26	-9	25	26	+1
Stopping the destruction and abuse of our environment	33	44	+11	43	29	-14	24	27	+3
Promoting peace in the country	25	42	+17	35	25	-10	40	33	-7
Enforcing the law on all, whether influential or ordinary people	28	42	+14	41	25	-18	42	33	-1
Creating more jobs	24	42	+18	36	21	-15	40	38	+2
Fighting criminality	24	39	+15	27	24	-3	49	36	+13
Addressing the problem of involuntary hunger	20	33	+13	36	27	-9	44	40	+4
Increasing the pay of workers	16	33	+17	36	19	-17	48	48	0
Fighting graft and corruption in government	13	28	+15	34	21	-13	53	50	-3
Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos	12	21	+9	39	25	-14	48	54	+6
Controlling inflation	3	18	+15	18	16	-2	79	66	-13

Most Urgent Personal Concerns of Filipinos

In June 2025, the same survey from Pulsa Asia revealed the top five personal concerns among Filipinos: staying healthy, having a secure income, saving money, providing education for their children, and having enough to eat. These priorities highlight the everyday challenges many face and their hopes for a better future.

1. Staying Healthy and Avoiding Illnesses (64%) – Health remains the top concern for Filipinos, driven by the high cost and limited accessibility of healthcare. Filipinos want better healthcare services that are affordable and available to everyone, so they can focus on their goals without worrying about medical bills.

2. Having a Secure, Well-Paying Job or Source of Income (53%) – A stable job or reliable income is essential for survival. Filipinos want to ensure they can provide for their families, pay bills, and save for the future. This concern reflects the importance of economic opportunities and fair wages. It is not just about having a job—it is about having a job that pays enough to live comfortably. Addressing this concern means creating more employment opportunities, supporting small businesses, and ensuring workers are paid fairly for their efforts.

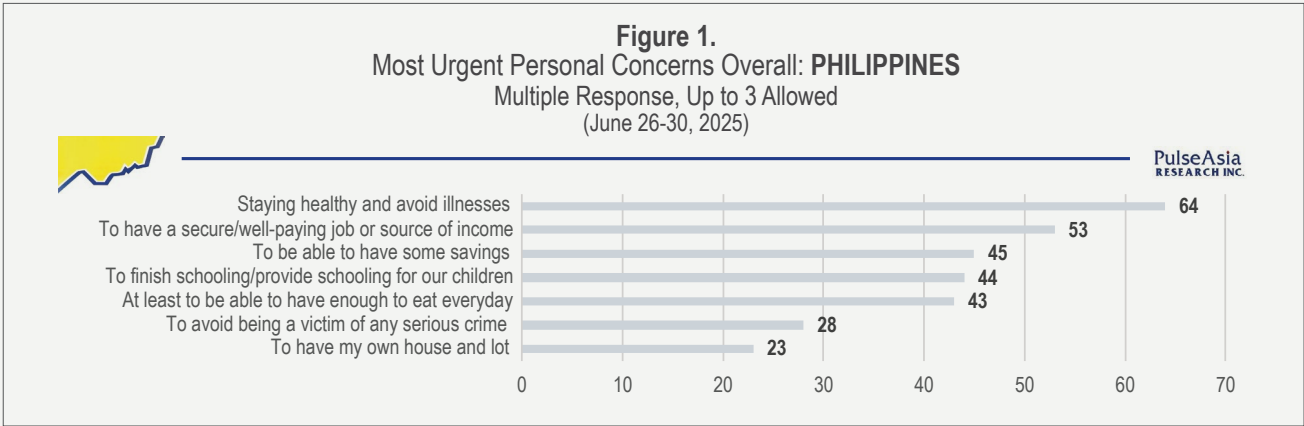
3. Being Able to Save Money (45%) – Saving is difficult for many due to rising costs and limited earnings. Filipinos seek greater financial security and the ability to prepare for emergencies and future needs. They want to build a safety net for themselves and their families, and this concern underscores the need for economic policies that reduce financial pressures and promote savings.

4. Finishing Schooling or Providing Education for Children (44%) – Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty and achieving a better life. Many Filipinos prioritize finishing their own schooling or ensuring their children receive a good education. This concern reflects the belief that education opens doors to opportunities and a brighter future. However, the cost of schooling and limited access to quality education remain barriers for many families. Addressing this concern means investing in schools, teachers, and programs that make education accessible to all.

5. Having Enough to Eat Every Day (43%) – Food is a basic necessity, yet many Filipinos worry about having enough to eat. This concern highlights the ongoing issue of hunger and food insecurity in the country. It is not just about survival; it is about ensuring families can eat nutritious meals that support their health and well-being. Solving this problem requires efforts to reduce poverty, support farmers, and make food more affordable for everyone.

6. Avoiding Being a Victim of Serious Crime (28%) – The government’s ability to maintain peace and order is essential for sustaining a peaceful and productive society. This concern reflects the need for stronger law enforcement, community-based crime prevention, and stricter penalties for offenders. By prioritizing public safety, the government can foster trust and create secure environments where Filipinos can thrive without fear.

7. Owning a House and Lot (23%) – Owning a house and lot is a deeply personal aspiration for many Filipinos, which symbolizes stability, security, and a sense of achievement. It reflects the desire for a permanent space to nurture families and build a future. Addressing this concern requires affordable housing programs, accessible financing options, and support for low-income families.



Political instability has complicated the post-election environment, with the impeachment case against Vice President Sara Duterte and controversies surrounding former President Rodrigo Duterte, exposing cracks in governance. These events have eroded public trust in institutions, emphasizing the importance of transparent leadership and institutional accountability. The Senate's inaction on the impeachment trial has further fueled frustrations, highlighting the urgent need for governance reforms that restore public confidence and foster unity amidst polarized public opinion.

Economic challenges such as inflation, unemployment, and poverty disproportionately affect marginalized groups, deepening inequality and limiting opportunities for vulnerable communities. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions, including price stabilization, job creation, and inclusive policies that uplift those most in need. Investments in technology, infrastructure, and education are essential to empower citizens and promote sustainable growth in the digital age.

Social divisions driven by political polarization and regional inequalities further complicate the nation's socio-political landscape. Bridging these divides will require inclusive policymaking, civic education, and livelihood programs that foster collaboration and mutual understanding among communities. Combating disinformation is also critical to rebuilding trust in institutions and ensuring informed civic engagement. By promoting media literacy and transparency, the administration can counter misinformation and empower citizens to make informed decisions.

The rise of issue-based governance and reform-oriented candidates offers the Marcos Jr. administration an opportunity to align its policies with public priorities, such as health, education, and food security. Proactive efforts to promote economic growth, social justice, and governance reforms will stabilize the nation and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable society. By addressing the urgent concerns of Filipinos, the administration can build a society where every citizen has the opportunity to live a healthy, secure, and dignified life.

Political Risk-to-Opportunity Outlook

The Marcos Jr. administration faces significant risks, including political instability, economic inequality, and social polarization, but these challenges also present opportunities for transformative governance. By addressing inflation, unemployment, and poverty through targeted interventions, the administration can uplift marginalized communities and foster inclusive growth. Transparent leadership and institutional accountability can rebuild public trust, while investments in digital technology, infrastructure, and education can empower citizens and bridge the digital divide. Leveraging the lessons of the 2025 midterm elections, the administration has the chance to redefine Philippine politics by prioritizing performance-driven leadership, combating corruption, and fostering participatory governance, which can turn vulnerabilities into pathways for resilience and progress.

To achieve political stability, the Marcos Jr. administration must align its policies with the priorities of a maturing electorate that increasingly values performance-driven leadership. This means addressing urgent concerns like inflation, poverty, and unemployment while ensuring that governance is rooted in integrity and responsiveness. Strengthening democratic processes, such as ensuring fair and transparent handling of impeachment cases, can restore trust in institutions and set a positive example for future leaders. By embracing reform-oriented governance and fostering collaboration across political divides, the administration can turn challenges into opportunities for resilience, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable political landscape in the Philippines.

Economic growth in the Philippines is within reach, but challenges like inflation, unemployment, and poverty continue to affect many families. The Marcos Jr. administration has already laid a strong foundation by passing key laws such as the Public-Private Partnership Code and the CREATE MORE Act, which aim to attract investments, create jobs, and support businesses, giving Filipinos more opportunities to earn a stable income. Stabilizing inflation is another critical priority, as rising prices make it harder for families to afford basic necessities.

Social unity in the Philippines starts with addressing the urgent personal concerns of Filipinos, such as health, education, and financial security. By improving public healthcare systems and making them more affordable, the Marcos Jr. administration can ensure that every Filipino stays healthy and productive. Education is another cornerstone of social unity, as it empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty and build better futures. By investing in schools, teachers, and learning recovery programs, the government can help students overcome potential disruptions and prepare them for meaningful careers.

Digital literacy is equally important in today’s connected world, as it opens doors to new opportunities and bridges social divides. Many Filipinos, especially in rural areas, lack access to technology and the skills needed to thrive in the digital economy. By promoting digital literacy and expanding internet access, the government can empower citizens to participate in online learning, entrepreneurship, and e-commerce. These efforts will not only boost individual livelihoods but also foster collaboration and innovation across communities. By prioritizing healthcare, education, and digital literacy, the Marcos Jr. administration can strengthen social unity, ensuring that every Filipino has the chance to live a healthy, educated, and connected life.

A three-year outlook for the remainder of the Marcos Jr. administration highlights the balance between risks and opportunities, emphasizing the need for proactive governance and strategic planning to maximize gains while mitigating challenges. In the short term (2025-2026), risks such as political instability, inflation, unemployment, and China’s aggression in the West Philippine Sea are counterbalanced by opportunities to rebuild public trust, stabilize the economy, and strengthen defense capabilities through transparency and targeted interventions. By mid-term (2026-2027), social divisions, ASEAN limitations, and law implementation challenges pose hurdles, but the administration can leverage its ASEAN Chairmanship to uphold maritime norms, institutionalize inclusive reforms, and deepen alliances for security and economic cooperation. Looking ahead to the long term (2027-2028), risks like political fragmentation and persistent economic challenges can be mitigated by preparing for transformative elections, institutionalizing defense modernization, and empowering citizens through sustained healthcare, education, and economic reforms. This underscores the importance of proactive governance and strategic planning to turn vulnerabilities into opportunities for resilience and progress.

II. FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

The Marcos Jr. administration has recalibrated the Philippines’ foreign and security policy, emphasizing sovereignty, adherence to international law, and a shift from internal to external defense priorities. Assertive transparency has been central to this strategy, with the administration exposing coercive activities by Chinese vessels in the West Philippine Sea through videos, incident reports, and diplomatic protests. This approach has mobilized public sentiment, strengthened public trust, and garnered international support for Philippine sovereignty, reinforcing the nation’s commitment to defending its maritime rights.

Table 2
AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT WITH TEST STATEMENT:
“In line with the continuous aggression of China, the current administration must continue to assert the Philippines’ rights in the West Philippine Sea in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award”: **PHILIPPINES**
In Percent
(June 26-30, 2025)

Base: Total Interviews, 100%								
How much do you agree or disagree with this statement? Would you say you...?	RP	LOCATION				CLASS		
		NCR	BL	VIS	MIN	ABC	D	E
AGREE	73	83	82	60	59	79	71	78
Strongly Agree	27	44	31	17	17	34	26	23
Somewhat Agree	46	38	51	43	42	45	45	55
CANNOT SAY IF AGREE OR DISAGREE	18	9	15	29	22	14	20	15
DISAGREE	7	7	2	7	14	7	7	5
Somewhat Disagree	4	2	2	5	9	5	5	3
Strongly Disagree	2	5	0	2	5	2	2	2
I don't have enough knowledge to give an opinion	2	1	1	4	4	1	3	2


This proactive campaign has helped promote a strong and growing support from the Filipino public. Surveys conducted over the past three years have consistently shown that an overwhelming majority of Filipinos support a foreign policy that asserts the country's maritime rights and strengthens ties with like-minded states.

The June 2025 Pulse Asia survey revealed strong public support for the Philippines' continued assertion of its rights in the West Philippine Sea under international law, including UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award. Nationwide, 73% of Filipinos agreed with this stance, with Metro Manila (83%) and Luzon (82%) showing the highest levels of support, while the Visayas (60%) and Mindanao (59%) exhibited slightly lower agreement. Among socio-economic classes, Class ABC expressed the strongest support at 79%, followed by Class E at 78% and Class D at 71%. This overwhelming agreement underscores the public's backing for the administration's proactive foreign policy, emphasizing the importance of defending maritime sovereignty and fostering regional stability amidst China's continuous aggression.

Diversification and expansion of defense partnerships have been key to the administration's strategy. While the alliance with the U.S. remains central, the Philippines has actively engaged other nations, including Japan, Germany, New Zealand, and ASEAN members, through bilateral agreements and multilateral initiatives. Notable milestones include the Reciprocal Access Agreement with Japan, enhanced coast guard cooperation with Vietnam and Malaysia, and joint maritime activities with Brunei and Indonesia. Public support for these partnerships remains strong, with surveys showing Filipinos favoring alliances that assert rights in the West Philippine Sea.

Modernizing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has been a cornerstone of the administration's defense strategy. The CADC envisions transforming the AFP into a modern force capable of operating across air, sea, and cyber domains. Expanded joint military exercises, such as the *Balikatan* Exercises, have demonstrated this shift, showcasing advanced weapons systems, cyber defense activities, and participation from diverse nations. These efforts underscore the Philippines' strategic importance in regional security and its readiness to project credible deterrence.

Table 3.
Measures the Philippines Should Implement to Effectively Defend the Country's Rights
in the Philippines' Seas: **PHILIPPINES**
Row Percent, Multiple Response, Up to 3 Allowed
(June 26-30, 2025)



Base: Total Interviews, 100%								
Which of the following measures should the Philippines continue to implement to effectively defend the country's rights in the Philippines' seas? Choose three.	RP	LOCATION				CLASS		
		NCR	BL	VIS	MIN	ABC	D	E
Support the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine Coast Guard to acquire assets in line with ensuring our territorial integrity	65	64	69	61	59	71	63	63
Reinforce alliance and elevate partnerships by conducting joint patrols and military exercises with allies, friends, and partners	51	55	57	46	40	62	49	41
Establish defense and security agreements with like-minded partners	33	40	40	22	25	28	35	32
Hold leaders accountable and ensure commitment to defend the Philippines' national interest in its maritime territories	14	22	11	15	16	12	15	16
File diplomatic protests and continue to engage China diplomatically	12	15	9	13	14	13	11	20
I don't have enough knowledge to give an opinion	3	1	2	1	5	2	3	1

Multilateral initiatives, including joint patrols and cooperative maneuvers with the U.S., Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, further highlight the administration's commitment to maritime domain awareness and freedom of navigation. The AFP's participation in international exercises outside Philippine territory reflects a new level of confidence and readiness in regional defense cooperation. These actions send a powerful message of collective resolve, reinforcing alliances and positioning the Philippines as a proactive player in regional security.

Looking ahead, the Philippines is set to lead regional efforts as ASEAN Chair in 2026, with plans to push for a binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and champion legal mechanisms under UNCLOS. This effort will provide a more conducive environment toward strengthening the assertion of our sea rights. Sustaining this trajectory will require consistency, resolve, and political will, but the groundwork laid by the Marcos Jr. administration has positioned the Philippines as a credible advocate for the rules-based international order and long-term peace in the region.

The same June 2025 Pulse Asia survey revealed that 73% of Filipinos support the continued assertion of the Philippines' rights in the West Philippine Sea through international law and the 2016 Arbitral Award. Similarly, 65% support AFP and Coast Guard modernization, and 51% back the conduct of joint patrols and exercises with partners.

Notably, the support could be even stronger if not for deliberate efforts to distort the narrative in certain regions. Data disaggregation reveals that public support for a firm stance on the West Philippine Sea is highest in Metro Manila and Luzon, while declining slightly in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Geopolitical Risk-to-Opportunity Outlook

The Marcos Jr. administration's assertive foreign and security policy presents risks, such as heightened tensions with China and regional power dynamics, but also offers opportunities to strengthen alliances and assert leadership in regional security. By maintaining transparency, modernizing the AFP, and deepening partnerships with nations like Japan, the U.S., and ASEAN members, the Philippines can transform geopolitical challenges into pathways for stability and leadership. As ASEAN Chair in 2026, the administration has the chance to champion maritime rules and norms, advancing the rules-based international order and fostering long-term peace in the region.

The Philippines' foreign policy is crucial for protecting its sovereignty and ensuring regional stability, especially in the face of challenges in the West Philippine Sea. By focusing on external defense rather than internal conflicts, the government can project strength and safeguard the Philippines' sovereignty in contested waters.

International partnerships are vital for amplifying the Philippines' voice on the global stage. The administration has successfully expanded alliances with countries like the U.S., Japan, and Australia, while also forging new agreements with Germany, New Zealand, and others. These partnerships bring resources, expertise, and solidarity in addressing shared security challenges. Joint patrols, multilateral exercises, and defense cooperation agreements demonstrate the Philippines' commitment to regional peace and stability. By continuing to strengthen these alliances, the Marcos Jr. administration can ensure that the Philippines remains a key player in the Indo-Pacific, protecting its interests while contributing to a rules-based international order.

III. LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

The Marcos Jr. administration has prioritized legislative reforms to strengthen the economy, enhance transparency, and secure territorial integrity during the first half of its term. The 19th Congress passed 18 laws and ratified seven Bicameral Conference Committee reports, addressing critical national concerns such as infrastructure development, economic growth, governance reforms, and education. These legislative measures aim to create a stable environment for businesses, empower citizens, and promote sustainable development.

Key economic laws include the Public-Private Partnership Code, which fosters collaboration between the government and private sector to enhance infrastructure development, and the CREATE MORE Act, which provides tax incentives to

attract investments and support corporate growth. The Ease of Paying Taxes Act simplifies tax procedures, while the Capital Markets Efficiency Promotion Act enhances transparency in financial markets. Together, these laws aim to drive long-term economic growth and stability.

Agriculture and food security have been addressed through measures like the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, which penalizes large-scale smuggling, and the Amendment of the Agricultural Tariffication Act, which promotes fair trade and supports farmers. The development of maritime infrastructure is supported by laws such as the Philippine Maritime Zones Act and Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act, which enhance maritime safety and connectivity, and the Philippine Natural Gas Industry Development Act, which promotes energy security.

Transparency and governance reforms are central to the administration's legislative agenda. For instance, the New Government Procurement Act modernizes procurement processes to reduce corruption. The Real Property Valuation and Assessment Reform Act standardizes property valuation for greater transparency, while the Anti-Financial Account Scamming Act strengthens cybersecurity measures to protect individuals and institutions from fraud, aiming to build public trust and ensure accountability in government transactions.

Education and recovery initiatives include the Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act, which addresses pandemic-related disruptions in education, and the Enterprise-Based Education and Training (EBET) Reform Act, which aligns skills development with labor market demands. The administration also ratified key measures like the E-Government Act that aims to promote digital transformation and the *Konektadong Pinoy Act* that aims to improve internet connectivity.

Laws Passed

1. **Public-Private Partnership Code – Republic Act (RA) 11966.** Establishes a legal framework to enhance collaboration between the government and private sector, aiming to boost infrastructure development and improve public service delivery in the Philippines.
2. **Internet Transactions Act – RA 11967.** Establishes a legal framework to regulate online commercial activities, ensuring consumer protection, promoting e-commerce growth, and fostering trust in digital transactions in the Philippines.
3. **Ease of Paying Taxes Act – RA 11976.** Reforms tax administration by simplifying procedures, promoting digitalization, and reducing compliance burdens, making tax payment more accessible and efficient for Filipino taxpayers.
4. **Real Property Valuation and Assessment Reform Act – RA 12001.** Standardizes property valuation, ensures transparency, and enhances revenue generation by establishing uniform guidelines for real estate assessment across the Philippines.
5. **New Government Procurement Act – RA 12009.** Modernizes procurement processes, promotes transparency, and ensures efficiency in acquiring goods and services, fostering accountability and reducing corruption in government transactions.
6. **Anti-Financial Account Scamming Act – RA 12010.** Combats financial fraud by penalizing scams targeting accounts, enhancing cybersecurity measures, and protecting individuals and institutions from unauthorized access and fraudulent activities.
7. **Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act – RA 12022.** Penalizes large-scale smuggling and economic sabotage in agriculture, safeguarding farmers, ensuring food security, and promoting fair trade practices to protect the Philippine agricultural sector.
8. **Self-Reliant Defense Posture Act – RA 12024.** Strengthens the Philippines' defense capabilities by promoting local production of military equipment, reducing reliance on imports, and enhancing national security through self-sufficiency initiatives.
9. **Imposition of Value-Added Tax on Digital Services – RA 12023.** Ensures taxation of digital platforms, leveling the playing field for local businesses, boosting government revenue, and addressing the evolving digital economy.

10. **Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program Act – RA 12028.** Supports students' learning recovery through accessible education initiatives, addressing pandemic-related disruptions and ensuring equitable opportunities for academic growth nationwide.

11. **Enterprise-Based Education and Training (EBET) Reform Act – RA 12063.** Promotes industry-driven education, aligning skills development with labor market demands to enhance employability, workforce competitiveness, and economic growth in the Philippines.

12. **Philippine Maritime Zones Act – RA 12064.** Strengthens the maritime industry by enhancing regulations, promoting safety, supporting sustainable practices, and ensuring the efficient use of the Philippines' vast maritime resources and sea lanes.

13. **Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act – RA 12065.** Establishes designated sea lanes for safe navigation through Philippine waters, ensuring maritime security, environmental protection, and compliance with international laws governing archipelagic states.

14. **Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy (CREATE MORE) Act – RA 12066.** Boosts economic recovery by providing tax incentives, fostering corporate growth, attracting investments, and supporting enterprises to maximize opportunities for revitalizing the Philippine economy.

15. **Amendment of the Agricultural Tariffication Act – RA 12078.** Revises policies on agricultural tariffs, promoting fair trade, enhancing farmer support, and ensuring food security while balancing importation and local agricultural development.

16. **Philippine Natural Gas Industry Development Act – RA 12120.** Establishes a framework to harness natural gas resources, promote energy security, attract investments, and support sustainable economic growth in the Philippines.

17. **Economy, Planning, and Development Act – RA 12145.** Strengthens national economic planning, enhances development strategies, fosters sustainable growth, and aligns government policies to attract investments and improve the Philippines' global competitiveness.

18. **Capital Markets Efficiency Promotion Act – RA 12214.** Aims to enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of Philippine capital markets, fostering investment opportunities, economic growth, and financial stability for businesses and investors.

Bicameral Conference Committee Reports Ratified

1. **E-Government Act:** Promotes digital transformation in government services, ensuring efficient, transparent, and accessible public service delivery through technology, enhancing connectivity, and streamlining processes for citizens and businesses in the Philippines.

2. **Konektadong Pinoy (Open-Access to Data Transmission) Act:** Aims to improve internet connectivity by promoting open access to data transmission infrastructure, fostering competition, affordability, and accessibility for Filipinos nationwide.

3. **Amendment to the Foreign Investors' Long-Term Lease Act:** Enhances investment opportunities by allowing foreign investors extended lease terms, fostering economic growth, and encouraging long-term commitments in Philippine business and property development.

4. **Accelerated and Reformed Right-of-Way Act:** Streamlines processes for acquiring land for infrastructure projects, reducing delays, ensuring fair compensation, and expediting development to support economic growth and national progress.

5. **Enhanced Fiscal Regime for Large-Scale Mining Act:** Establishes a fair taxation system for mining operations, promoting sustainable resource management, increasing government revenue, and ensuring equitable benefits for communities and stakeholders.

6. **Rightsizing the National Government Act:** Aims to streamline government operations by reducing redundancy, improving efficiency, optimizing resources, and ensuring a more responsive bureaucracy to better serve public needs and national priorities.

7. Virology Institute of the Philippines: Focuses on research, development, and innovation in virology, aiming to strengthen the country's capacity to prevent, manage, and respond to viral diseases and outbreaks effectively.

Unfortunately, with the end of the 19th Congress, all bills that were not enacted into law, regardless of the stage where they are in the legislative process, would have to be refiled in the 20th Congress. This includes the Department of Water Resources, Blue Economy, New Government Auditing Code, and the Waste-to-Energy bills. As these were identified priorities, they are expected to be refiled in the 20th Congress.

The 20th Congress will convene in the morning of the Fourth State of the Nation Address of President Marcos Jr. on July 28, 2025. Both houses would then take a few weeks to settle on their respective leadership arrangement. Current House Speaker Martin Ferdinand Romualdez is likely to retain his post with at least 197 representatives (104 from Lakas-CMD, 32 from the National Unity Party, 32 from the National People's Coalition, and 29 from the Partido Federal ng Pilipinas) expected to be in his coalition. Former Senate President Vicente Sotto III, meanwhile, will seek to reclaim his senate presidency from embattled Senate President Francis Escudero as Sotto rejoins the Senate after a three-year break.

Legislative Risk-to-Opportunity Outlook

The Marcos Jr. administration's legislative agenda presents both challenges and opportunities for transformative governance. While the passage of 18 laws and key reforms demonstrates a commitment to economic growth, transparency, and national security, their success depends on effective implementation and public trust. Adequate funding, robust enforcement, and collaboration with stakeholders are essential to ensure these measures deliver tangible benefits. By addressing risks such as inefficiency, digital inequality, and political dynamics, the administration can turn legislative achievements into pathways for inclusive growth, sustainable development, and strengthened democratic institutions.

Conclusion

The Marcos Jr. administration stands at a pivotal moment in Philippine history, where challenges such as political instability, economic hurdles, social divisions, and foreign policy risks can be transformed into opportunities for national progress. By embracing transparency, accountability, and reform-oriented leadership, the government has the chance to rebuild public trust and strengthen democratic institutions. Addressing urgent concerns like inflation, unemployment, and poverty through targeted interventions and legislative reforms can directly improve the lives of Filipinos, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

Moreover, the administration's proactive stance on foreign policy, particularly in asserting maritime rights and modernizing defense capabilities, positions the Philippines as a credible and influential player in regional security. Strengthening alliances with like-minded nations not only safeguards sovereignty but also amplifies the country's voice on the global stage. By investing in education, healthcare, and digital literacy, the government can empower citizens, bridge social divides, and create a culture of resilience and collaboration.

The administration now faces a pivotal test: can it convert institutional gains into lasting reform? By reframing risks as opportunities and implementing bold, inclusive strategies, the Philippines can emerge stronger, more united, and better prepared to navigate future challenges. This moment calls for decisive action and visionary leadership to pave the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for all Filipinos.





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