

Gov't keeping P26 B in TRAIN subsidy — lawmaker

The Philippine Star · 9 Jun 2018 · 4 · By JESS DIAZ

Government agencies are keeping nearly P26 billion in subsidies for the poor under the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law, the chairman of the House of Representatives ways and means committee said yesterday.

Quirino Rep. Dakila Cua said there is P25 billion in “unconditional cash transfer” to 10 million poor families in the 2018 national budget, and an additional P900 million for fuel subsidy to public utility vehicle (PUV) drivers.

Although the administration’s economic managers have assured the House that the subsidy programs “will be in place to help Filipinos cope with rising consumer prices,” Cua revealed that he received information that the bulk of the money has not been released yet.

He stressed that it is imperative for the government to give out the subsidies to their intended beneficiaries as inflation rose to 4.6 percent last month.

“When prices rise more than expected, basic commodities such as food and transportation become less accessible to a typical Filipino family. Regardless of the causes, the effects of price increases are more pronounced on those who have less income. They are the families who can barely get by and urgently need help from government,” Cua pointed out.

He acknowledged that the public outcry against the high inflation rate and rising consumer prices is “linked to the recently passed TRAIN law.”

“We need to roll out all the social welfare and benefits programs, and we need to do it now,” he said.

Cua has scheduled a meeting with agency heads to find what is delaying the release of funds and discuss “ways of moving forward.”