

Headline	Senators to push sin tax bill OK	
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## Senators to push sin tax bill OK

AFTER saying that no tax bill would be passed before Congress closes on June 7, senators on Thursday agreed to push the passage of the sin tax bill before the end of the 17th Congress.

Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri said the senators had a change of heart after meeting with Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez 3rd who reiterated the need for additional funding for the Universal Health Care (UHC) program.

“We discussed only sin taxes particularly tobacco tax. The Secretary reiterated the need for additional funding for our new Universal health care measure as we have a large budget deficit for that program. We the senators all agreed to do our best to pass this before the break,” said Zubiri in a text message.



2. Cigarettes are sold at a sidewalk eatery in Intramuros, Manila on Thursday, May 23, 2019.  
PHOTO BY ENRIQUE AGCAOILI

He said sponsorship will start on Monday, May 27.

Earlier, Senate President Vicente Sotto 3rd told reporters that the measure seeking to raise the excise tax on tobacco products may have a rough time in the Senate.

Several measures have been filed in Congress seeking to raise sin taxes, especially tobacco tax. Senate Bill 1599, introduced by Sen. Emmanuel “Manny” Pacquiao, proposes to increase the unitary cigarette tax to P60.

Meanwhile, Senate Bill 1605, written by Sen. Joseph Victor “JV” Ejercito, sets the excise tax to P90. Both measures remain pending at the committee level.

The Senate ways and means committee, chaired by Sen. Juan Edgardo Angara, conducted hearings on the bills raising sin taxes to determine whether the revenue generated could fund the proposed universal health care program.

“Sin taxes have been crucial in funding health programs of the government,” Angara said in a statement.