

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 969

Introduced by REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO, Ph. D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Protection of life and property is a paramount duty of the government due to its great impact on our economic and social progress. The country's economic gains and prosperity are sometimes averted because of destructive fires that cause lives and millions of properties.

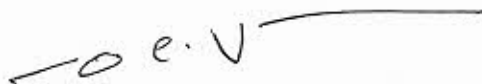
The undermanned firefighting force is at being reinforced by members of volunteer fire brigades and civic organizations all over the country. They play an important role in suppressing and fighting conflagrations and most often save lives and properties even to the extent of losing their own. Harry Lo, a volunteer fireman of the Gandara Volunteer Brigade, deserves recognition and tribute for his heroic deed last March 1, 1996 at the Quaipo blaze where he was hit by a burning wall that fell down which caused his death. The respective fire brigade or organization where these "heroes in time of peace" belong provides them the necessary benefits in such cases, like insurance, hospitalization and financial assistance. However, such unselfish volunteer service is not compensated, much more recognized by the government.

This bill, therefore, seeks to provide assistance and benefits to volunteer firefighters of duly recognized fire brigades and organizations, regardless of nationality, and members of barangay fire brigades trained by the Bureau of Fire Protection who are killed or incapacitated while in the line of duty in suppressing or protecting the lives and properties from fires. In recognition for their dedicated service and volunteerism, these volunteer firefighters shall be granted financial assistance and hospitalization benefits. A special fund, referred to as the Special Fund for Volunteer Firemen shall be established in the Bureau of Fire Protection to serve this purpose. The amount necessary to finance the Special Fund shall come from the savings of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and from the Bureau itself, the fire fund collected by some local government units for the issuance of building permits, and from charitable government institutions.

In addition to the financial assistance, the deceased volunteer fireman shall be accorded burial honors just like a regular fireman from the Bureau of Fire Protection.

The bill further encourages cooperativeness and stimulates the spirit of volunteerism among citizens. In the end, the noble purpose is attained, to save more lives and properties.

In view of the foregoing, early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO, Ph. D.
2nd District, Province of Iloilo

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Introduced by REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO, Ph. D.

AN ACT PROVIDING SPECIAL ASSISTANCE AND BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEER FIREMEN OF DULY RECOGNIZED FIRE BRIGADES OR CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS WHO DIE OR BECOME INCAPACITATED WHILE PROTECTING LIVES AND PROPERTIES DURING FIRES AND CONFLAGRATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Volunteer firemen of duly recognized fire brigades or civic organizations, regardless of nationality, who die or become incapacitated while protecting lives and properties from destructive fires shall be entitled to special assistance and benefits in addition to the financial assistance granted them by their respective volunteer group.

SEC. 2. The term "volunteer firemen" as used in this Act shall refer to members of a duly recognized fire brigade or civic organization, regardless of nationality, as well members of barangay fire brigades who voluntarily offer themselves in providing service of preventing and suppressing destructive fires from causing damage and loss of lives and properties.

SEC. 3. "Duly recognized fire brigades or civic organizations" refer to duly organized private fire brigades accredited with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and registered with the Bureau of Fire Protection, as well as barangay brigades trained and recognized by the Bureau.

SEC. 4. A Special Fund for Volunteer Firemen shall be established in the central office of the Fire Protection Bureau under the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). The amount necessary to finance this special fund be taken from the savings of the Department and the Bureau itself, the fire fund collected by some local government units for the issuance of building permits, and donations from charitable institutions of the government: *Provided*, That the savings of the Department and the Bureau, the proceeds of the building permits as fire fund collected by some local government units, and donations from charitable government institution for one (1) year following the approval of this Act shall constitute the initial fund reserve for this purpose. Thereafter, the Fund shall be replenished or enhanced by the savings and collections in the succeeding years.

SEC. 5. The special assistance and benefits referred to in Section 1 hereof shall refer to financial and hospitalization benefits for the deceased, injured or incapacitated volunteer firemen.

SEC. 6. In recognition for his heroic deed of saving lives and properties from fires, compulsory heirs, as provided for in Article 887 of the Civil Code, of the deceased volunteer fireman shall receive the amount of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) from the fund.

SEC. 7. If a volunteer fireman is injured or wounded or in any manner suffers any injury or becomes incapacitated while suppressing or controlling a conflagration, his hospitalization expenses shall be shouldered by the government through the Fund and shall likewise receive the amount of Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) as livelihood assistance. A certification by the proper medical officer designated by the Chief of the Bureau of Fire Protection is necessary for the payment of the aforesaid benefits.

After the payment of special assistance and benefits, the Chief of the Bureau of Fire Protection shall submit a report to the Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

SEC. 8. It shall be the duty of the of the Financial Officer of the Bureau of Fire Protection to deliver to the beneficiaries of the deceased fireman the amount he is entitled to receive from the Fund within three (3) days from receipt of a written certification of the fact of death and other circumstances thereof by the President of the duly recognized fire brigade or organization where is a member.

SEC. 9. The same burial honors accorded to regular firemen of the Bureau of Fire Protection shall likewise be given to the deceased volunteer fireman to be supervised by the Chief of Bureau of Fire Protection, in coordination with the duly recognized fire brigade or organization concerned.

SEC. 10. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall strictly implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 11. All acts, laws, decrees, executive orders, and rules and regulations which are contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.