

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4322

Introduced by Representative ARNEL U. TY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the Philippines, we celebrate Fire Prevention Month in the month of March and during this season fire prevention activities are administered by the Bureau of Fire Prevention (BFP), local government units, firefighting agencies, schools, and other institutions.

We have to take seriously these fire prevention activities because annually, our average fire incidents have not decreased through the years. In Metro Manila, our average fire incidents are 3,864.8; in Luzon, the average fire incidents are 2,113; in Visayas, the average is 1,551.8; and in Mindanao, the average is 1,269.2. In all, the average fire incidents in the Philippines are 8,798.8.

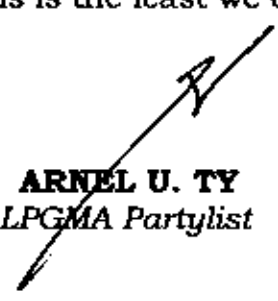
In every fire incident, we always see the victims because they truly have suffered losses which may be in the form of shelter, clothing and worst – love ones. We tend to forget, however, that there are unsung heroes who rise to the challenge of putting out the uncontrollable fires in order to save the things and those that are precious and dear to us, not minding that while doing so, they endanger their health, arms, limbs and also their lives. When these fire incidents happen, those who treasure fire volunteers are equally threatened every time that these unsung heroes rise to spare us from more grief as they put-off uncontrollable and destructive fires.

The unsung heroes referred to are the fire volunteers whose sheer motivation in conducting fire fighting activities is the spirit of voluntarism which is deeply rooted in our bayanihan culture. Our conservative estimate of fire volunteers in Metro Manila based on the records of the Bureau of Fire Protection is 2,700 while the conservative estimate of firetrucks and ambulance being used to respond to any uncontrollable fire is 282. If we put economic value on these, we can say that the government is saving an estimated amount of P32,400,000.00 a year for the supposed salaries and benefits of the fire volunteers and 88,000,000.00 a year for the value of the operations and regular maintenance of firetrucks and ambulances. But these figures are for Metro Manila only. In short, if we include in the computation all fire volunteers and all firetrucks and ambulances in the

Philippines, the estimated savings of the government would be tripled - that is roughly P361,200,000.00 a year. This conservative estimate does not include the value of the firetrucks and ambulances which is roughly P846,000,000.00 for the whole country.

While these people have already done so much for us, we have yet to do our part to recognize and reward their contribution in providing public order and safety.

This house bill seeks to encourage, promote, strengthen and reward the practice of volunteerism as a strategy in attaining public safety and order and to ensure that the voluntary and selfless acts of fire volunteers are indeed recognized and fairly rewarded. This is the least we can do for them.



ARNEL U. TY
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AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE WELFARE OF FIRE VOLUNTEERS IN THE PHILIPPINES, PRESCRIBING PENALTIES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

SECTION 1. Short Title - This Act shall be known as the "Fire Volunteers Welfare Act of 2011".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy – It shall be the policy of the State to encourage, promote, strengthen and reward the practice of volunteerism as a strategy in attaining public safety and order. Towards this end, the State shall ensure that voluntary and selfless acts of fire volunteers shall be recognized and fairly rewarded.

SEC. 3. Coverage – All fire volunteers in the Philippines who are at least eighteen (18) years old, have not been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude and certified members of a Fire Brigade which is duly affiliated with Federation and accredited by the Bureau of Fire Protection shall be entitled to all the benefits provided hereof.

SEC. 4. Medical Benefit - All fire volunteers shall be given free medical care including subsistence medicines and medical attendance in any government hospital or institution: Provided That such hospital care

shall include surgery or surgical expenses, medicines, x-rays, laboratory fees and other hospital expenses.

SEC. 5. Scholarship - All fire volunteers shall be granted scholarship for all competency based training courses or curricula in the Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA).

SEC. 6. Financial Assistance - The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall provide financial assistance to all fire volunteers in case of dismemberment or death during the performance of

Nature of Claim	Amount of Assistance
Death	P50,000.00
Dismemberment	P25,000.00

SEC. 7. Funeral and Death Benefit - All fire volunteers shall be entitled to a funeral grant of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) and their beneficiaries shall be entitled to financial assistance of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00).

SEC. 8. Creation of Fire Volunteers Board - There is hereby created an agency to be named as Fire Volunteers Board in the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) which shall be composed of Five (5) members, with the Secretary of Department of Interior and Local Government as *ex officio* head and the Fire Chief as *ex officio* member and the Undersecretary of the Department of Health (DOH) also as *ex officio* member. The remaining members shall come from the Federations of Fire Volunteers: Provided, That they have been in existence and active for the last five (5) years prior to this Act. They shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years each by the President upon the recommendation of the secretary of DILG.

SEC. 9. Function – The Fire Volunteers Board shall be the central advisory, planning and policy-making body for development and implementation of a nationwide Fire Volunteers Fire Fighting and Safety Training Program (Program). The Fire Volunteers Board shall perform the following functions:

- 1) The institution of a nationwide Fire Volunteers Fire Fighting and Safety Training Program.
- 2) The establishment of a comprehensive fire volunteers monitoring system.
- 3) The management of funds for all fire volunteers.

All persons who want to serve as fire volunteers shall undergo and pass this Program. Once the fire volunteer has passed this Program, the Fire Volunteers Board shall issue a certification bearing such information.

SEC. 10. Penalties - The public officer who shall violate the provisions of this Act shall be punished by a fine of not less than Thirty Thousand Pesos (P30,000.00) nor more than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) or suspension, if found guilty in an appropriate administrative investigation. This is without prejudice with the filing of appropriate criminal cases.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations - The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Board shall jointly formulate, issue and promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 12. Appropriations – To carry out the purposes of this Act, the amount One Hundred Fifty Million Pesos (P150,000,000.00) shall be taken from the annual earnings of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

Sec. 13. Separability Clause - If for any reason, any section or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional, illegal, or invalid,

SEC. 14. Repealing Clause - All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 15. Effectivity - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.