



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **5553**



Introduced by Representative Ranulfo P. "Dodong" Canonigo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill aims to grant a colonist status to a qualified and deserving inmate in a penal institution.

Pursuant to the operating manual of the Bureau of Corrections, inmates are classified by a Classification Board according to their entitlement of privileges as detainee, third class inmate, second class inmate, first class inmate and a colonist. It is discretionary on the part of the Classification board to grant to a first class inmate a colonist status.

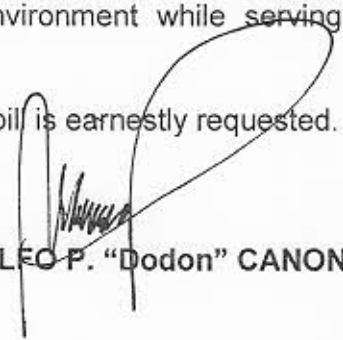
With this measure, the colonist status will no longer be a privilege. An Advisory Council is created just for the purpose of evaluating and approving the application of an inmate into a colonist status. An inmate who has served one-fourth (1/4) of the maximum term of his sentence with good behavior or seven (7) years in case of life sentence and has not violated any rule or regulation of the penal institution may apply with the Advisory Council for the colonist status. Once said Advisory Council finds that the applicant possesses all the qualifications to become a colonist, it shall approve said application. Once granted the colonist status, the inmate is then classified under the minimum security group.

An inmate can avail of the privilege once for every sentence to be served and can only be revoked when he violated any rules and regulations. A prisoner with colonist status enjoys certain privileges in prison such as credit of additional good conduct time allowance of five (5) days for each calendar month of good behavior; automatic reduction of life sentence to thirty (30) years; and to have the spouse and children, or any person the inmate wants to marry, to live with the inmate in the penal colony with a condition that he abides the rules and regulations of the penal institution. The inmate can also avail of prison facilities like hospital, church, and school, wear civilian clothes, and receive reasonable clothing and household supplies from the

government commissary, in addition to free subsistence allowance. Likewise, a colonist status is given an opportunity to earn a living by working in an agricultural land of the penal institution.

Moreover, the prisoner who has been granted colonist status can enjoy "*living out*," or the privilege to stay out of prison cell. Thus, the colonist is allowed to move around as long as the inmate remains within the vicinity of the penal institution. These benefits serve as motivation to an inmate to conduct himself in a well and productive environment while serving the sentence.

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



RANULFO P. "Dodon" CANONIGO



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 5553

Introduced by Representative Ranulfo P. "Dodong" Canonigo

AN ACT
GRANTING MANDATORY COLONIST STATUS TO A QUALIFIED AND
DESRVING INMATE IN A PENAL INSTITUTION

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

SECTION 1. Applicant for Colonist Status. – An inmate who has served imprisonment equivalent to one-fourth (1/4) of the maximum term of prison sentence or seven (7) years in case of life sentence with good conduct and has not violated any rules and regulations of the penal institution may apply for a colonist status with the Advisory Council. After evaluation of the records of the applicant, the Advisory Council shall grant colonist status to the qualified and deserving inmate.

SEC. 2 Advisory Council. – An advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, is hereby established in the Bureau of Corrections whose sole purpose and function is to evaluate and approve the application for colonist status of any inmate.

SEC. 3. Composition of the Advisory Council. – The Advisory Council shall be composed of the following:

Director of the Bureau of Corrections, as chairman
Superintendent, as vice-chairman
The Chief of the Reception and Diagnostic Center,
Medical Officer,
Chief, Evaluation Section; and
Chief, Agro-Industries Section, as members; and
The Chief Overseer, as Secretary

The Council shall meet once a month or as frequently as necessary to consider the application for colonist status. The Council shall be convened by the Chairman or upon a written request of at least three (3) of its members.

The member of the Council shall receive reasonable *per diem* for meetings actually attended.

The presence of a majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a *quorum*.

SEC. 4. Privileges of a Colonist. – A colonist shall have the following privileges:

a. An additional Good Conduct Time Allowance (GCTA) of five (5) days for each calendar month of good behavior on top of the regular GCTA authorized under Article 97 of the Revised Penal Code;

b. Automatic reduction of the life sentence to thirty (30) years;

c. Government paid transportation of the family going to the penal institution and the transportation expenses of the colonist upon discharge from the prison or penal farm.

d. To have the spouse and children, or the person the inmate desires to marry, live with the inmate in the prison or penal farm.

e. Avail of all the hospital and sports facilities inside the penal institution;

f. Be issued clothing and ordinary household supplies from the government commissary in addition to free subsistence;

g. Wear civilian clothes on such special occasions as may be designated by the Superintendent;

h. The family, spouse and children, of the inmate can avail of the hospital, sports and school facilities free of charge: *Provided*, That they follow all the rules and regulations governing the prison and penal farm.

Provided, That possesses a colonist status shall remain until the end of inmate's sentence unless he violated any rules and regulations or failed to maintain a good standing behavior as may be determined by the Advisory Council. *Provided further*, That the privilege of achieving a colonist status shall be given only once for every sentence to be served.

SEC. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Secretary of Justice shall, in coordination with the Director of the Bureau of Corrections, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.