

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5658



Introduced by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The country is home to disasters, calamities, or emergencies that threaten limbs and lives. When such phenomenon, man-made or natural, strikes, not few individuals or families are affected, become victims, get injured, and/or suffer socio-economic dislocation which may be temporary or even permanent.

Volunteer responders in the face of these occurrences are a great help to government and its efforts to respond to the needs of those affected. Thus, their services become a third way for government. And they sometimes become unwitting victims as they undertake to perform rather selfless if not heroic tasks and the daunting challenge of saving other people's lives at the risk of their own.

This bill urgently contemplates to incentivize volunteer responders by way of financial as well as non-financial incentives or benefits such as medical or hospital attention or treatment especially for those who themselves become victims of disasters, calamities, or emergencies because they undertake the challenge to save or bring the lives of people to safety and away from harm. Either they become injured in the process or at times, they also become casualties leaving behind their families unable to carry on their daily lives.

In truth, what could have been costs supposedly borne out by government are actually provided for by volunteer responders who not only have such commendable social conscience but likewise skill and training to successfully manage and surmount the tasks of a volunteer responder.

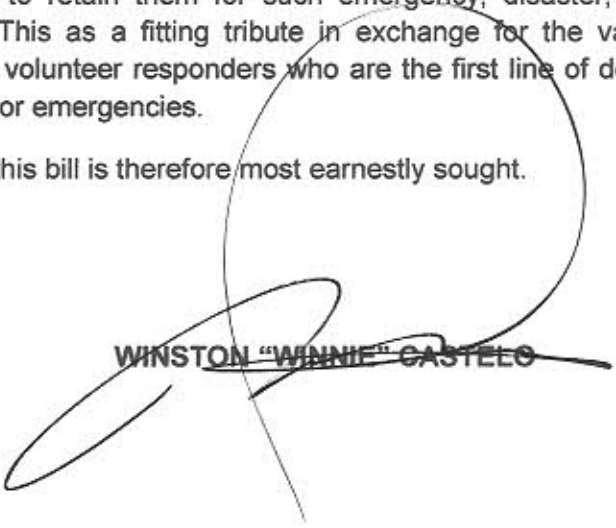
It is therefore contemplated in this urgent measure to reward in modest extent the continuing contribution to society, to people, and to government from volunteer responders. For this purpose, they shall be granted financial, medical, and other non-pecuniary benefits to incentivize them and acknowledge their unique role in providing timely and actual services of saving people from harm or possible threat of death from disasters, calamities, or other such emergencies.

The government just cannot turn deaf and blind to the now commonplace fact that this area of volunteer emergency services must be aggressively tapped given that the growing challenge that is facing it today is recruitment and retention. If they stop rendering their selfless

dedication to serve, the government might find itself having to spend more in terms of a variety of related costs.

Hence, volunteer responders deserve to be rewarded by financial, medical, and/or other non-pecuniary benefits as a way to retain them for such emergency, disaster, or calamity services, natural or man-made. This as a fitting tribute in exchange for the value of time donated by our selfless but heroic volunteer responders who are the first line of defense in all the variety of disasters, calamities, or emergencies.

The immediate passage of this bill is therefore most earnestly sought.



WINSTON "WINNIE" CASTELO

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AN ACT

ESTABLISHING THE VOLUNTEER RESPONDERS INCENTIVES PROTECTION PROGRAM THEREBY PROVIDING FINANCIAL AND/OR NON-PECUNIARY BENEFITS ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHO BECOME VICTIMS THEMSELVES OF SUCH DISASTERS, CALAMITIES OR EMERGENCIES IN THE COURSE OF DUTY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the 'Volunteer Responders Incentives Protection Act of 2015.

SEC. 2. There shall be established a Volunteer Responders Incentives Protection Program with the Office of Civil Defense of the Department of National Defense as the Office of Primary Responsibility.

SEC. 3. Under this Act, volunteer responders shall be provided financial, medical and/or other non-pecuniary benefits or incentives in exchange of the value of time they donate to perform with skill volunteer emergency, calamity, or disaster services.

Provided Further That, similar or related entitlements as may later be granted shall accrue to the benefit of volunteer responders especially for those who become victims and suffer injury or even death.

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect immediately upon its approval and publication in at least three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,