

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **5867**



Introduced by Honorable Sherwin T. Gatchalian

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish an evacuation center in every municipality and city in the country and to ensure the structural capacity of evacuation centers.

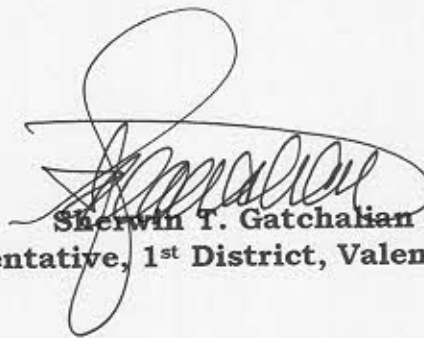
The Philippines has been frequently affected by climate-related weather events in recent years which have damaged property and caused the loss of many lives. More intense typhoons, higher sea levels, and storm surges have affected a great number of the population. Coastal communities and informal settlements in urban areas are the most vulnerable to floods in times of weather disturbances. Every time a typhoon hits the country or when monsoon rains cause heavy flooding, many people are displaced and need to be relocated to evacuation centers. The importance of a permanent and fully operational evacuation center with the necessary facilities in place cannot be disregarded during a calamity, whether natural or human-induced, or in times of armed conflict when residents of a community need to be relocated.

In the Philippines, it is a common practice to use schools as evacuation centers in times of calamities which causes the disruption of school activities. Hence, this bill proposes to establish an evacuation center in every municipality and city with priority given to the local government units with the most vulnerable communities and with less secure infrastructure. This measure also emphasizes the need to ensure the structural capacity of existing evacuation centers and those that will be constructed in the future. It is imperative that strict compliance with the National Building Code of the Philippines is observed and that inputs of structural engineers are integrated into the design and specifications of evacuation centers to ensure that it can withstand climatic and other hazards.

It is also recognized that building an evacuation center for all municipalities and cities at the same time is not feasible. Under this measure, the NDRRMC is mandated to determine which municipalities and cities will be given priority and be provided with a new evacuation center. In order to ease the pressure on classrooms of schools already utilized as evacuation centers, constructing additional facilities in these schools is also an option in areas where it will be difficult to have a new evacuation center.

The establishment of permanent evacuation centers with the necessary facilities will address the issues encountered by evacuees including congestion, exposure to hazards and lack of facilities. It will also enhance the delivery of social services during calamities and help minimize the loss of lives.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sherwin T. Gatchalian', is written over the printed name.

Sherwin T. Gatchalian
Representative, 1st District, Valenzuela City

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING EVACUATION CENTERS IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY
AND CITY, PROVIDING FOR THE NECESSARY FACILITIES,
ENSURING THEIR STRUCTURAL CAPACITY, 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
“Evacuation Center Act.”

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – This Act recognizes the constitutional right of the people for the protection of their life and their property and the promotion of their general welfare. Towards this end, the State, in recognition of the vulnerability of the Philippines to climate change, the occurrence of severe floods, typhoons, and other natural or human-induced disasters, illnesses, diseases and other factors that affect the environment, shall institutionalize the governments’ effort to establish and maintain fully equipped and fully-operational evacuation centers and provide the necessary facilities to sites used as evacuation centers to make them responsive to environmental or climatic events.

Furthermore, it shall be the continuing policy of the State to provide the appropriate facilities for evacuees in evacuation centers and to ensure the structural capacity of evacuation centers.

SEC. 3. **Establishment of Evacuation Centers.** –There shall be established an evacuation center in every city and municipality in the Philippines which shall provide immediate and temporary accommodation for people who have been evacuated or displaced from their homes due to emergency events such as typhoons, floods, storm surges, drought and other severe climate disturbances, as well as fire,

and the outbreak of illnesses and diseases that presents imminent danger to life and property.

SEC. 4. **Facility Requirements.** – The following shall be the minimum requirements for every evacuation center that will be established under this Act:

a) *Location* – The evacuation center should not be at risk of isolation. It should be located at a safe distance from danger areas or hazards. The Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (LDRRMC) of the local government unit (LGU) concerned shall coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to determine the appropriate location of the evacuation center.

The following shall be considered in identifying an ideal site for an evacuation center:

- 1) Drainage;
- 2) Elevation;
- 3) Protection from strong winds;
- 4) Accessibility to and proximity from the vulnerable community;
- 5) Availability of the following in the immediate vicinity:
 - i) Parking areas for emergency and other vehicles;
 - ii) Allocated area for additional portable toilets;
 - iii) Storage tanks for potable and non-potable water; and
 - iv) Safe shelter for livestock.

b) *Structural Capacity* – New evacuation centers and improvements in schools used as an evacuation center which will be constructed after the effectivity of this Act must be made of construction materials which are in accordance with the specifications of Republic Act No. 6541, otherwise known as the “*National Building Code of the Philippines*,” and be able to withstand wind speeds of three hundred twenty (320) kilometers per hour or two hundred (200) miles per hour and moderate seismic activity of at least 7.2 magnitude.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall be responsible in formulating the appropriate specifications for evacuation centers and to ensure compliance with these specifications during the construction of evacuation centers. The specifications shall be periodically reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the DPWH every three years.

c) *Suitability and Capacity of Premises* – If the building is not primarily a shelter or permanent site as an evacuation center,

considerations should be made on its impact to normal business if its operation as an evacuation center is prolonged or its normal function is taken off for an extended period of time.

The number and diversity of evacuees as well as public health and safety concerns should be considered in the suitability of the premises.

It must likewise be able to provide electricity, back-up power supply, water, sewerage system, solid waste management, and physical mobility for people with mobility aids.

d) *Physical Amenities* – The evacuation and relief center should be able to provide the following minimum facilities:

- 1) Sleeping area;
- 2) Eating area;
- 3) Shower and toilet facilities which should accommodate twenty (20) people per shower or toilet room, and should be utilized according to gender;
- 4) Kitchen or food preparation area;
- 5) Trash collection area;
- 6) Clinic area including an isolation area for potentially infectious people;
- 7) Laundry area;
- 8) Recreation area; and
- 9) Pet and livestock holding area.

e) *Food Safety* – Kitchen and dining facilities should be able to cater for the number of people in the evacuation center. Food preparation and storage facilities should comply with satisfactory standards of the Department of Health on cleanliness to minimize the potential for contamination and invasion of insects and pests.

SEC. 5. *Priority in the Establishment of Evacuation Centers.* – The NDRRMC shall, in coordination with local chief executives of provinces, cities, and municipalities, identify areas to be given the highest priority in the establishment of new evacuation centers.

Upon determination by the NDRRMC and the chief executives of LGUs, the NDRRMC shall make a priority list of LGUs needing evacuation centers. The frequency of occurrence of calamities, whether natural or human-induced, and the number of displaced persons in the LGU during said calamities in the past three years may be considered in coming up with the priority list.

SEC. 6. *Improvement of Schools or Structures Used as Evacuation Centers.* – When an LGU is included in the priority list of LGUs which need an evacuation center pursuant to Section 5 of this Act and there is no available site where the government can construct a new evacuation center, the NDRRMC may instead consider the improvement of facilities in schools or other structures already being used as evacuation center by the LGU to make it comply with the provisions of Section 4 of this Act, particularly on the requirement on location and structural capacity.

SEC. 7. *Role of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.* – The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) shall be the lead agency in implementing this Act. It shall ensure that the requirements of this Act are faithfully complied with.

SEC. 8. *Coordination Among Agencies.* – The NDRRMC shall coordinate with the DPWH and the Department of Science and Technology with regard the design specifications, cost estimates and construction details of new evacuation centers that will be constructed pursuant to this Act.

All government agencies and instrumentalities, when necessary, shall provide assistance to the NDRRMC to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Operation and Maintenance of Evacuation Centers.* – The operation and management of evacuation centers shall be under the auspices of the LGU where the evacuation center is situated while the DPWH shall be charged with the maintenance of evacuation centers that will be constructed under this Act.

The local Sanggunian shall promulgate guidelines and procedures for the use and operation of the evacuation centers under their jurisdiction. The guidelines shall include provisions on the use of the evacuation center when it is not being utilized as an evacuation center including its utilization as a classroom, livelihood center, youth center, or multi-purpose center to benefit the constituents of the LGU.

The Department of Education shall be charged with maintaining the additional facilities of schools which will be constructed in accordance with Section 6 of this Act.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the Department of Public Works and Highways with respect to the

construction and maintenance of new evacuation centers. For this purpose, the DPWH shall include in its programs and annual budget the maintenance of evacuation centers constructed under this Act.

The amount necessary for the operation of the evacuation centers shall be charged to the funds of the LDRRMC.

The construction and maintenance of additional facilities for schools already used as evacuation centers shall be charged to the appropriations for the Department of Education. Thereafter, such amount needed by the concerned Department for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. **Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,