

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill no. **6387**



Introduced by Representative Leni Robredo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Barangay leaders are the foundation of governance at the community level, especially in parts of the country that are remote and hard-to-reach. According to the Local Government Code of 1991: "As the basic political unit, the Barangay serves as the primary planning and implementing unit of government policies, plans, programs, projects and activities in the community, as a forum wherein the collective views of people may be expressed, crystallized and considered, and where disputes may be amicably settled." Officials and volunteers in the country's 42,036 barangays are not only the frontliners in delivering various government services that attend to the basic needs of our people, they are also the primary facilitators of citizen empowerment and engagement so that government is responsive to the true needs of the citizens it serves.

Strengthening barangay governance is thus at the heart of making government more effective, accountable, and inclusive in its public service. In recent years, the Administration has spearheaded various innovations to serve the country's poorest of the poor and engage them in the business of governance, notably through the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) and the Bottom Up Budgeting (BUB) process. The effective implementation of these and other government priority programs depend on barangay structures that work, led by empowered barangay leaders.

The thrust of this bill is to undertake a much-needed reform in barangay governance so that its critical role in providing government service and facilitating participatory processes can be fully unlocked. In particular, the reform is anchored on the following pillars:

1. Financial empowerment of Barangay Officials and Volunteers

To deload some of the financial pressure that Barangay officials face, the bill proposes that national government should subsidize the honorarium of 1 Barangay Health Worker (BHW) and no more than 20 tanods in each barangay. Based on data from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the total number of BHWs throughout the country is 183,389 while the total number of tanods is 443,972. The honorarium for barangay day care centers (42,384 in total throughout the country), for

their part, should continue to be covered by the city/municipal government. This way, the honorarium for these mentioned barangay volunteer workers do not have to compete anymore for the allocated share (i.e. 55%) of personnel services in the barangay's Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA); the budget for personnel services can instead be maximized for the salary of the punong barangay and the kagawads as well as the honorarium only for the Barangay Nutrition Scholars (34,861 in total throughout the country) and the members of the Lupon ng Tagapamayapa (345,853 in total throughout the country). Together with the increasing trend of the IRA, barangays will have more resources at their disposal to financially empower its officials and volunteers.

Subsidizing the honorarium of BHWs and tanods has the added benefit of insulating these important barangay frontliners from local politics. Unlike city and municipal career positions that remain regardless of who the elected leaders are, almost all barangay workers and volunteers are replaced when barangay leadership changes. Since the honorarium for BHWs and tanods will be coming from the national government, – through the Department of Health (DOH) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in particular – will have a stake in guaranteeing that effective BHWs and tanods, respectively, get to stay and are not arbitrarily removed by newly elected barangay officials.

2. Capacity building for Barangay Officials and Volunteers

The bill likewise seeks to ensure that appropriate training and seminars will be provided to empower barangay officials and volunteers to effectively exercise their duties. Protecting barangay volunteer workers in particular as they perform their tasks is also important, which takes the form of guaranteeing their access to free legal services when needed and facilitating the coverage of BHWs under PhilHealth.

3. Continuity in the service of Barangay Officials

Various government agencies from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) spend millions of pesos and countless hours orienting newly elected barangay officials on the conduct of their responsibilities and on relevant government processes. The resources that are devoted for these orientation sessions and the knowledge and skills these build on each new batch of officials can be better maximized if barangay officials are able to serve longer terms. In this regard, the bill proposes to amend the term of barangay officials from three consecutive three-year terms to two consecutive five-year terms, with the hope of facilitating continuity in the service of barangay officials and higher likelihood for improving the reach and quality of the programs they can offer to their communities.

The proposed reforms under this bill conform to the principle of local autonomy as enshrined in the Constitution and to the operative principles of decentralization as declared in the Local Government Code of 1991, specifically those that pertain to enhancing the capabilities of barangays to participate actively in defining and implementing national programs and projects.

These proposed reforms are needed more than ever, especially as we seek to ensure that the growth the country has experienced in recent years is truly felt, especially by those at the margins of society. Barangay officials and volunteers, as the face of government for most of our people, require the financial empowerment, capability building and opportunities for continuity championed by this bill to be effective agents of public service.

In line with this, passage of this bill is urgently sought.


Leni Robredo
Representative, Third District of Camarines Sur

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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE BARANGAY UNIT THROUGH SUPPORT
FOR BARANGAY OFFICIALS AND BARANGAY VOLUNTEER WORKERS,
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 7160, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “The Barangay Reform Act of 2015.”

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared policy of the state to empower and strengthen our Barangay Officials and Barangay Volunteer Workers in order to sufficiently provide front line government services to the Filipino people in the barangay level. The State acknowledges the need to provide for the financial burden of rendering service and the need to properly compensate and capacitate Barangay Officials and Volunteers. Furthermore, the State recognizes the need to ensure continuity of programs, projects and services of each barangay in order to effectively benefit our people.

Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following shall mean:

- a) *Barangay Health Worker (BHW)* shall refer to a person who has undergone training programs under any accredited government and non-government organization and who voluntarily renders primary health care services in the community after having been accredited to function as such by the local health board in accordance with the guidelines promulgated by the Department of Health (DOH); and
- b) *Barangay Tanod* shall refer to all duly appointed members of the barangay tanod brigades, which shall number not more than twenty (20) in each barangay as prescribed by Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991.

Sec 4. *Honorarium of BHWs and Barangay Tanods.* – In order to ease the financial burden on our barangay officials and volunteers, the following benefits shall be given by the National Government for services rendered by the following Barangay Workers:

- a) One (1) BHW in each Barangay shall receive a monthly honorarium of, not less than, Five Hundred (500) pesos from the Department of Health.
- b) At least twenty Tanods, in each barangay, shall receive a monthly honorarium of, not less than, Five Hundred (500) pesos from the Department of Interior and Local Government

The Barangays may choose to give additional honorarium to the aforementioned volunteers. *Provided*, that such additional honorarium shall be charged against the local budgets of each barangay. *Provided further*, that Barangays shall ensure that all BHWs receive the same honorarium.

Sec 5. Capacity Building for Barangay Officials and Volunteer Workers – In addition to financial benefits, the National Government shall provide the following to Barangay Officials and Volunteer Workers:

- a) Training and workshops on how to effectively exercise their duty provided by the Department of Interior and Local Government for Tanods and Department of Health for BHWs, and any other such training fit for Barangay Officials and Volunteer Workers.
- b) PhilHealth coverage for BHWs, which shall include medical examination and treatment in government hospitals, and fully subsidized by the National Government through the Department of Health. *Provided*, that indigent barangay volunteers shall be covered through the full national government subsidy scheme.
- c) Free legal services from government lawyers or the Public Attorney's Office for cases arising from acts committed in the performance of duty. *Provided*, that such legal services shall continue, even after the expiration of the term of the Barangay volunteer, until its final disposition.

Sec 6. Continuity of Barangay Services – In order to ensure the continuity of Barangay Services, the term of office of all elected barangay officials after the effectivity of this Act shall be five (5) years.

No barangay elective official shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same position.

The power of the Department of Interior and Local Government regarding suspension, removal, recall, and other disciplinary actions against offending Barangay Official, as prescribed by Republic Act 7160 otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, shall be in full force and effect in this Act.

Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The Department of the Interior and Local Government, in consultation with the National Liga ng mga Barangay, Department of Health, and the Commission on Elections, shall issue the rules and regulations to implement this Act within ninety (90) days after its approval.

Sec. 8. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

Sec. 9. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances or portion thereof, as well as rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 10. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,