

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH (17th) CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7039



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Public Transportation is an important part of every community. It enables people to get to work, go to school, to visit friends, and to attend in their other day-to-day activities. For a developing country like the Philippines, public transportation becomes all the more important because majority of its people belong to the middle class who are not easily able to afford a car or vehicle of their own. Public Transportation is a necessity that a typical Filipino's cannot possible live without, and therefore, it has always been a priority of the government to ensure that the public are able to access the same.

On the national level, public transportation supports our country's goals and our national policies, including reducing our dependence on foreign oil, among others. On an individual level, public transportation basically saves money – and to an ordinary middle-class Filipino commuter, such saving – no matter how minimal - has a significant impact on his/her life and his/her family.

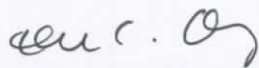
Indeed, the public transportation system is a crucial part of the lives of the Filipino people. In the Philippines, roughly seventy percent (70%) of the population does not own a car; And in Metro Manila alone – where a total of 12.8 million people reside as per the 2015 Census - commuting or travel by public transportation constitutes 69% of the total number of trips taken daily, with buses and jeeps accounting for 71% of these trips.¹

¹Data culled from a study conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

In light of this, a national strike by public utility jeepneys and/or buses will definitely take its toll on the public commuters. While we recognize the right of our jeepney and bus operators, drivers and their respective associations to strike, assemble and even petition or object to the plans of the government concerning or affecting their livelihood, it cannot be denied that it is ultimately the public at large that experiences great inconvenience as a result of the national strike.

One of the most affected groups/sectors by the national transport strike is the students. As students mostly rely on their parents/family to provide their allowance for their day to day sustenance, they are greatly affected by the conduct of national transport strike. Students, in general, cannot afford to ride taxi cabs or privately hired vehicles like Uber or Grab. They rely mostly on public utility jeepneys and buses to go to school and then home as these vehicles have proven to be the most economical and budget-friendly. A national PUJ and/or PUB transport strike therefore poses an extreme inconvenience to the students. The absences of these vehicles could paralyze them and could negatively impact their access to education, even if just for a day. Simply put, the absence of the middle-class Filipino students' essential transportation will make them miss their classes albeit beyond their fault.

Thus, as a countermeasure, this Act shall be enacted to make sure that this vulnerable group of commuters will be spared of the great inconvenience that ensues from a national public transportation strike. It will also ensure that students who do not own a private car nor can afford more expensive rides like taxi cabs, Uber or Grab – will not miss an opportunity to learn in school, and lag behind those who are better-off financially.


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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE AUTOMATIC SUSPENSION OF CLASSES
FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN ALL LEVELS IN CASE OF
NATIONWIDE STRIKE OF PUBLIC UTILITY JEEPNEYS AND/OR PUBLIC
UTILITY BUSES**

Section 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as Automatic Class Suspension During PUJ/PUB Nationwide Strike Act of 2017.

Section 2. Coverage. This Act shall apply to all schools and educational institutions, public or private, and covers all levels including preschool, elementary, high school, college and graduate level.

Section 3. Definition of Terms

Public Utility Vehicle- A public utility is a business or service, which may be publicly or privately owned, engaged in supplying the public generally with transportation.

Public Utility Jeepney (PUJ) – is a jeepney operating as a public utility vehicle. For purposes of this Act, it shall include or cover the entire Public Utility Jeepney Transportation System.

Public Utility Bus (PUB) – is a bus operating as a public utility vehicle. For purposes of this Act, it shall include or cover the entire Public Utility Bus Transportation System

National PUJs/PUBs Strike - A national PUJs/PUBs strike is a strike action in which a substantial proportion of the total PUJ/PUB Transportation System (i.e. drivers and/or operators) in a city, region, or country participate, and the absence of which could render extreme inconvenience to the public who rely on these mass transportation systems to carry out their day to day activities.

School – any institution at which instruction is given in a particular discipline. It shall pertain both to formal and informal educational institutions, and shall include colleges and universities. Provided, that these institutions are regulated/supervised either by the Department of Education or the Commission on Higher Education.

Section 4. Automatic Suspension – Classes at all levels shall be automatically suspended during a national PUJ and/or PUB strike. Provided, that only the schools located in the city, region or the entire country affected by the national strike on the day of a scheduled national strike of public utility jeepneys or buses, shall be covered by the automatic suspension.

Section 5. Extension and Lifting of Automatic Suspension – The class suspension shall automatically extend while the said national strike persists, and shall be automatically lifted the day after the scheduled national strike.

Section 6. Declaration of Affected Areas – The Office of the President shall officially identify the city and/or regions that will be affected by the scheduled national strike in order to identify which schools will be covered by

the automatic suspension. Upon declaration thereof, the classes in schools and other educational institutions as defined in this Act, and which are located in such affected city/cities and/or region/regions shall automatically be suspended on the day of the national strike and until such strike lasts.

Section 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, letters of instructions, executive orders, rules and regulations insofar as they are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or amended as the case may be.

Section 8. Separability Clause. - In the event that any provision of this Act or any portion thereof is declared unconstitutional by a competent court, the other provisions shall not be affected thereby and shall remain valid and enforceable.

Section 9. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

APPROVED.