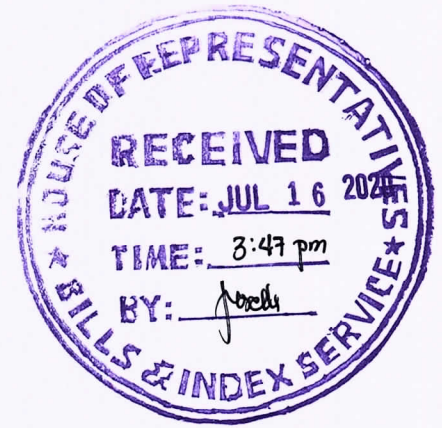


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7109



Introduced by Representative Ron P. Salo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

"Lahat po sila ay bayani and not only that, talagang bumilib ako. Bihira akong sumasaludo ng tao pero 'pag mga doktor natin, mga health workers na nadisgrasya, talagang saludo ako sa inyo."

– President Rodrigo Roa Duterte

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the world's most catastrophic events in recent history. As of July 16, 2020, the total infection worldwide has already reached 13,694,593, with the confirmed deaths caused by the virus at 586,845. Locally, the total number of cases already reached 58,850 while the total deaths reaching 1,614. With these numbers continuing to rise, the burden on our frontliners remain unabated.

Notwithstanding the danger of exposure and the possible infection with this deadly virus, our frontliners braved the raging storm in order to fulfil their sworn duty to their profession and to the people they serve. As early as June 4, 2020, the Department of Health (DOH) already confirmed a total of 2,703 healthcare workers who have been infected with COVID-19, with 32 succumbing to the disease.

Even until the very end, these courageous and dedicated frontliners, bravely held the line despite the clear and imminent risk to their own health and lives. As John 15:13 perfectly describes such selfless act, *"No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."*

To better address the health crisis and in order to recognize the heroism of our frontliners, Congress passed R.A. 11469 or the "Bayanihan to Heal as One Act," which provides, among others, the grant of Php 100,000.00 compensation for medical frontliners who contracted a severe form of the disease, and Php

1,000,000.00 to the family of any health worker who has died while fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is respectfully proposed in this legislative measure that the State, among others, shall erect a national monument that will commemorate the heroism of our frontliners. The said monument will also serve as a constant reminder to all of us, of how our frontliners – from our healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, medical technologists, and other allied health professionals) to military and police personnel, civil servants, media practitioners, religious leaders (such as priests, pastors, and imams), selflessly performed their duties to serve and bring hope to the people. As Bob Riley, the former governor of Alabama once said, *“Hard times don’t create heroes. It is during the hard times when the ‘hero’ within us is revealed.”* Indeed, this unprecedented crisis has awakened the hero within every Filipino frontliner.

To our medical and non-medical frontliners who tirelessly serve even in the face of great peril, this legislative measure is our small way of giving back to you and your families, the recognition that each of you well deserves.

The Filipino people are eternally grateful to each and every one of you for your sacrifices!

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


RON P. SALO
KABAYAN Party List

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AN ACT

COMMEMORATING THE HEROISM OF FRONTLINE WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ERECTING A MONUMENT TO BE KNOWN AS THE “BANTAYOG NG MGA BAYANING FRONTLINERS” AND OBSERVING A “NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING AND REMEMBRANCE” EVERY YEAR FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SEC. 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Frontliners Commemoration Act”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy – The State recognizes the invaluable contribution of the frontliners who responded and heeded the call of duty during the COVID-19 health emergency. To this end, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to:

- (a) To inspire Filipinos on the heroism of ordinary men and women who rose to the occasion and who willingly and valiantly performed their duties in the service of their countrymen despite the clear and imminent danger to their own health and safety;
- (b) To memorialize their acts of heroism so that the present and future generations will always remember their selfless sacrifices; and
- (c) To give appropriate recognition, both tangible and intangible, to their acts of heroism during the time of health emergency.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.

- (a) Medical Frontline Heroes – refer to public and private health workers during the COVID-19 pandemic who succumbed to

the virus while in the performance of their duties, or while rendering medical assistance to save or protect people from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This shall include doctors, nurses, medical technologists, nursing aides, and other allied health professionals.

- (b) Non-medical Frontline Heroes – refer to non-medical personnel who rendered essential goods and services during the COVID-19 pandemic, and who succumbed to the virus while performing their duties, or while rendering assistance to save or protect people from the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. This shall include, but not limited to, the social workers, barangay health workers, barangay tanods, military and police personnel, soldiers, civil servants, elected and appointed officials, volunteers, food and supply workers, security guards, delivery personnel, janitors, religious leaders such as priests, pastors, and imams, media practitioners, and other individuals and professionals who have rendered services during the COVID-19 health emergency.
- (c) *Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners* – refers to the structure erected as a memorial to the frontliners, both medical and non-medical.
- (d) National Day of Mourning and Remembrance – refers to the annual commemoration of the heroism of all frontliners who have died in the line of duty during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (e) Essential Goods and Services – cover health and social services to secure the safety and well-being of persons, such as but not limited to, food, water, medicine, medical services, public utilities, energy, and telecommunications services. This shall also include spiritual needs and news and information.

SEC. 4. Construction of the Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners. –

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCAA), as the prime government agency that safeguards, develops, and promotes Filipino culture, shall erect a National Monument to be called *Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners* to serve as a memorial for the heroism of COVID-19 frontliners, both medical and non-medical frontline heroes, who succumbed to the virus.

The names of all COVID-19 heroes shall be inscribed in the Monument.

The Monument shall be inaugurated during the National Day of Mourning and Remembrance.

SEC. 5. Design, Location and Construction of the Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners. – The NCAA shall:

- (a) Determine the appropriate location where the Monument shall be erected, in coordination with the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA);

- (b) Prepare the design of the Monument, in coordination with the national artists for architecture and landscape, sculpture and visual arts; and
- (c) Undertake the construction of the Monument, in coordination with the Department of Public Works and Highways and other relevant agencies of the government.

SEC. 6. Selection Committee. – There shall be established a Selection Committee composed of nine (9) members, to be Chaired by the Chairman of the NCCA, and the Secretary of the Department of Health, Secretary of Education, Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission and representatives from the medical professional organizations, religious sector, media organizations, volunteer groups and business sector, as members. The representatives from the private sectors shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines from the nominees submitted by their respective sectors or groups.

The members of the Selection Committee shall be entitled to per diem allowances pursuant to the guidelines of the Department of Budget and Management.

SEC. 7. Functions of the Selection Committee. – The Selection Committee shall set the Guidelines for Nomination and Selection of the Frontline Heroes, whose names shall be engraved in the *Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners*. The selection process shall be transparent and open to the public.

SEC. 8. Certificate of Heroism. – The Chair of the NCCA shall issue a Certificate of Heroism to the immediate family of the frontline heroes in a ceremony held for the purpose.

SEC. 9. National Day of Mourning and Remembrance. – The NCCA shall determine the appropriate date for the yearly commemoration of the heroism of all frontliners who have died during the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purpose of this Act, such day shall be referred to as the National Day of Mourning and Remembrance, which will be a special working holiday.

The NCAA shall conduct a program at the *Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners* every year during the National Day of Mourning and Remembrance to commemorate their heroism.

SEC. 10. Commemoration in Educational Institutions. – The National Day of Mourning and Remembrance shall form part of the calendar of activities for both basic and higher educational institutions. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are mandated to undertake commemorative activities and programs in schools, colleges, and universities.

Both the DepEd and the CHED shall prepare literatures on the heroism of the frontliners during the COVID-19 pandemic to inspire students and the general public.

SEC. 11. Commemoration in All Government Offices. – All government offices shall conduct a commemorative program on the heroism of the frontliners during the National Day of Mourning and Remembrance.

SEC. 12. Scholarship Grant and Financial Assistance to the Children of the Frontline Heroes. – The Commission and Higher Education shall extend scholarship grant and financial assistance to the children of the Frontline Heroes in any State Universities or Colleges where they will be accepted to enable them complete their baccalaureate degree.

SEC. 13. Appropriation. – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the NCAA.

SEC. 14. Separability Clause. – If any provision or portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not thereby affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 15. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, ordinances, rules, regulations, or other issuances, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, and/or modified accordingly.

SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The NCCA, together with the Department of Health, Civil Service Commission, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, such as the various medical societies, religious organizations, media organizations, volunteer groups, and the various business groups, shall issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 17. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.