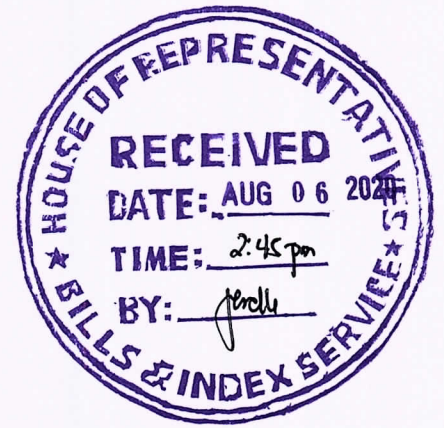




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7310

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE JOSE "BONG" J. TEVES, JR.

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING BALIK PROBINSYA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FUND
PROGRAM TO AID THE PROVINCIAL, CITY, AND MUNICIPAL
GOVERNMENT UNITS, PRIORITIZING THEREFOR THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH,
AND SIXTH CLASS MUNICIPALITIES, FOR PURPOSE COVID-19 RELIEF
ASSISTANCE AND BALACING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Amidst the health crisis and with the disturbing and consistent increase of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines, our country's economy continues to suffer, thousands of Filipinos have lost their livelihoods in the National Capital Region (NCR) and other metropolis as a result thereof. Many victims of the current economic crisis due to the pandemic are from the province who tried their luck in the NCR hoping for a better future. However, since the pandemic ensued, many of them are now jobless, striving daily to make the ends meet, and now wants to return to their respective provinces.

This proposed measure seeks to assist the local government units in welcoming locally stranded individuals returning to their respective provinces. This proposed bill shall assist the local government units, such as provinces, cities, and municipalities, especially those belonging to third to sixth class, in establishing health protocols such as but not limited to swab testing, acquisition of personal protective equipment, in preparation for the returning individuals to prevent the spread of COVID-19 disease in their respective localities.

Aside from establishment of health protocols, this shall also enable the local government units to provide livelihood assistance to those returning individuals to ensure economic growth in the countryside and balancing regional and provincial development.

Considering the risk of infection and to ensure the safety of all the parties concerned, returning individuals shall undergo the necessary health protocols to further prevent the spread of the COVID-19 in the provinces. This shall provide a peace of mind to those provinces welcoming back their respective *kababayans*.

This shall be of great help to local government units especially those which have no capabilities in addressing the health protocol concerns to those locally stranded individuals returning to their provinces due to limited source of revenue and to provide a new start or capital for the livelihood of their returning *kababayans*.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bong L. Teves', is written over a large, hand-drawn circle.

REP. JOSE "BONG" L. TEVES, JR.
TGP Partylist



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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “Balik Probinsya Financial Assistance Fund to LGUs Act of 2020”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The Constitution requires that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. Likewise, the State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.

SECTION 3. *Purpose and Coverage.* – This Act shall cover all local government units, such as provinces, cities, and municipalities, especially the third to sixth class municipalities.

The purpose thereof is to provide support to said local government units in the form of financial assistance in combating the spread of COVID-19 disease in their respective provinces, and providing financial livelihood assistance to returning individuals.

Further, the fund shall be utilized by the local government units to finance the implementation of the following programs and activities, in addressing their concerns about returning locally stranded individuals, to wit:

- a) Acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment for health care workers;
- b) Swab-testing/ Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for returning individuals;
- c) Financial livelihood assistance to returning individuals;
- d) Provision of food and water to returning individuals billeted in quarantine facilities;
- e) Other health and economic related activities in connection with returning individuals similar to the abovementioned activities.

SECTION 4. *Expenditures Not Covered.* - No amount shall be disbursed to expenses that are not related in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 disease in the countryside, and inconsistent with Section 3 of this Act, such as:

- a) Unnecessary administrative expenses;
- b) Travelling expenses of LGU officials whether domestic or international;
- c) And other expenses not related to the purpose of this Act.

SECTION 5. *Balik Probinsya Financial Assistance Fund.* - The amount fifty billion pesos (Php. 50,000,000,000.00) shall be appropriated as Balik Probinsya Financial Assistance Fund to carry out the purpose of this Act.

The funds necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be sourced from the loans granted by international monetary institutions to the Philippines for COVID-19 relief, and shall be augmented by the appropriations from the Department of Social Welfare and Development as provided in Republic Act No. 11260 and Republic Act No. 11465, otherwise known as the General Appropriations Act for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 respectively, and Republic Act No. 11469, otherwise known as the Bayanihan To Heal As One Act. For subsequent years and in case of insufficiency of available funds, Congress shall increase the amount allocate for this Act through a supplemental budget or through the annual general appropriations.

SECTION 6. *Role of the Department of Budget and Management.* - The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall make available the funds to the local government units fifteen (15) days after the effectivity of this Act.

The DBM shall formulate an equitable distribution of funds to the local government units; provided, that third, fourth, fifth, and sixth class municipalities shall be prioritized and shall be granted with higher subsidy compared to other local government units.

SECTION 7. *Role of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.* - The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall provide livelihood and skills education program to locally stranded individuals returning to their respective provinces under this Act. Such livelihood and skills education program shall include among others:

- a) Agriculture and Fishery Courses
- b) Electronics and Electrical Courses
- c) Computer Related and Software Courses
- d) Building Construction and Welding Courses
- e) Entrepreneurship and Management Courses
- f) Industrial and Manufacturing Courses

SECTION 8. *Role of the Department of Health.* - The Department of Health (DOH) shall ensure that returning individuals under this Act shall undergo a

mandatory real time Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test to detect the presence of COVID-19 anti-bodies in their system.

Whenever the beneficiary is tested negative of COVID-19, he or she shall be allowed to return to his or her respective province and shall be qualified as beneficiary of the livelihood assistance under this Act; otherwise, he or she shall undergo the necessary health protocols such as undergo quarantine period as mandated by the DOH at the place of origin.

SECTION 9. *Role of Local Government Units.* – The LGUs shall impose their respective health and safety precautions such as the mandatory quarantine to persons entering their respective territorial jurisdictions and swab testing.

The LGUs shall, aside from health protocols, provide financial livelihood assistance to those returning individuals in order to provide them a fresh start in the province and to strengthen economic growth in the countryside amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The LGUs shall also submit to Congress a detailed report on the implementation of this Act, which includes but not limited to the following information:

- a) Number of returning individuals;
- b) Number of tested returning individuals and the results thereof;
- c) Livelihood assistance provided to returning individuals;
- d) Disbursement of fund under this Act.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The DBM, DOH, TESDA, Bagong Pag-Asa Council, in consultation with the LGUs, shall issue the necessary Implementing Rules and Regulations within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, superseded or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.* - Any portion of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof, as long as such remaining provisions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation

Approved,