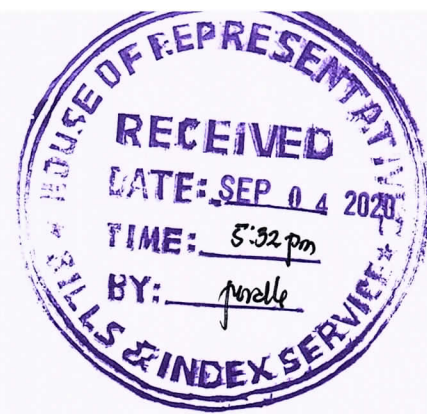


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7583



Introduced by **HON. JOY MYRA S. TAMBUNTING**

AN ACT GRANTING BENEFITS TO MEDICAL WORKERS, PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND ADVANCING THE WELFARE OF MEDICAL FRONTLINERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The crisis caused by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented in modern history.¹ Government lockdowns here and abroad have caused the highest unemployment numbers since the Great Depression.² Businesses across the country have been forced to temporarily or permanently lay-off their workers.³ Millions of Filipinos are struggling to put food on the table while government programs to address the real danger of hunger turn out to be lacking.⁴ As of April 2020, the unemployment rate in the Philippines is at 17.7 percent, higher than the 10.3% unemployment rate recorded in the 1998 recession, while the labor force participation rate is at 55.6%, the lowest in the history of the Philippine Labor Market.⁵ Government offices whose primary mandate is to protect the rights of labor from abuse by management were forced to close down due to the pandemic.⁶ Even before the crisis, Filipino workers were already among the most unprotected in the world⁷ yet it seems a crisis has forced workers to take even a greater blow. Labor is left without a voice as both the

¹ Gita Gopinath, *The Great Lockdown: Worst Economic Downturn Since the Great Depression*, IMFBlog (2020) available at <https://blogs.imf.org/2020/04/14/the-great-lockdown-worst-economic-downturn-since-the-great-depression/>

² Andrew Soergel, *Unemployment Highest Since Great Depression as Coronavirus Collapses Labor Market* U.S. News & World Report (2020) available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2020-05-08/unemployment-highest-since-great-depression-as-coronavirus-collapses-labor-market>

³ ABS-CBN News Report, *Over 2,000 companies declared permanent closure, redundancy or retrenchment: DOLE* (2020), ABS-CBN News Online (2020) available at <https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/business/06/09/20/over-2000-companies-declared-permanent-closure-redundancy-or-retrenchment-dole>

⁴ Michael Beltran, *The Philippines' Pandemic Response: A Tragedy of Errors*, The Diplomat (2020) available at <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/the-philippines-pandemic-response-a-tragedy-of-errors/>

⁵ Statement of Secretary Silvestre H. Bello III on the April Labor Force Survey, Department of Labor and Employment (2020) available at <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/statement-of-secretary-silvestre-h-bello-iii-on-the-april-labor-force-survey/>

⁶ NLRC COVID-19 Advisory No. 5 (2020)

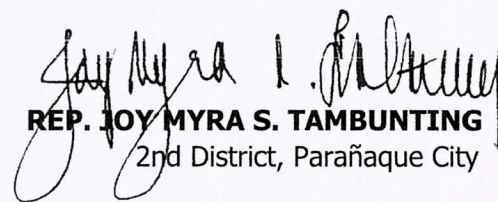
⁷ International Trade Union Confederation, *The 2019 Global Rights Index: The World's Worst Countries for Workers* (2019), available at <https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/2019-06-ituc-global-rights-index-2019-report-en-2.pdf>

government and their employers claim to be fellow victims of the crisis. Filipinos have been stripped of their dignity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives forever. Thousands of our countrymen have fallen ill while millions are going hungry. The suffering is unimaginable. We have the responsibility in Congress to ensure this suffering is mitigated.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a war of sorts. It is a war against disease. It is a war against hunger. This bill seeks to ensure our soldiers in this war, our medical frontliners, are given the benefits they deserve. We must take care of our medical frontliners if they are too effectively take care of the sick among us. In spite of the economic crisis the world is facing, the welfare of our medical frontliners must be protected.

On behalf of the people of Parañaque City's Second District, and for the common good of the Filipino people, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



REP. JOY MYRA S. TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Frontline Medical Workers Benefits and Welfare Act".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy and Coverage. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure the welfare of medical workers in recognition of their indispensable role in the healthcare system of our country, particularly in times of a pandemic or public health emergency. The provisions and benefits of this Act shall be given to public and private medical workers who are actively engaged in treating patients affected by a pandemic or national health emergency. The provisions of this Act shall only apply during a pandemic or public health emergency as declared by the National Government.

SECTION 3. Benefits for Medical Workers. – The following benefits shall be provided to medical workers:

1. A monthly allowance of Ten Thousand Pesos (PhP 10,000.00) for every month of the pandemic or public health emergency;
2. A food allowance of Three Thousand Pesos (PhP 3,000.00) for every month of the pandemic or public health emergency;
3. A personal protective equipment allowance of Two Thousand Pesos (PhP 2,000.00) for every month of the pandemic or public health emergency ;
4. A transportation allowance of Two Thousand Pesos (PhP 2,000.00) for every month of the pandemic or public health emergency ;
5. Free lifetime yearly vaccination from influenza, pneumonia, and other diseases to be determined by the Department of Health for the medical workers and their respective immediate families;
6. Free lifetime access to mental health services to be provided by the government; and
7. Free hospitalization in all government hospitals for 10 years from the end of the pandemic or public health emergency for the medical workers and their respective immediate families.

SECTION 4. Separability Clause. – If any provisions or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 5. Repealing Clause. – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 6. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,