

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8045



Introduced by Representative Roman T. Romulo

Explanatory Note

It is stated in our Constitution that the arts and letters shall enjoy the patronage of the State. Towards this end the State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations. The State shall also promote the moral and intellectual well-being of the people; elevate the literacy level of every Filipino; and recognize the vital role of knowledge and information in nation-building.

In this light, this bill seeks to establish the Charter of the National Library of the Philippines. The National Library of the Philippines, as it is known today, dates back to August 12, 1887, where its precursor, the Museo-Biblioteca de Filipinas, was established through a royal decree. Throughout the decades, it has been operating without an original charter. Various laws were enacted which only touched upon the nomenclature of the National Library. Evidently, there exists a need for the enactment of a law which will define the functions and structure of the National Library of the Philippines to be able to serve the demands of our rich history and our people.

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) define a public library as *“an organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic, employment status and educational attainment”* (Gill, 2001). It exists to serve communities. It is a *“democratic equalizer, open to all and providing access to information that helps people improve their individual, family, and community lives* (Scott, 2011).” In many jurisdictions, public library services contribute to youth development, community health, agriculture, and community and economic well-being. Aptly put, the IFLA UNESCO Public Manifesto says: *“The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups”* (Elbert and Atuti, 2011).

The National Library of the Philippines (NLP) is the official repository of the printed and recorded cultural heritage of the country and other intellectual, literary, and information sources. It is only right that the State endeavors to continuously develop and enhance its library facilities, relevant library resources, and dynamic services that contribute to the intellectual, social, and cultural development of the Filipino society.

This bill effectively addresses the realities that have plagued the NLP for decades such as the small fund allocation for public libraries, the lack of public librarians, lack of infrastructures and facilities, as well as learning resources. This representation believes that the development of the NLP, as an integral institution for lifelong learning, as well as the 1,455 public libraries it currently assists and the 40,000 public libraries which are yet to be established and affiliated with the NLP, are intricately linked to the economic, social, and educational development of our country.¹ Through this measure, we are assured that our libraries will not merely build

¹ Status of Philippine Public Libraries & Librarianship. 2018

collections or services. Rather, the libraries that we will establish will effectively build communities. Our support only serves to benefit the millions of Filipinos across the country.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of the proposed measure is earnestly requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Romulo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

ROMAN T. ROMULO

Lone District, Pasig City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8045

Introduced by Representative Roman T. Romulo

AN ACT

**INSTITUTING THE CHARTER OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THE
PHILIPPINES, DEFINING ITS OBJECTIVES, POWERS, AND FUNCTIONS,
REPEALING FOR THIS PURPOSE ACT NOS. 222, 1849, 1935, 2572, 3477, EXECUTIVE
ORDER 94, and REPUBLIC ACT NOS. 3873, 10087, and 7743**

*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 "*THE CHARTER OF THE NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF THE PHILIPPINES.*"

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby declared a policy of the State that the arts and
letters shall enjoy the patronage of the State. The State shall conserve, promote, and popularize

the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations. The State shall also promote the moral and intellectual well-being of the people: elevate the literacy level of every Filipino; and recognize the vital role of knowledge and information in nation-building.

Towards this end, the State shall establish The National Library of the Philippines as the official repository of the printed and recorded cultural heritage of the country and other intellectual, literary, and information sources. The State shall endeavor to continuously develop and enhance its library facilities, relevant library resources, and dynamic services that contribute to the intellectual, social, and cultural development of the Filipino society.

The National Library of the Philippines shall also manage, maintain, and support the provincial, city, and municipal libraries, as well as the barangay reading centers, as provided in this Act.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of a National Library of the Philippines.* - There is hereby established a National Library of the Philippines (NLP). The NLP shall be the repository of the printed and recorded cultural heritage of the country and other intellectual literary and information sources. It shall continue to provide access to these resources for our people's intellectual growth, citizenship building, life-long learning, and enlightenment.

It shall be an independent agency attached to the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) for budgetary purposes.

SEC. 4. *Purposes and Objectives of the NLP.* - The NLP shall have the following purposes and objectives:

- (a) To acquire and preserve books, papers, documents, and periodicals of every kind or class, as well as Filipiniana materials through various methods of acquisition such as purchase, donations, bequests, transfers of property, money, or books for the use of the NLP;
- (b) To provide for an efficient online access to the different information resources and national bibliographic services of the NLP and the Philippine eLib;

- (c) To be the lead organization in promoting digital library services online, especially in the field of publishing works online;
- (d) To establish and develop, in cooperation with the local government units, a system of public libraries and information centers throughout the country;
- (e) To promote, establish, and maintain national and international standards in library and information services;
- (f) To conduct continuing research on Philippine librarianship;
- (g) To conduct training and assessment of the basics and standards of library practice such as the maintenance of accession records and list of collections;
- (h) To promote and collaborate with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to include programs in library science and related courses to ensure the increase in number of course takers who can be fielded or employed in public libraries.
- (i) To undertake related cultural activities under the provisions of Republic Act No. 10066, or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, which states that *"the National Library of the Philippines shall be responsible for rare and significant contemporary Philippine books, manuscripts such as, but not limited to, presidential papers, periodicals, newspapers, singly or in collection, and libraries and electronic records"*;
- (j) To become an institute of lifelong learning;
- (k) To ensure the continuity of funding for the special tasks carried out in libraries and centralized services;
- (l) To uphold national pride by maintaining and preserving written history on behalf of the government who is responsible for this obligation;
- (m) To collect reasonable fees to those who will avail any of its services, such as entrance fees for the use of its reading rooms, admission fees for its cultural activities, among others; and
- (n) To solicit and/or receive for and on behalf of the government, donations, grants, bequests and the like, in relation to the NLP.

SEC. 5. ***Functions of the NLP*** - The NLP shall have the following functions:

- (a) Exercise general supervision over public libraries and develop a minimum standard of operations for all public libraries to follow which shall be the basis for the evaluation of the performance of the public libraries;
- (b) Provide the initial allocation of materials to newly-affiliated public libraries;
- (c) Continue to supply public libraries with other resources not included in the initial allocation;
- (d) Invest in the development and introduction of innovative library services; and
- (e) Perform such other functions that may be provided by law or in pursuant to the purposes and objectives of the NLP.

SEC. 6. ***Board of Advisers.*** - There shall be constituted a Board of Advisers which shall meet with the Management of the NLP at least twice a year to assist it in aligning its policies and plans with the cultural, political and socioeconomic development needs of the nation and with the demands of world-class resources of information.

The Board of Advisers shall be composed of the following:

- (a) the Chairperson of the NCCA as chairperson;
- (b) the Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd), as co-chairperson;
- (c) the Chairperson of the CHED;
- (d) the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
- (e) the Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- (f) the President of the Philippine Librarian Association, Inc. (PLAI); and
- (g) the Commissioner of the NLP

Sec. 7. ***Management of the NLP.*** - The Management of the NLP shall be composed of three (3) members. The Commissioner and two (2) Deputy Commissioners for Operations and Administration, respectively. The Commissioner and the two (2) Deputy Commissioners shall be

appointed by the President of the Philippines for a fixed term of six (6) years. Vacancies in the Commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

The Commissioner must be at least thirty-five (35) years of age and of good moral character, unquestionable integrity and known probity. Furthermore, the Commissioner must have a master's degree, 120 hours of managerial training for the last five years, five years of supervisory experience, Career Service Executive or Career Executive Service eligible, and the Commissioner must be a licensed librarian and a recognized expert in the field of information and library science. The Commissioner shall enjoy the benefits, privileges and emoluments equivalent to the rank of Undersecretary.

The Deputy Commissioners must be licensed librarians and recognized experts in the field of information and library science. The Deputy Commissioners shall enjoy the benefits, privileges and emoluments equivalent to the rank of Assistant Secretary.

SEC. 7. *Powers and Functions of the Commissioner.* — The management of the NLP shall be vested in the Commissioner who shall have the following powers and duties:

- (a) Serve as Chief Executive Officer of NLP, and directly manage, direct, and supervise its day-to-day operations and internal administration;
- (b) Sign all agreements and contracts entered into for and in behalf of the NLP, such as, but not limited to, deeds of sale or donation for the acquisition of books and other Filipiniana materials, contracts for consultation services, and memoranda of agreement;
- (c) Approve and authorize registration and issuance of copyright;
- (d) Establish policies, standards, and guidelines related to the operation of the NLP and the maintenance of the NLP system;
- (e) Formulate and implement reasonable rules and regulations;
- (f) Execute orders and directives from the NLP Board of Advisers;
- (g) Appoint NLP personnel whose appointments are not vested in the President, and discipline them according to Civil Service Rules;
- (h) Direct the preparation of annual reports and budget;
- (i) Represent NLP before any government office; and

- (j) Exercise such other powers as may be necessary in the performance of his duties and which may be vested to the Commissioner by law, rule or regulation.

SEC. 8. *Powers and Functions of the Deputy Commissioner.* — The Deputy Commissioners shall assist the Commissioner and shall have the following functions and duties:

- (a) Assist the Commissioner in planning, directing, supervising, and coordinating the functions of the NLP;
- (b) Assist in the formulation of policies and program activities of the office;
- (c) Assist in organizing and directing the program of activities of the office as well as the application of procedures and standards;
- (d) Supervise the preparation of periodic and special reports; and
- (e) Act for the Commissioner in case of temporary incapacity or absence, subject to the provisions of Section 9 of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Power to Delegate.* — the Commissioner may, by an instrument in writing, delegate any function under this Act, subject to conditions, limitations or restrictions as may be decided upon, to a person or class of persons who may perform those functions in the same manner and with the same effect as if those functions had been conferred on them under this Act, subject to the provision of Sec. 40, Chapter 8, Book IV of Executive Order No. 292.

SEC. 10. *Administrative Divisions of The National Library of the Philippines.* — The Administration of the NLP shall be divided into 12 Subdivisions, each headed by a Division Chief who must be a licensed librarian, as follows:

- (a) Readers Services Division (RSD) shall provide information, reference, and research services and resources to library users, and shall maintain reading room services for said purpose. It shall maintain and preserve foreign library materials as well as select and recommend which library materials shall be acquired by NLP.
- (b) Copyright Division (CD) shall implement the provisions of Republic Act No. 8293 as amended, otherwise known as the Intellectual Property Code which is a) to receive

registration of literary and artistic works and deposit with the NLP and the Supreme Court Library (SCL) for the purpose of completing the records of the NLP under the SCL; b) assign an exclusive license upon registration; c) receive the written instrument which names the person or persons to be charged with the posthumous enforcements of these rights; and, d) the power to determine and collect such fees for the discharge of services under the Act.

- (c) Special Services Division (SSD) shall ensure that the facilities are accessible for all. It shall: a) assist persons with disabilities and senior citizens in accessing various information; b) maintain and organize Braille, LP, and audio tapes; c) transcribe print to Braille and convert reference books to audio tapes; d) prepare guides to collections for persons with disabilities; and e) undertake such other functions as may be necessary to cater to persons with disabilities and senior citizens.
- (d) Technical Services Division (TSD) shall be responsible with the organization of printed materials with regard to its technical aspects, including, but not limited to bibliographic services, cataloguing, and other related services.
- (e) Human Resource Management Division (HRMD) shall be responsible for the selection, hiring, appointment, transfer, promotion, or dismissal of personnel. Such system shall aim to establish professionalism and excellence at all levels of the NLP in accordance with sound principles of management;
- (f) Finance and Administrative Division (FAD) shall implement and execute the policies laid down by the Commissioner relative to the organization, operation, and functions of the library. It shall coordinate the activities of the various divisions with respect to administrative and support services.
- (g) Information Technology Division (ITD) shall be responsible for the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) geared towards the improvement of delivery of information and mandated services as well as the improvement of the internal business processes of the NLP.
- (h) Public Libraries Division (PLD) shall implement the provisions of this law on the Public Library System, in cooperation with local government units. It shall be the primary liaison of the NLP with all public libraries in the country. It shall monitor and enforce the

minimum standards, qualifications, and services as stated in Section 11 of this Charter. It shall conduct training for public librarians and assist in the operation of public libraries.

- (i) Preservation and Conservation Division (PCD) shall be responsible for the conservation of the Library's paper-based special collections through activities including: conservation assessment, treatment, research, and housing; storage materials procurement and testing; environmental monitoring and analysis; exhibition, loan, and digitization evaluation and preparation; collections emergency management and response;
- (j) Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PPMED) shall provide planning standard guidelines for preparing the short, medium, and long term plans of the NLP; integrate central and regional plans for funding and investment proposals; provide a mechanism for monitoring physical and financial accomplishments; coordinate with different units and offices affiliated with the NLP the conduct of policy studies and review for effective, efficient and economical operations of the Library and generate reports for policy purposes; coordinate the installation and design of the NLP's central and regional management information system that will provide up-to-date information necessary for the management's policy formulation and decision-making functions; and coordinate the NLP's policy, planning, program development and information systems management activities with the appropriate offices of the NCCA to ensure coherence and consistency of the NLP's policies, plans and programs with the Commission's plans and programs.
- (k) External Affairs Division (EAD) shall be responsible for ensuring enhanced and more effective engagement of the NLP with the external community, and building partnerships to support the use of the NLP for development.
- (l) Public Online Library Division (POLD) shall manage the library's electronic resources: website, databases, e-books, and electronic periodicals. It shall collaborate with the Collection Development Section to evaluate and select new resources. It shall also monitor bibliographic management operations and the development of applications for public use in collaboration with the Information Technology Division.

Each Division Chief must be a licensed librarian and shall be appointed by the Management of the NLP. The Division Chief shall develop and implement plans and programs for the Division. The Division Chief shall also perform the following functions: a) assist in the formulation of library

policies, rules and regulations, b) administer library policies and implement rules and regulations to the division, c) submit reports and approve communications, d) issue certifications for legal purposes, and e) perform other duties that may be assigned by the Commissioner from time to time.

SEC. 8. ***Public Libraries in Local Government Units.*** — Public Libraries shall be a permanent institution in the organizational structure of Local Government Units (LGU). Such Public Library Office will function as the public library of the LGU and shall also exercise administrative functions similar to an office.

It shall have the following functions:

- (a) To make available to the members of the community reading materials of wide array, including reading materials prescribed by the DepEd, CHED, the NCCA, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) printed or digital materials endemic to the Local Government Units (LGU), national and local newspapers of general circulation and others;
- (b) To be used as a venue for audio-visual presentation in the community and other kinds of exhibitions and activities aimed at increasing the literacy rate by government agencies, nongovernmental organizations or private entities in the dissemination of information of general interest;
- (c) To partner with local libraries and schools; and
- (d) To offer such other related services in furtherance of this Act.

SEC. 10. ***Establishment of Provincial, City, and Municipal Libraries and Barangay Reading Centers.*** — Each province, city, and municipality shall establish provincial, city and municipal public libraries and barangay reading centers except in provinces, cities, or municipalities where there are existing public libraries or in barangays where there are existing reading centers: *Provided*, That the establishment of such libraries and reading centers shall be based on the development program of the NLP, taking in consideration the latest developments in

computer and electronic library technologies, in coordination with the development council of each city or municipality and in the case of the barangay reading centers, in coordination with the respective barangay councils: *Provided, Further,* That where these public libraries and reading centers already exist, the NLP shall continue to upgrade the facilities thereof with complete standard sets of books, e-books, online research resources and other materials as provided in Sec. 8 of this act as well as the latest electronic library system using computers for storing, cataloguing, and filing of data and materials: *Provided, finally,* that by the year 2022, all cities and municipalities of the Philippines shall be provided with an electronically operated library system.

The NLP shall continue to coordinate and organize seminars, workshops and other training for the professional benefit of librarians. The NLP shall strive to improve and maintain the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of all libraries in relation to the socio-economic development of their respective communities.

SEC 10. *Period of Establishment of Congressional, City, and Municipal Libraries and Barangay Reading Centers.* — The overall national plan of implementation shall cover initially a period of five (5) years: Congressional districts, cities, and municipalities with no existing public libraries, as well as barangays situated in remote, isolated and rural areas, shall have priority in the allocation of resources.

Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NLP, in consultation with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the DICT and the different local government units, shall come out with the list of priority areas, taking into account the commitment of the local government units in the establishment and maintenance of public libraries and barangay reading centers.

The NLP shall ensure that all sites for libraries and reading centers shall be equipped with the necessary facilities to fulfill its mandate. It shall provide continuous support and, in coordination with the implementing agencies, further develop and enhance all library facilities, relevant library resources, and dynamic services that contribute to the intellectual, social, and cultural development of the Filipino society.

SEC. 11. ***National Network of Libraries.*** – The NLP, as the central agency mandated to promote and establish national and international standards in library and information services, shall create a Quality Manual of Libraries of the Philippines which shall contain the minimum standards, qualifications, and services which must be performed by all libraries which will be affiliated, supervised, and supported by the NLP. It shall further create a National Registry of Libraries throughout the country which complies with the minimum standards, qualifications, and services as determined by the NLP for the Congressional, City, and Municipal Libraries, and Barangay Reading Centers, as the case may be, which have been set forth in the Quality Manual of Libraries of the Philippines. Each Public Library Office shall be headed by a licensed librarian and the staffing pattern shall be in compliance with and pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9246.

The NLP shall provide the standard set of reference books and other materials such as, but not limited to, encyclopedias, dictionaries, maps and globes upon the establishment of the libraries. The NLP shall continue to supply the public libraries with other books, non-book materials, equipment, supplies and other appropriate and relevant reference and reading materials, taking into consideration the needs of the community concerned.

SEC. 12. ***Standards Monitoring.*** – The NLPs shall assess all libraries according to the standards set forth in the Quality Manual of Libraries of the Philippines on categories such as: resources, technical services, readers' services, professional research and development, management, and overall assessment. This will be done in coordination with the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI).

SEC. 13. ***Overall Coordinating Authority.*** – The NLP shall be under the administrative supervision of the NCCA.

SEC. 14. ***Public Online Library.*** - The NLP shall establish a versatile and comprehensive computer and electronic library system which shall supplement the complete standard set of books to be provided to public libraries and reading centers with e-books, online research resources, and other similar materials. The Public Online Library shall be developed in coordination with the DepEd, DICT, DOST, the CHED, and the TESDA, in partnership with the NLP, the National Book Development Board (NBDB), and other concerned government agencies.

The DepEd shall also provide the NLP with digitized copies of all textbooks and reference materials which they deem necessary for the public education of Philippine Elementary and Secondary Students. The Public Online Library shall be jointly managed by the NLP, DICT, and DepEd.

The NLP shall have custody over the digitized copies of all books, textbooks, reference materials, and other resources to be included in the Public Online Library. The DICT shall take charge of the technological management of the digital repository to ensure the integrity of the system.

SEC. 15. ***Annual Report.*** - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, and at the end of every calendar year thereafter, the Commissioner of the NLP shall submit detailed progress reports on the progress, condition, and needs of the NLP to the Office of the President of the Philippines and each House of Congress.

SEC. 16. ***Joint Congressional Oversight Committee on the National Library of the Philippines.*** - There is hereby created a Joint Oversight Committee to oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Act.

The Oversight Committee shall be composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and from the House of Representatives, including the Chairs of the Committees on Basic Education and Culture, and Finance in the Senate and Appropriations in the House of Representatives. The membership of the Committee for each House shall have at least one (1) opposition or minority member.

SEC. 17. *Tax Exemptions of The National Library of the Philippines.* – The importation of equipment relating to creative industry, books, art related supplies, musical instruments, materials and goods, including those donated to the NLP shall be exempt from customs duty in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10863, otherwise known as the “Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA)”: *Provided*, That these are of international standards and are not available from local manufacturers: *Provided, further*, That the importation shall only be in such numbers as may be required in the development programs and/or training of librarians, staff, and the general public, as the case may be: *Provided, finally*, That all importations shall be made in the name of the NLP as recipient and shall be immediately registered in the name of the NLP.

SEC. 18. *Tax Exemption on Donations.* – All grants, bequest, endowments, donations and contributions made to the NLP that are actually, directly, and exclusively used by the NLP, shall be exempt from donor’s tax and the same shall be considered as allowable deduction from the gross income in the computation of the income tax of the donor in accordance with the provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

SEC. 19. *Trust.* - All income, fees, and revenues earned and collected by the Agency shall constitute a trust fund in the name of NLP to be managed and used by NLP to further carry out its functions. All incomes, fees, revenues, and donations earned and collected by the NLP shall constitute a trust fund, to be known as the National Library Fund, which the NLP shall be authorized to retain, without need of a separate approval from any government agency, and subject only to existing accounting and auditing rules and regulations. This fund shall be expended as authorized by the NLP Management exclusively for the purposes of this Act.

SEC 20. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be included in the NLP budget in the annual General Appropriations Act. The budget for the initial allocation and additional allocation for public libraries shall be included in the GAA of the year following its enactment and for every year thereafter. The budget for every public library shall be determined by the respective LGUs.

The local government units shall undertake the maintenance of public libraries and reading centers while the NLP shall continue to provide reading materials and supplies to the said libraries and reading centers.

SEC. 21. ***Implementing Agencies.*** - The NLP, in coordination with the NCCA DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DILG, DICT, and the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) shall be responsible for implementing the provisions of this Act.

Within (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing agencies shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of this Act. *Provided*, The NLP shall include the evaluation scheme/accreditation for the public libraries while the DILG shall include sanctions for non-compliance of LGUs.

SEC. 22. ***Separability Clause.*** - Should any part of this Act be declared unconstitutional or inoperative, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 23. ***Repealing Clause.*** - Act Nos. 222, 1849, 1935, 2572, 3477, Executive Order 94, Republic Act No. Three Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy-Three (R.A. 3873), otherwise known as "An Act Changing the Name of the Bureau of Public Libraries to the National Library," Republic Act No. Ten Thousand Eighty-Seven (R.A. No. 10087), otherwise known as "An Act Amending Republic Act No. 3873, Entitled An Act Changing the Name of the Bureau of Public Libraries To The National Library" and Republic Act No. Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Forty-Three (R.A. No. 7743), otherwise known as "An Act Providing for the Establishment of Congressional, City and Municipal Libraries and Barangay Reading Center Throughout the Philippines, Appropriating the Necessary Funds therefor and for other Purposes" are hereby repealed. The provisions of other laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 24. ***Effectivity.*** - Notwithstanding the non-issuance of an Implementing Rules and Regulations, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* and/or in at least two (2) national newspapers in general circulation.

Approved,