

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8110



Introduced by **Representative Stella Luz A. Quimbo**

**AN ACT DECLARING MARCH 15 OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL
FRONTLINERS' DAY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In January 2020, the Philippines recorded the first case of COVID-19. From then on, the number of cases began to increase and since the early parts of March 2020, there has never been a day where the country does not record a case. This means COVID-19 patients are rushed to the hospital each day while medical professionals do their utmost to save as many lives as they can.

Many of these human resources for health are overworked and underpaid. Worse, per the Filipino Nurses United, about 30,000 health workers have yet to receive several months of salary, hazard pay, and special risk allowance.¹ The delays in their compensation further aggravates the already dire situation that these workers are in. There have been reports of health care workers who succumbed to COVID before even getting their measly hazard pay. These brave men and women sacrifice their safety and their lives so that others may live.

As of August 2020, more than 6,000 health workers have contracted the virus.² Of this figure, 40 have died. Certainly, many of the country's health workers could have opted to leave their jobs, go abroad, or transfer to a different field where there are better opportunities away from the threat of the virus. As the Filipinos have seen, however, these workers altruistically stayed in their jobs, at the expense of their safety, because of the call of duty.

¹ Roper, G. (2020) 'Killing me softly': Nurses' group urges govt to lift cap on deployment ban. *ABS-CBN News*. Retrieved from: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/11/23/20/killing-me-softly-nurses-group-urges-govt-to-lift-cap-on-deployment-ban>.

² Ramos, C. M. (2020). DOH: 6,735 PH medical frontliners get COVID-19. *Inquirer.net*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1328299/doh-6735-ph-medical-frontliners-get-covid-19>.

Aside from the health workers, those who belong to other sectors also fight the pandemic by keeping the economy running. They ensure people's safety from the virus and from other sources of harm. Military and police personnel, bank workers, logistics and delivery workers, storekeepers, security guards, utility personnel, media workers, and countless others who have devoted their time, effort, and lives so that the several crucial sectors of the economy may survive the challenges brought by the pandemic.

At present, the country is in a war but a different one from those it fought in the last century. Then, the arena was the strategic battlefields, now the arena is the emergency rooms, the ICUs, and the wards. Then, armed forces were deployed to fight the opposing armies, now, medical professionals are being deployed to beat the invisible enemy. Both groups of men and women deployed in these different types of war are, at one point or another, frontliners. Just as the veterans and heroes of the World War II are commemorated through a holiday, the Day of Valor (April 9), so must Congress enact a working holiday law to pay tribute to the priceless and immeasurable act of sacrifice performed by the COVID-19 frontliners.

This measure does not aim to fully repay the blood and sweat shed by the frontliners but it does give them the recognition and the apposite tribute they so deserve. In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



STELLA LUZ A. QUIMBO, Ph.D.

Representative

Second District, Marikina City

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

3 **SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*National Frontliners’ Day Act*”.

4 **SEC. 2. Definition.** – For the purposes of this Act, the term “frontliners” includes, but
5 is not limited to, healthcare workers, scientists and researchers, government workers,
6 police and military personnel, journalists and media personnel, security guards,
7 storekeepers, bank employees, logistics and delivery workers, cleaners and janitors,
8 and countless others who are directly involved in health crisis response efforts.

9 **SEC. 3. Purpose.** – March 15 of every year is hereby declared as a special working
10 holiday to be known as “National Frontliners’ Day” to give honor and due recognition
11 to the immeasurable act of sacrifice performed by the COVID-19 frontliners in
12 delivering public health, safety and welfare services, maintaining public order, and
13 allowing the economy to continuously operate.

14 **SEC. 4. Holiday Activity.** – The Department of Health, the Department of Labor and
15 Employment, and the Department of Trade and Industry, in coordination with the
16 Civil Service Commission, the Department of Interior and Local Government, and
17 other government agencies, shall conduct activities and programs that promote the
18 principles and values espoused by our frontliners and honor and/or reward our
19 frontliners for their significant role during national emergencies. Every government
20 agency is required to have a banner outside their office every March 15.

21 All heads of national government departments and agencies, local government units,
22 and employers in the private sector shall encourage and afford sufficient time and
23 opportunities for their employees to engage and participate in any activity conducted
24 in observance of the National Frontliners’ Day.

25 **SEC. 5. Separability Clause.** - If any provisions or part of this Act is held invalid or
26 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected
27 shall remain valid and subsisting.

28 **SEC. 6. Repealing Clause.** - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,
29 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
30 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

31 **SEC. 7. Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
32 publication in at least (2) newspapers of general circulation.

33 Approved,