

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8474



Introduced by **HON. LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.**

**AN ACT CREATING A VACCINE PASSPORT PROGRAM,
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR**

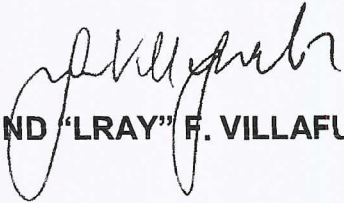
COVID-19's highly contagious nature forced to limit the movement of billions of people across the globe. It prohibited mass gathering and travel, and forced the closure of many businesses. Data shows that the Philippines have severely suffered from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic – GDP fell by 16.9% and unemployment by around 17.7% during the height of the lockdown.

Towards the last quarter of 2020, a number of vaccines for COVID-19 have been developed and approved for emergency use. It is seen as the most effective tool in eradicating the pandemic. The Philippines, like the rest of the world, lined up to purchase vaccines. The COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases - National Task Force (IATF-NTF) stated that there will be 148 million doses of vaccines to be rolled out this year.

This measure proposes the creation of a Vaccine Passport Program for the country to have an effective and efficient COVID-19 vaccination effort. It shall provide an individual's record of COVID-19 vaccinations, including information on the vaccination given, the number of doses administered, and other related matters.

The early preparation for the roll-out of the vaccines allows the government to adequately prepare for the administration of its mass vaccination program and recognize the purchase of Local Government Units and private businesses.

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


LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

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

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Vaccine Passport Program Act*”.

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. – The Constitution mandates that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

The State recognizes the importance of preventive healthcare and the need to take proactive measures in the fight against diseases, particularly COVID-19. It acknowledges that a comprehensive, mandatory and sustainable immunization program for vaccine-preventable diseases is indispensable to achieve the objectives of universal healthcare and the country’s commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). A Vaccine Passport Program can help facilitate COVID-19 immunization and future immunization programs by allowing the State to track who has been vaccinated, ~~which groups should be prioritized,~~ and where priority vaccinations should take place. It also serves as a means to monitor the vaccines’ effects and the effectivity of immunization programs. Towards this end, the State shall adopt and implement a Vaccine Passport Program to facilitate its COVID-19 and future immunization programs against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Sec. 3. Vaccine Passport Program. – Subject to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 or the “Data Privacy Act of 2012”, the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) shall issue a Vaccine Passport to all Filipinos, which shall be a record of the COVID-19 vaccinations received by an individual. The Vaccine Passport shall take into account internationally-recognized standards, and shall contain the following:

- a) Manufacturer, brand name, and batch number or other identifier of the COVID-19 vaccine;
- b) Date of vaccination;
- c) Name of the hospital, health center, or health facility where the vaccine was received; and
- d) Name, signature and license number of the duly licensed physician, nurse or other health worker administering the vaccine.

The Vaccine Passport Program shall primarily be digital, but shall remain accessible through other means such as printed passports. The IATF, through the Department of Information and Communications Technology, shall develop the digital systems and applications that will meet the objectives of the Program while maintaining quality, safety, ease of use, and accessibility for all Filipinos.

Sec. 4. *Benefits of Receiving the COVID-19 Vaccine.* – Individuals vaccinated against COVID-19 may be granted certain benefits or exemptions, subject to guidelines issued by the IATF, which shall be clearly stated in the individual's Vaccine Passport, such as but not limited to:

- a) International travel, as may be allowed in foreign jurisdictions;
- b) Non-essential domestic travel;
- c) Local checkpoint and quarantine exemptions; and
- d) Access to business establishments allowed to operate based on IATF guidelines.

Individuals vaccinated against COVID-19 as indicated in the Vaccine Passport shall not be considered immune from COVID-19, unless otherwise declared by the DOH based on reliable scientific evidence and consensus.

Sec. 5. *Adoption of the Vaccine Passport Program for Other Immunization Programs.* – The Department of Health (DOH) shall adopt the Vaccine Passport Program to facilitate other immunization programs, including but not limited to mandatory basic immunization as provided by Republic Act No. 10152 or the "Mandatory Infants and Children Health Immunization Act of 2011", subject to guidelines to be issued by the DOH.

Sec. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within 30 days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines for the effective implementation of this Act. The implementing rules and regulations issued pursuant to this Section shall take effect upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Sec. 7. *Appropriations.* – The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be sourced from reallocations of the 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act for the COVID-19 response. Appropriations for the succeeding years shall be included in the annual appropriations of the DOH under the General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

Sec. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, other issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,