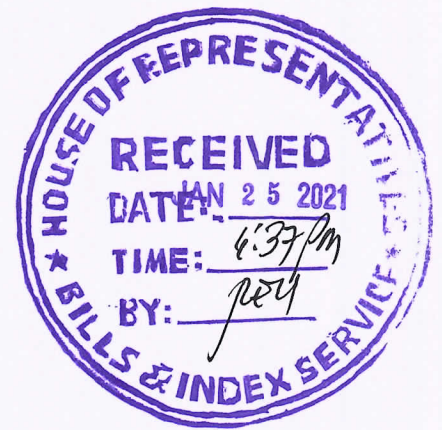


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8498



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

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO RECOMMEND A UNIFORM
STRATEGY TO PROTECT WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENT CRIME

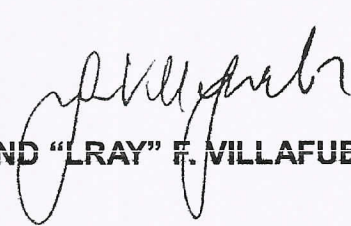
The Constitution, Article II, Section 14 provides:

The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.

The incidence of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault by strangers and non-strangers, marital rape, and incest has steadily increased in the past few years.

Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies are not successful in protecting women against violent crimes because of the inadequacy of existing laws and the underreporting of rape, sexual assault, and violent crimes due to fear of reprisal.

Hence, this bill seeks to establish a Task Force that shall develop a uniform law enforcement strategy in order to protect women against violent crime, punish persons who commit such crimes, and enhance the rights of victims of such crimes.


LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Violence Against Women Research Act.”

SECTION 2. National Task Force on Violence Against Women. – Not later than thirty (30) days after the date of enactment of this Act, there shall be established a Task Force to be known as the “National Task Force on Violence Against Women” (referred to in this Act as the “Task Force”), which shall be created under the office of the President.

SECTION 3. Duties. –

(A) **General Purpose of Task Force.** – The Task Force shall develop a uniform law enforcement strategy aimed at protecting women against violent crime, punishing persons who commit such crimes, and enhancing the rights of victims of such crimes.

(B) **Duties of Task Force.** – The Task Force shall perform such functions as the President deems appropriate to carry out the purposes of the Task Force, including —

- (1) Considering the reports of the Commission on Human Rights, appropriate agencies and other non-governmental organizations;
- (2) Developing strategies for law enforcement designated to protect women against violent crime, and to prosecute and punish those responsible for such crime;
- (3) Evaluating the adequacy of sentencing, incarceration and release of violent offenders against women, and making recommendations designated to ensure that such offenders receive appropriate punishment; and

(4) Devaluating the adequacy of the treatment of victims of violent crime against women within the criminal justice system, and making recommendations designed to improve such treatment.

SECTION 4. Membership. –

(A) In General. – The Task Force shall consist of up to ten (10) members, who shall be appointed by the President not later than sixty (60) days after the date of enactment of this Act. The President shall ensure that the Task Force includes representatives of law enforcement, the judiciary, and groups dedicated to protecting the rights of victims.

(B) Per Diem. – While away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of duties for the Task Force, members of the Task Force shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under existing law.

SECTION 5. Executive Director and Staff. –

(A) Executive Director. – The Task Force shall be headed by an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Justice not later than thirty (30) days after the Task Force is fully constituted under Section 2. He or she shall be compensated at a rate not to exceed the maximum rate of the basic pay payable under existing law.

(B) Staff. – With the approval of the Task Force, the Executive Director may appoint not more than twelve (12) individuals to serve as staff and fix the compensation of such additional personnel as the Executive Director considers necessary to carry out the duties of the Task Force.

(C) Applicability of Civil Service Laws. – The Executive Director and the additional personnel of the Task Force appointed under paragraph (B) may be appointed and paid without regard to the provisions of applicable civil service laws.

SECTION 6. Power of the Task Force. –

(A) Hearings. – For the purpose of carrying out this Section, the Task Force may conduct such hearings, sit and act at such times and place, take such testimony, and receive such evidence, as the Task Force considers appropriate. The Task Force may administer oaths before the Task Force.

(B) Delegation. – Any number or employee of the Task Force may, if authorized by the Task Force, take any action that the Task Force is authorized to take under this section.

(C) Access to Information. – The Task Force may secure directly from any executive department or agency such information as may be necessary to enable the Task Force to carry out the provisions of this Act, to the extent access to such information is permitted

by law.

(D) Mail. – The Task Force may use the mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the government.

SECTION 7. Report. – Not later than one (1) year after the date on which the Task Force is fully constituted under Section 2, the Secretary of Justice shall submit a detailed report to the Congress on the findings and recommendations of the Task Force.

SECTION 8. Authorization of Appropriations. – There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 11. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,