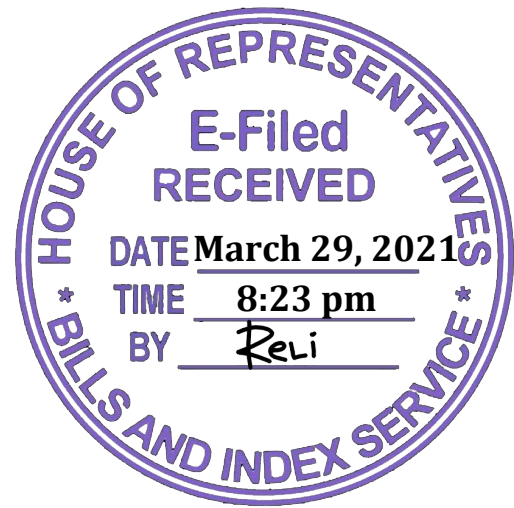


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9159



Introduced by **Rep. Manuel Luis T. Lopez** of the 1st District of the City of Manila

AN ACT

RECOGNIZING THE HEROISM OF FRONTLINE WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ERECTING A MONUMENT TO BE KNOWN AS THE "BANTAYOG NG MGA BAYANING FRONTLINERS", AND OBSERVING A "NATONAL DAY OF MOURNING AND REMEMBRANCE" EVERY YEAR FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is unfortunate that at the time of the passage of this bill, the number of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases in the country is at a record high. The Philippines now ranks 30th in terms of total COVID-19 cases¹ and 33rd in terms of total COVID-19-related deaths² in the world.

Many of these cases and deaths include our frontline heroes. As of December 2020, more than 13,000 health workers have been infected with COVID-19, with 76 recorded deaths. Almost half of them died during the first few months of the pandemic during the time when hospitals experienced an influx of patients in emergency rooms and shortage of personal protective equipment (PPEs).³

We can only presume that there are thousands more of non-medical essential workers – like social workers, food and supply workers, security guards, delivery personnel, and similar employees – who have also contracted COVID-19 in the line of duty.

As we face a continuous surge of COVID-19 infections and almost all of our hospitals in the National Capital Region once again declare full capacity, our frontline workers, both medical and non-medical, have not stopped working tirelessly, selflessly,

¹ World Health Organization. (2021, Apr. 2). *WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard*. <https://covid19.who.int/table>

² Sam, C., et al. (2021, Apr. 3). *Mapping the Coronavirus Outbreak Across the World*. Bloomberg. <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2020-coronavirus-cases-world-map/>

³ Sabillo, K. (2020, Dec. 30). *2020 heroes: Frontliners who died battling COVID-19*. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/30/20/2020-heroes-frontliners-who-died-battling-covid-19>

and valiantly in the service of their countrymen despite the clear and imminent danger to their own health and safety.

It is in this time, now more than ever, that we should recognize the courage, hard work, sacrifice, and invaluable contribution of our Frontline Heroes. This proposed measure seeks to memorialize their acts of heroism by constructing the “Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners” and declaring a National Day of Mourning and Remembrance for our departed COVID-19 Frontliners.

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


HON. MANUEL LUIS T. LOPEZ
Representative
1st District, City of Manila

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*Frontliners Recognition*
2 *Act*”.

3
4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – The State recognizes the courage, hard work,
5 sacrifice, and overall invaluable contribution of the Medical and Non-medical Frontline
6 Heroes who responded and heeded the call of duty during the COVID-19 pandemic. To
7 this end, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to:

- 8
9 a. Give appropriate recognition and honor to Frontline Heroes for their acts of
10 heroism during the time of health emergency;
11
12 b. Provide support to the families that all Frontline Heroes have left behind;
13
14 c. Memorialize their acts of heroism so that the present and future generations
15 will always remember their selfless sacrifices; and
16
17 d. Inspire Filipinos on the heroism of ordinary men and women who rose to the
18 occasion and who willingly and valiantly performed their duties in the
19 service of their countrymen despite the clear and imminent danger to their
20 own health and safety.
21

22 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- 23
24 a. Medical Frontliners – refer to public and private health workers rendering
25 medical assistance to save or protect people from the effects of the COVID-19
26 pandemic. This shall include doctors, nurses, medical technologists, nursing

aides, and other allied health professionals who have rendered services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- b. Non-medical Frontliners – refer to non-medical personnel providing essential goods and services to save or protect people from the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. This shall include, but not limited to, social workers, barangay health workers, barangay *tanods*, military and police personnel, soldiers, civil servants, elected and appointed officials, volunteers, food and supply workers, security guards, delivery personnel, janitors, religious leaders such as priests, pastors, and imams, media practitioners, and other individuals and professionals who have rendered services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c. Frontline Heroes – refer to Medical and Non-medical Frontliners who have passed away and selected as Frontline Heroes pursuant to Section 7 of this Act.
- d. Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners – refers to the structure erected as a memorial to the Frontline Heroes, both medical and non-medical.
- e. National Day of Mourning and Remembrance – refers to the annual commemoration of the heroism of the Medical and Non-medical Frontliners who have passed away.
- f. Essential Goods and Services – refer to health and social services to secure the safety and well-being of persons, such as but not limited to, food, water, medicine, medical services, public utilities, energy, and telecommunications services. This shall also include spiritual needs and news and information.

SEC. 4. Construction of the Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners. – The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), as the prime government agency that safeguards, develops, and promotes Filipino culture, shall erect a national monument to be called *Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners*, hereinafter referred to as Monument, to serve as a memorial for the heroism of all Frontline Heroes.

The names of all Frontline Heroes shall be inscribed in the Monument. The Monument shall be inaugurated during the National Day of Mourning and Remembrance for COVID-19 Frontliners as provided in Section 9.

SEC. 5. Design, Location, and Construction of the Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners. – The NCAA shall:

- a. Determine the appropriate location where the Monument shall be erected, in coordination with the National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA);
- b. Prepare the design of the Monument, in coordination with the national artists for architecture and landscape, sculpture, and visual arts; and
- c. Undertake the construction of the Monument, in coordination with the

1 Department of Public Works and Highways and other relevant agencies of the
2 government.
3

4 **SEC. 6. Selection Committee.** – There shall be established a Selection Committee
5 which shall have ten (10) members, to be composed of the Chairman of the NCCA, which
6 shall act as the Committee's Chair, the Secretary of Health, Secretary of Education,
7 Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, Chairperson of the Civil Service
8 Commission, and five (5) private sector representatives, one (1) each from the medical
9 professional organizations, religious sector, media organizations, volunteer groups, and
10 business sector. The representatives from the private sectors shall be appointed by the
11 President of the Philippines from the nominees submitted by their respective sectors or
12 groups. The members of the committee shall not receive any compensation.
13

14 **SEC. 7. Functions of the Selection Committee.** – The Selection Committee shall
15 set the Guidelines for Nomination and Selection of the Frontline Heroes, whose names
16 shall be engraved in the *Bantayog ng mga Bayaning Frontliners*. The selection process
17 shall be transparent and open to the public.
18

19 **SEC. 8. Certificate of Heroism.** – The Chair of the NCCA shall issue a Certificate of
20 Heroism to the immediate family of the frontline heroes in a ceremony held for the
21 purpose.
22

23 **SEC. 9. National Day of Mourning and Remembrance for COVID-19**
24 **Frontliners.** – The NCAA shall determine the appropriate date for the yearly
25 commemoration of the heroism of the Medical and Non-medical Frontliners who have
26 passed away. For the purpose of this Act, such day shall be referred to as the National
27 Day of Mourning and Remembrance for COVID-19 Frontliners, which shall be a special
28 working holiday.
29

30 The NCAA shall conduct a program at the *Bantayog ng mga Bayanihang*
31 *Frontliners* every year during the National Day of Mourning and Remembrance to
32 commemorate their heroism.
33

34 **SEC. 10. Commemoration in Educational Institutions.** – The National Day of
35 Mourning and Remembrance for COVID-19 Frontliners shall form part of the calendar of
36 activities for both basic and higher educational institutions. The Department of
37 Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are mandated to
38 undertake commemorative activities and programs in schools, colleges, and
39 universities.
40

41 Both the DepEd and the CHED shall prepare literatures on the heroism of the
42 frontliners during the COVID-19 pandemic to inspire students and the general public.
43

44 **SEC. 11. Commemoration in All Government Offices.** – All government offices
45 shall conduct a commemorative program on the heroism of all Frontliners during the
46 National Day of Mourning and Remembrance for COVID-19 Frontliners.
47

48 **SEC. 12. Scholarship Grant and Financial Assistance to the Children of the**
49 **Frontline Heroes.** – The NCAA, through and in coordination with the DepED and CHED,

1 shall extend scholarship grant and financial assistance to the children of the Frontline
2 Heroes in any State Schools, Colleges, or Universities where they will be accepted to
3 enable them to complete their baccalaureate degree.
4

5 **SEC. 13. Popular Subscription.** – In order to achieve the objectives laid down in
6 Section 5 of this Act without the need to further deplete public funds, the NCAA shall
7 constitute a committee for the purpose of raising funds through private contributions or
8 popular subscription, in such manner and subject to such conditions as prescribed in
9 the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act. All such funds collected shall be
10 held in a separate account and disbursed solely for the attainment of the objectives in
11 Section 5 hereof. Any excess shall be used for such purposes mentioned in Section 12 of
12 this Act.
13

14 **SEC. 14. Appropriation.** – Subject to Section 13 above, the amount necessary to
15 carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the NCAA.
16

17 **SEC. 15. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
18 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
19 provisions hereof.
20

21 **SEC. 16. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, ordinances, rules and
22 regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified
23 accordingly.
24

25 **SEC. 17. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The NCCA, together with the
26 Department of Health, Civil Service Commission, DepEd, CHED, and the Department of
27 the Interior and Local Government, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, such as
28 the various medical societies, religious organizations, media organizations, volunteer
29 groups, and the various business groups, shall issue the Implementing Rules and
30 Regulations (IRR) within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.
31

32 **SEC. 18. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
33 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
34

35 Approved,