

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4578



Introduced by **HON. GUS S. TAMBUNTING**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR THE
PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE OF TOURISTS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism is an indispensable element of the national economy. In 2019, the percent share of tourism to GDP is estimated at 12.8 percent. A lot of Filipino families also depend on the industry with its percentage share of total employment recorded at 13.6 percent in 2019 and 11.9% in 2020. Considering its potential to jumpstart the economy towards national development, it is incumbent upon the State to adopt policies, programs, and projects to protect the welfare of both foreign and domestic tourists and to likewise boost the image of the country as a premier travel and tourism destination across the globe.

This measure proposes the creation of the Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force which shall be responsible for the following: (1) adoption of uniform standards on signages across the country, (2) preparation of multilingual travel and tourism information and promotional materials, (3) establishment of an assistance system and help desks for tourists, among others. The task force shall be composed of the Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Justice (DOJ), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and other government and private sector representatives.

On behalf of the people of Parañaque City's Second District, and for the common good of the Filipino people, the approval of the said measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "GUS S. TAMBUNTING".

REP. GUS S. TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City

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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 “Tourist Protection and Assistance Act”.

Sec. 2. Declaration of Principles. – The State recognizes tourism as a major contributor to the country's economic growth. Towards this end, the State shall endeavor to enact measures for the protection and assistance of tourists, both domestic and foreign, during their travel around the country.

Sec. 3. Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force. – Within nine (9) months after the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT) shall establish an intergovernmental task force to be known as the “Tourist Protection and Assistance Task Force”, hereinafter referred to as the “Task Force.”

It shall be the duty of the Task Force to facilitate through the concerned national government agencies and local government units (LGUs), the following:

- a) Adoption of uniform standards on signage for use throughout the Philippines to facilitate travel in the country;
- b) Provision of directional signage in tourism facilities and destinations, including airports seaports land border crossings, highways, bus train, and other public transit locations
- c) Preparation and dissemination of multilingual travel and tourism information and promotional materials;
- d) Establishment of a toll-free telephone assistance system run by multilingual operators to assist domestic and foreign tourists;
- e) Coordination with LGUs for the establishment of tourist help desks in identified tourist destinations; and

- f) Institution of measures to prevent unlawful acts or harassment committed against tourists.

Sec. 4. Composition of the Task Force. – The Task Force shall be composed of the following:

- a) Secretary of the DOT or the duly designated representative as Chairperson.
- b) Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government or the duly designated representative, as Vice Chairperson;
- c) Secretary of the Department of Transportation or the duly designated representative;
- d) Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways or the duly designated representative;
- e) Secretary of the Department of Justice or the duly designated representative;
- f) Director General of the Philippine National Police or the duly designated representative;
- g) Such other representatives of other government agencies and private sector entities may be determined to be appropriate to the mission of the Task Force by the Chairperson, as members.

The Task Force shall meet whenever necessary.

Sec. 5. Funding. – The amount necessary to cover the expenses for the operation of the Task Force shall be charged against the existing appropriation of the DOT as contained in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Funds for the implementation of the programs and projects that shall be approved by the Task Force shall be included in the appropriation of the implementing agencies concerned.

Sec. 6. Separability Clause. – Should any provision of this Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance be held invalid, the other provisions or sections of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

Sec. 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof that are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Sec. 8. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,