

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6162

Introduced by Representative Joseph Gilbert F. Violago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the World Bank, there are about 155,000 personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as of 2019.¹ While there are about 220,000 police officers of the Philippine National Police.²

Since the AFP and PNP's mandate is to serve and protect the country, it is therefore a reality that in the performance of their official duties - while putting their lives and limbs in danger - these officers and enlisted personnel could face potential civil, criminal, and administrative charges. This proposed measure seeks to give free legal assistance to any officer and enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police for any charge arising from an incident or incidents in relation to the performance of their official duty before the prosecution, judicial courts, and administrative bodies.

This commendable bill had been first filed in the 16th Congress by Rep. Felix Fuentebella and was approved on 3rd Reading. Thereafter, similar bills had been filed in the 17th and 18th Congress, and the present proponent is acknowledging the wisdom and hard work of his predecessors.

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



JOSEPH GILBERT F. VIOLAGO



¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.P1?locations=PH>

² Quismoro, Ellson. "PNP could use a bit of rightsizing; here's what Recto means". *Manila Bulletin*. 05 September 2022. Web. < <https://mb.com.ph/2022/09/05/pnp-could-use-a-bit-of-rightsizing-heres-what-recto-means/>>

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO ANY OFFICER OR
ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE ON ANY CHARGE BEFORE
THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE, COURT OR ANY COMPETENT BODY
ARISING FROM AN INCIDENT RELATED TO THE PERFORMANCE OF
OFFICIAL DUTY

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Free Legal Assistance to Enlisted AFP and PNP Personnel Act”.

SECTION 2. *Coverage.* – Any officer or enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), who is facing before the prosecutor’s office, judicial court, administrative or any competent body, any charge arising from an incident or incidents in relation to the performance of their official duty shall be entitled to free legal assistance.

SECTION 3. – Within twenty-four (24) hours from the official receipt of the information that the officer or enlisted personnel is charged, the Chief of Staff of the AFP, the Chairperson of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) or the Chief of the PNP shall authorize the legal office of their respective agencies, with the assistance of the Public Attorney’s Office (PAO), to provide free legal assistance to any officer or enlisted personnel of the AFP and the PNP for the purpose of the immediately preceding section.

SECTION 4. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the Legal Defense Fund funded through the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Public Attorney’s Office, in coordination with the AFP, NAPOLCOM, and the PNP, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SECTION 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,