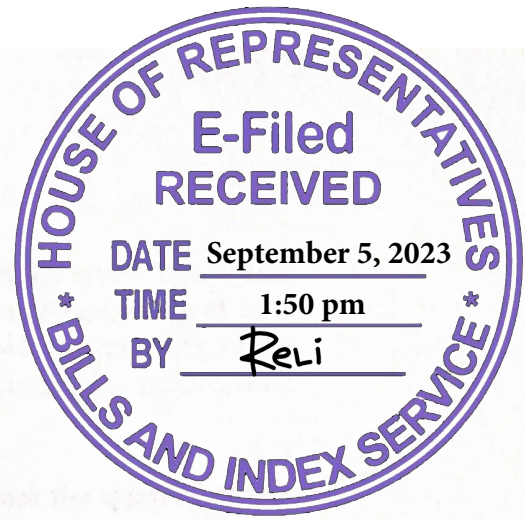


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9039



Introduced by Representatives Faustino Michael T. Dy III and Emigdio P. Tanjuatco III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

There is no doubt of the significance of tourism both as an economic force to a nation and a psychological boost to an individual traveler. In the Philippines, the increasing contribution of the Tourism Direct Gross Value Added cannot be belittled. It's even more impressive in other countries where tourists flock in the tens of millions annually. One could just imagine the income earned, and the multiplier effect of the tourists' spending, and their consequent effects on, generally, the people's livelihood and quality of life. It is also indubitable in all cases that it is both the beauty and safety of a destination that attract a tourist and create lasting impressions, and that the reverse holds true as well.

It is thus important to preserve not only our valued tourist destinations, but more importantly our tourists' memories of their sojourn however brief. Good memories will entice them to come back, and their stories will be the best, free, marketing tool.

This bill seeks the establishment of a Tourist Protection and Assistance Council that will ensure the implementation of measures to protect and assist tourists during their travel, with the end in view of preventing unpleasant incidents from happening, and reducing the trouble and inconvenience to tourists in case such things do happen. These include the erection of warning signs, especially easy-to-understand visuals, in crime-prone areas to raise awareness and alert the tourists to take necessary and proper precautionary measures; coordination with LGUs for the establishment of tourist help desks in identified tourist destinations; preparation and dissemination of multi-lingual travel and tourism information and promotional materials which include contact details of embassies of countries whose citizens are among the top ten (10) tourists to the Philippines; establishment of a toll-free telephone assistance to connect the foreign tourists with their embassies; provision of leaflets with contact details of embassies in all police stations and tourist help desks; establishment of a tourist incidents desk in police stations and regular training and briefing of police regarding relevant local and national laws and rules and how these apply to tourists; and referral to hospitals in case of medical emergencies.

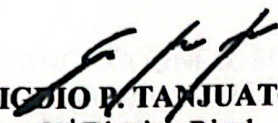
This bill also recognizes the importance of coordinating during times of distress with the embassies of foreign tourists, as they have an even wider remit and capacity in assisting

their nationals. It thus includes the creation of disaster response guidelines involving tourists, including ensuring the familiarity of DoT staff to embassy protocols and necessity of their assistance to avoid the embarrassing snafu that happened in 2010 with the hijacking of the bus in the Rizal Park, where DoT employees prevented embassy officials from reaching their citizens and providing adequate support.

For the reasons above cited, these representations earnestly seek the approval of this bill.



FAUSTINO MICHAEL T. DY III
5th District, Isabela



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2nd District, Rizal

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A TOURIST PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE COUNCIL FOR THE
SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF TOURISTS AND TOURIST FACILITIES, AND
PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR THE HARASSMENT OF TOURISTS

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Tourist Protection and Assistance Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – Tourism is widely recognized as a leading contributor to the country’s economic growth, and the State recognizes its role as such, with a full department dedicated to tourism. The State shall endeavor to enact measures for the protection of and assistance to tourists, whether foreign or domestic, during their tourism-related travels and stays.

SECTION 3. Tourist Protection and Assistance Council. – The Department of Tourism (DoT) shall, within nine (9) months from the effectivity of this Act, establish a Tourist Protection and Assistance Council in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), other concerned national government agencies (NGAs) and local government units (LGUs). Such council shall aim to strengthen security and protection measures for tourists and tourism-related services and establishments. It shall likewise be tasked to ensure the following:

- (a) Adoption of uniform standards on signage for use to adequately facilitate travel throughout the country;
- (b) Provision of directional signage in tourism facilities and destinations, including airports, seaports, land border crossings, highways, and bus, train and other public transit locations;
- (c) Erection of warning signs, especially easy-to-understand visuals, in crime-prone areas to raise awareness and alert the tourists to take necessary and proper precautionary measures;
- (d) Coordination with LGUs for the establishment of tourist help desks in identified tourist destinations;

- (e) Preparation and dissemination of multi-lingual travel and tourism information and promotional materials which include contact details of embassies of countries whose citizens are among the top ten (10) tourists to the Philippines;
- (f) Establishment of a toll-free telephone assistance to connect the foreign tourists with their embassies;
- (g) Provision of leaflets with contact details of embassies in all police stations and tourist help desks;
- (h) Institution of measures to prevent unlawful acts or harassment committed against tourists including, but not limited to, repeated and/or unwanted solicitation;
- (i) Inclusion in the DoT website of the contact details and links to embassies' websites;
- (j) Regular training and briefing of police regarding relevant local and national laws and rules and how these apply to tourists;
- (k) Establishment of a tourist incidents desk in police stations;
- (l) Referral to hospitals in cases of medical emergencies;
- (m) Creation of disaster response guidelines involving tourists, including ensuring the familiarity of DoT staff to embassy protocols and assistance.

SECTION 4. Composition of the Tourist Protection and Assistance Council. – The Tourist Protection and Assistance Council shall be composed of the following: Secretary of Tourism or duly designated representative as head, representative each of the DILG, other concerned NGAs, LGUs and private sector entities as may be deemed appropriate.

SECTION 5. Penal Provisions. – For the purpose of this act, the following penalties shall be given to the following:

- (a) Any person found guilty of harassment by the Tourist Protection and Assistance Council shall incur a fine of Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php 20,000). Harassment is defined in this act as the following:
 - i. Repeated solicitation of business from tourists who have expressed their desire not to be bothered by solicitations.
 - ii. Solicitation of business from tourists through intimidation.
 - iii. Offering fixed rates for goods or services that are usually set through a metered device or instrument.
 - iv. Declining to provide goods and/or services to tourists who refuse to purchase the same from vendors who set a fixed rate.
 - v. Offering goods and services to tourists with the intent to defraud.
 - vi. All acts including, but not limited to, the aforementioned with the intent to defraud or cause harm to tourists that is deemed as such by the Tourist Protection and Assistance Council, or other concerned government agencies.
- (b) Any person found guilty of any criminal offense against tourists other than harassment as defined in the Section 5, shall incur the next higher penalty as provided for by the Revised Penal Code.

SECTION 6. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to cover the expenses for the operation and implementation of the programs and projects of the Tourist Protection and

Assistance Council shall be charged against the current year's budget of the DoT.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Department of Tourism shall formulate the rules and regulations of this Act within ninety (90) days of its effectivity.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. – All acts, decrees, letters of instruction, issuances, orders, or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If any part of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the rest of the provisions shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect 15 days after its publication in two newspapers of general circulation or in the Official Gazette.

APPROVED,