Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10969

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Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all its citizens, including those with disabilities. Disasters pose significant risks to individuals with disabilities, and their unique needs require specific considerations for effective disaster risk management. Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected in disaster, emergency, and conflict situations due to inaccessible evacuation, response (including shelters, camps, and food distribution), and recovery efforts. In situations of disasters, persons with disabilities tend to be overlooked and left out from aid which makes them highly vulnerable to disasters.

Disabilities and special needs can make it challenging to prepare for and respond to a disaster. Often, people with disabilities and special needs require assistance and additional lead time when a disaster strikes. The importance of capturing community knowledge in disaster risk management (DRM) planning has been recognized for some time. This understanding, however, does not regularly extend to people with physical impairments, which is problematic for communities as a whole. Leaving people with disabilities out of the planning process robs them of a voice and everyone else of their expertise.

Living in poverty further increases their vulnerability, where they have limited capacity to deal with disasters and the government becomes their only shelter. It is imperative to implement measures that promote disability inclusion and equity in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.

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HOUSE BILL NO. **10969**

Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

AN ACT ENSURING THE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS) DURING DISASTER CALAMITIES AND PROMOTING DISABILITY INCLUSION AND EQUITY IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN THE COUNTRY

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 "Disability Inclusion and Equity in Disaster Risk Management in the Country".

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy* – The State recognizes the importance of disability inclusion and equity in disaster risk management. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to:

- Ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery services;
- Promote the full participation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of disaster risk management;
- Develop and implement disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction plans and strategies;
- Ensure that the built environment and infrastructure are accessible to individuals with disabilities during and after disasters.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms*. As used in this Act:

• **Disability** means any physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental impairment that limits a person's ability to participate fully and effectively in society on an equal basis with others.

• **Disaster** means a serious disruption of the functioning of a community caused by a natural or man-made hazard that leads to widespread human, material, or economic losses and exceeds the coping capacity of the affected community.

• **Disaster Risk Management** refers to the systematic process of identifying, assessing, and reducing risks to people, property, and the environment from disasters.

• **Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan** shall refer to a comprehensive plan developed by the City Government to address disaster calamities, including specific provisions for PWDs.

• **PWDs** shall refer to individuals with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental impairments that limit their everyday activities and participation in society.

• **Triage** is often used to prioritize needs during emergencies, so that limited resources can be maximally used.

SECTION 4. ENFORCEMENT. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) under the Office of Civil Defense shall be responsible for the implementation of this ordinance.

SECTION 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF PWD EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM. A PWD Emergency Response Team shall be established within the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) to coordinate and implement measures for the safety and well-being of PWDs during disaster calamities.

It is highly encourage to involve representatives from the PWD sector in the Response Team to fully understand and to communicate accurately the needs of the said sector.

SECTION 6. INCLUSION OF PWDs IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLANS. The NDRRMO shall ensure that PWDs are included in all disaster preparedness and response plans, including evacuation procedures, shelter management, and distribution of relief goods. The following should be taken into consideration:

- **Accessibility:**

o Ensure that all disaster preparedness, response, and recovery facilities and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

o Promote the development of accessible infrastructure, including evacuation routes, shelters, and communication systems.

- **Communication:**

o Develop and disseminate disaster preparedness information in accessible formats, such as Braille, large print, and audio recordings.

o Ensure that emergency alerts and warnings are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

- **Evacuation:**

o Develop evacuation plans that take into account the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.

o Provide training to emergency responders on how to assist individuals with disabilities during evacuations.

- **Shelters:**

o Ensure that disaster shelters are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

o Provide necessary accommodations and support services for individuals with disabilities in shelters.

- **Recovery:**

o Prioritize the needs of individuals with disabilities in disaster recovery efforts.

o Ensure that reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts result in a more inclusive and accessible built environment.

SECTION 7. ACCESSIBILITY OF EVACUATION CENTERS. Evacuation centers shall be made accessible to PWDs by:

- Providing ramps, elevators, and other necessary facilities.

- Ensuring the availability of accessible toilets and bathrooms taking into consideration the physical mobility needs of the PWDs.

- Providing sign language interpreters and other communication aids.

SECTION 8. ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRIAGE IN THE EVACUATION CENTERS. A triage shall be set up in the Evacuation Centers during calamities and disasters. There should a signage stating that the triage serves PWDs. The personnel in the triage shall provide communication

avenues for the PWDs asking for vital information as to their identity, actual disability and next of kin. Thereafter, the PWD shall be instructed as to the space he/she can use in the Evacuation Center.

SECTION 9. PRIORITIZATION OF PWDs IN RELIEF OPERATIONS. PWDs shall be prioritized in the distribution of relief goods and services during disaster calamities.

SECTION 10. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC)shall conduct training and capacity building programs for PWDs, their caregivers, and emergency responders to enhance their preparedness and response capabilities during disasters.

SECTION 11. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC)shall disseminate information about disaster preparedness and response measures to PWDs through accessible channels, including sign language interpreters, braille, and audio recordings.

SECTION 12. Appropriations

The amount needed for the implementation of this Act shall be include in the budget of the Office of Civil Defense in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) of the year following its enactment to law and thereafter.

SECTION 13. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. If any provision of this ordinance is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. EFFECTIVITY. This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

Approved,