

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 524



Introduced by Representative Reynante U. Arrogancia

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism is one of the leading contributors to the Philippine economy. It has helped improve our socio-economic well-being through the generation of employment, income for local businesses, investments and foreign exchange and a deep regard for cultural heritage and traditions.

It was among the economic sectors that were strongly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ The easing of hard lock down impositions and quarantine restrictions has enabled the industry's stakeholders to resume operations and bounce back at the national and local levels, backed by government support.

The Philippine Statistics Authority has reported that in 2024, the contribution of Tourism Direct Gross Value Added (TDGVA) to the Philippine economy is estimated at 8.9 percent. The TDGVA is higher by 11.2 percent in 2024, amounting to 2.35 trillion in 2024 compared with the 2.12 trillion in 2023.²

The same report stated that employment in the tourism industry was estimated at 6.75 million in 2024, higher by 6.1 percent compared with 6.37 million in 2023. To sustain this trend, strengthening of programs and policies is needed to protect the welfare of both foreign and domestic tourists as the industry recovers from the effects of the pandemic.

This bill seeks to implement an integrated approach to tourism safety development by creating a Tourist Protection and Assistance Council, to be composed of the Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and other concerned national government agencies and local government units (LGUs).

The Tourist Protection and Assistance Council will ensure the adoption of a uniform standard on signage, the promotion of multilingualism in travel and tourist information, the creation of help desks and the establishment of assistance systems across all tourist establishments in the country, among others.

These coordinated and integrated policies will serve as an ideal measure in achieving the national goals towards the fullest development of tourism in the country. A similar

¹ Impact of COVID-19 on the Philippine Tourism industry. Retrieved from <https://www.pwc.com/ph/en/publications/pwc-publications/tourism-covid-19.html>

² Philippine Statistics Authority - Philippine Tourism Satellite Account. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/tourism>

measure has been filed in the previous Congresses, and it is hoped that in the 20th Congress this bill will finally become a law.

In view of the foregoing, this representation seeks approval of this bill.



REYNANTE U. ARROGANCIA
3rd District, Quezon Province

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House Bill No. **524**

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A TOURIST PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE COUNCIL
FOR THE SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF TOURISTS AND TOURIST
FACILITIES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Tourist Protection and
2 Assistance Act.”
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State recognizes tourism as one of the leading
5 contributors to the country's economic growth. Towards this end, the State shall
6 endeavor to enact measures for the protection and assistance of tourists, domestic and
7 foreign, during their travel across tourist-service establishments and facilities in the
8 country.
9

10 **SEC. 3. Tourist Protection and Assistance Council.** - Within six (6) months from
11 the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Tourism (DOT), in coordination with the
12 Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and other concerned national
13 government agencies and local government units (LGUs), shall establish a tourist
14 protection and assistance council aimed at strengthening security and protection
15 measures for tourists and tour-service establishments. The council shall administer the
16 following:
17

18 (a) Adoption of uniform standards on signage for use to facilitate travel
19 throughout the country;

20 (b) Provision of directional signage in tourism facilities and destinations,
21 including airports, seaports, land border crossings, highways, and bus, train, and
22 other public transit locations;

23 (c) Preparation and dissemination of multilingual travel and tourism
24 information and promotional materials;

25 (e) Coordination with LGUs for the establishment of tourist help desks in
26 identified tourist destinations including free access to the internet and telephone;

27 (f) Institution of measures to prevent unlawful acts or harassment committed against
28 tourists including a system for filing a complaint; and

29 (g) Establishment of guidelines for disaster response and protection including

assessment for local preparedness and response capability, assessment of disaster risks in tourist destination areas, ensuring the safety of tourists, guidelines to evacuate, and creation of tourist disaster response guidelines.

SEC. 4. *Composition of Tourist Protection and Assistance Council.* - The Tourist Protection and Assistance Council shall be headed by the Secretary of the Department of Tourism (DOT) or its duly designated representative, and composed of a representative of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), other concerned national government agencies and local government units (LGUs) and such other representatives of other government agencies and private sector entities as may be determined to be appropriate to the mandate of the Tourist Protection and Assistance Council.

SEC. 5. *Funding.* - 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 existing appropriation of the DOT as contained in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, rules, regulations, executive orders, presidential decrees and other issuances inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,