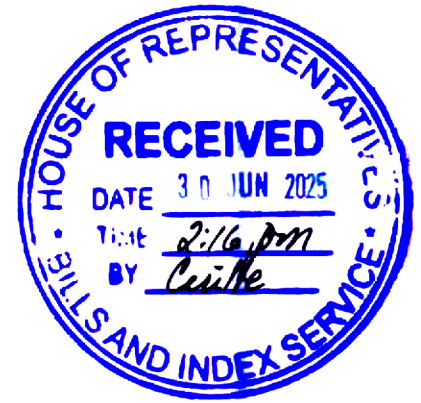


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 525



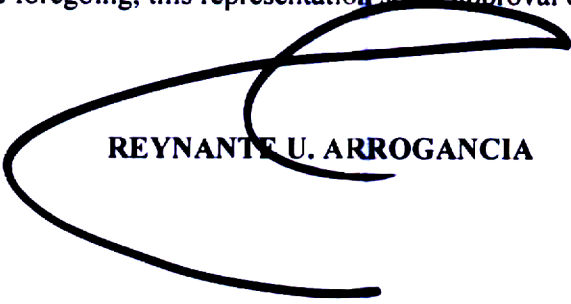
Introduced by Representative Reynante U. Arrogancia

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is an archipelagic country with water as part of its everyday life, hence the safety of passengers in ships is of paramount importance. It is projected that in 2025 the passenger volume in our ports will be more than 85.4 million. In December 2024 alone, there was a reported record of 4.7 million passengers during the holidays. With the increase in sea travel for leisure, education and employment, the safety of our domestic passengers and crew must be enhanced through comprehensive regulations on sea travel.

This bill seeks to enhance and ensure the safety and quality of passenger-transport services thru effective supervision and regulation of operations of all water transport utilities in the country. It also provides for the criminal liability of shipowners and crew members for malicious or culpable negligence in the course of the performance of their contracts of carriage under this proposed Act.

This bill has been filed in previous Congresses, but it is hoped that in the 20th Congress, this bill will become a law. In view of the foregoing, this representation seeks approval of this bill.


REYNANTE U. ARROGANCIA

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 525

Introduced by Representative Reynante U. Arrogancia

AN ACT
MANDATING SHIPOWNERS, SHIP CREW, AND CONCERNED GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES TO PROVIDE FOR AND ENSURE THE SAFETY OF PASSENGERS
AT SEA, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*Maritime Passenger Safety*
2 *Act.*”
3

4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to:
5

- 6 a) Enhance and ensure the safety and quality of passenger-transport services in the
7 country through the provision on board the ship of adequate safety equipment, strict
8 observance by ship owners, ship crew, and passengers of minimum safety measures
9 and standards, and the provision of qualified and competent crew personnel to man
10 and operate the vessels;
11 b) Provide for the effective supervision and regulation of operations of all water
12 transport utilities in the country, particularly those engaged in the commercial
13 carriage of passengers by sea, through the rationalization of functions and
14 responsibilities of various government agencies involved in the enforcement of
15 maritime safety laws; and
16 c) Provide the basis for the criminal liability of shipowners and crew members of ships
17 for any injuries suffered by, or loss of lives of their passengers resulting from their
18 malicious or culpable negligence in the course of performance of their contracts of
19 carriage with such passengers.
20

21 **SEC. 3. *Scope.*** – The provision of this Act shall apply to:

- 22 a) All vessels engaged in the carriage of passengers and goods for hire regardless of
23 tonnage, including such vessels of foreign registry temporarily used in Philippine
24 waters; and
25 b) All types of vessels required to be registered in the Philippines under existing laws.
26

27 Warships, naval vessels, non-motorized bancas, sailboats, and other watercrafts of less
28 than three (3) gross registered tonnage (GRT) shall not be covered by this Act.
29

30
31 **SEC. 4. *Mandatory Minimum Safety Standards and Measures.*** – All vessels covered by
32 the provisions of this Act shall strictly observe the following:
33

- 34 a. The showing of a film, at least of ten (10) minutes length and dubbed in the local
35 dialects of the points of origin and destination of the vessel, pertaining to the ship's
36 safety, health and sanitation in such places in the vessel, and in such times that will
37 ensure that most if not all passengers on board have effectively seen and heard the
38 same;
39 b. All watertight doors, potholes, ramps and manholes shall be securely locked and
40 checked prior to leaving port and must be regularly inspected during the voyage;
41 c. During any emergency, the posting of crew members and other personnel of the
42 vessel on strategic areas or points in the vessel as may be indicated in its general
43 emergency plan for the purpose of assisting the passengers to, or prioritizing and
44 ensuring their safety;
45 d. The clearing, at all times, of all passageways of any obstruction. Safe and
46 convenient storage for passengers' hand carried luggage must be provided; and
47 e. The wearing of the prescribed uniform and identification cards by the ship's officers
48 and crew, including security personnel, while they are on duty.
49

50 **SEC. 5. *Provision of Standard Safety Equipment.*** – All vessels covered by the provisions
51 of this Act shall at all times be provided with:
52

- 53 a. Life vests or life jackets on board the vessel in the quantity of twenty (20) units or
54 pieces more than the passenger load capacity of such vessel as determined and
55 authorized by the MARINA imprinted with the vessel's name, conspicuously stored
56 in any locker and must be readily accessible for use in any case of emergency;
57 b. Lifeboats or rubber boats on board the vessel in the quantity of two (2) units more
58 than what is sufficient to accommodate the passenger load capacity of such vessel,
59 including the crew members of the vessel, imprinted with the vessel's name
60 conspicuously located in strategic points or areas of the vessel, and must be readily
61 accessible for use in any case of emergency;
62 c. At least two (2) accessible emergency exits or escape openings in all general areas,
63 and the location of such shall be indicated by luminous signs visible in all passenger
64 areas showing the proper direction thereto;

- d. Independent red blinking lights as a part of, and indicating each emergency exit or escape opening for the purpose of assisting the passengers in identifying such exits in cases of emergency;
- e. Emergency lights, in good working condition, in all passenger accommodations, passageways and stairways that shall automatically switch on in any case of power failure in the vessel; and
- f. Sketches of the vessel indicating the locations of lifejackets and lifeboats, firefighting equipment, emergency exits, and the major sections of the vessel, passageways and stairways, including the vessel's general emergency plan, must be conspicuously displayed in the passenger lounges and inside cabins and suites.

SEC. 6. *Passenger Overloading.* – No vessel shall:

- a. Leave a port unless its manifest or passenger list has been prepared and made available by the concerned ship officer;
- b. Leave the port carrying more than or in excess of its authorized passenger load capacity;
- c. Accept persons or passengers without a valid ticket issued by the ship owner or its authorized agent;
- d. Allow selling or issuance of tickets on board.

SEC. 7. *Delineation of Functions.* – Notwithstanding existing laws, rules and memoranda and issuances the Maritime Industry Authority or MARINA shall promulgate rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) shall assist the MARINA in the enforcement of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations. For this purpose, it shall be primarily responsible for enforcing the provisions of this Act before any vessel leaves, or as it calls on, any port, and whenever, allowed by law, or when necessary, in the interest of the safety of the passengers, while any such vessel is on its voyage at sea.

SEC. 8. *Penalties.* – Any violation of the provisions of this Act shall be punished accordingly:

- a. Any violation of the provisions of Section 4 of this Act shall be punished with a fine not less than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) to the ship owners or juridical entity concerned. For the third violation of the same provisions, the ship owners and other responsible officers, as the case may be, shall be punished by an imprisonment of two (2) years and one (1) day;
- b. Any violation of the provisions of Section 5 of this Act shall be punished with a fine not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) to the shipowners or juridical entity concerned. For the third violation of the same provisions, the shipowners and other responsible officers, as the case may be, shall be punished by an imprisonment of three (3) years and one (1) day;

- 109 c. Any violation of the provisions of Section 6 of this Act shall be punished with a
110 fine not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than
111 Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) to the shipowners or employee or
112 agent concerned. For the third violation of the same provisions, the shipowners
113 and other responsible officers, or agent or employee, as the case may be, shall be
114 punished by an imprisonment of three (3) years and one (1) day;
115

116 **SEC. 9. *When Injuries or Deaths Occur.*** – Whenever less grave or serious physical injuries
117 or death of any passenger occur as a direct and efficient cause of any violation of Section 4,
118 5, and 6 of this Act as may be shown by evidence in a judicial proceeding, the responsible
119 persons of the entity shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) years but
120 not more than twelve (12) years, without prejudice to the penalties imposed in the
121 abovementioned sections.
122

123 **SEC. 10. *Jurisdiction of Courts.*** - The jurisdiction over a case arising from any violations
124 of this Act shall be in accordance with the pertinent provisions of Batas Pambansa Bilang
125 129, as amended: *Provided*, That if the violation occurred at sea, the court whose seat is the
126 most proximate in distance to such location of the vessel at sea shall have jurisdiction.
127

128 **SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from the
129 effectivity of this Act, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), in
130 coordination with its relevant attached agencies, MARINA, Philippine Coast Guard, and
131 private sector shipping practitioners, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and
132 regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.
133

134 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and
135 regulations, or other issuances, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
136 repealed or modified accordingly.
137

138 **SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If any portion of provision of this Act is declared
139 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall
140 remain in force and effect.

141 **SEC. 14. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
142 *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers in general circulation.

143 *Approved,*
144