

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

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
*First Regular Session*

**HOUSE BILL NO. 590**



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Introduced by **Rep. Jaime R. Fresnedi**

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### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This Bill seeks to declare certain sites and structures of the National Bilibid Prison in the City of Muntinlupa as cultural and historical landmarks and to provide for the preservation of historical structure and monuments thereat.

Spanning a total of 551 hectares, the National Bilibid Prison (NBP) is located in the NBP Reservation, Barangay Poblacion, Muntinlupa City. It houses the biggest prison population in the Philippines. As of May, 2023, the Bureau of Corrections reports a total of 30,457 total number of inmates in NBP.

The NBP has a vast and rich history. The Old Bilibid Prison was established in June 25, 1985 in Sta. Cruz, Manila and was transferred to a “remote” area in Muntinlupa, which was at the time a province of Rizal. The construction began in 1936 and was finished in 1940, to which the prisoners, equipment and facilities were transferred to the new location. Witnessing the World War II, specifically the Japanese occupation of the Philippines and later the Commonwealth Republic, the postwar era, the Martial Law years, and contemporary history, NBP has an enormous share in the history and culture of the country.

The NBP Reservation, with its immense land area which also includes within its walls a lake, has a number of landmarks and areas which are worthy of appreciation due to their cultural value. Its historically significant scenery and architecture should be preserved and maintained for future generations. Despite its dim undertone in the Filipino psyche, it is undeniable that the NBP deserves to be commemorated and valued.

These sites and structures are passive and silent witnesses in the important albeit grim events of our nation’s history. To name a few, according to the Museo ng Muntinlupa, the Japanese Cemetery “*is a garden dedicated to Japanese soldiers who were imprisoned and executed in Muntinlupa during the war*”. Many Japanese tourists visit the place to give respect due to their ancestors, hence, a Filipino-Japanese Peace Monument can also be found in the area.

The Director's Quarter serves as the official residence of the Director of the Bureau of Prisons. Built simultaneously with the New Bilibid Prison, the building boasts of a well-preserved pre-war architecture.

The NBP also has a Jamboree Lake which is known to be the smallest natural lake in the Philippines. Museo ng Muntinlupa states that "*the Jamboree Lake served as a food production unit for inmates from Cordillera, who developed the surrounding lands into terraces when they were transferred to the NBP.*" In the middle of the Jamboree lakes stands a long-standing statue of the Lady of Justice.

Memorial Hill is also another historical site. This is the burial place of Major Eriberto B. Misa Sr., former Bureau of prison Director who served for 12 years, making him the longest-serving prison director up to this date. It cradles a vintage Japanese cannon used during the World War II and a grotto statue of Our Lady of Lourdes where regular masses in the early 1950s were held before the establishment and installation of the Our Lady of Mercy Chaplaincy.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, the Administration Building which already bears the NHCP Marker which states:

*"Ipinatayo alinsunod sa batas Komowelt Bldg. 67 kapalit ng lumang bilangguang Bilibid sa Sta. Cruz, Maynila. Ang Pambansang Bilangguan ay inilipat dito nuong Nobyembre 15, 1940. Ginamit na kampo ng mga bilanggong sibilyang aksis na kinabibilangan ng 300 Hapon, 72 Aleman at ilang Italyano nang sumiklab ang ikalawang digmaang pandaigdig. Nagsilbing kampong sanayan ng mga sundalo ng bagong tatag na sandatahang hukbo ng Estados Unidos sa malayong silangan (USAFFE). Nilisan ng USAFFE sa pagdating ng mga Hapon mula sa timog na nagbunga sa paglaya ng mga bilangguang sibilyang aksis noong Disyembre 28, 1941. Ginamit ng mga Hapon na bilangguan ng mga kalabang sundalo at gerilya. Ilang ulit na nilusob ng mga geri;yang Filipino at kanilang Nabawi ito nuong 1945. Dito ipiniit ang naging pangulong Jose P. Laurel at si Jorge B. Vargas dahil sa bintang na pakikipagtulungan sa mga Hapon."*

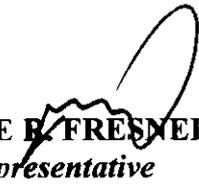
On January 29, 1999, the City Council of Muntinlupa passed the City Ordinance No. 99-020 which identified several cultural and historical landmarks situated within the its jurisdiction. Among them are the Jamboree Lake with the Liberty Statue, the Memorial Hill, the N.B.P. Administration Building (Maximum Compound), the Japanese Cemetery, and the Director's Quarter. The said Ordinance implemented the preservation, restoration, upgrade and maintenance of the identified cultural and historical landmarks.

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<sup>1</sup> Museo ng Muntinlupa, "Did you know that five of the six declared historical landmarks of Muntinlupa are found inside the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) Reservation Compound?," Facebook, October 5, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=612162816121355&set=a.304128800258093>.

Notwithstanding the Muntinlupa City Council Ordinance, it is deemed best to pass a national legislation that would institutionalize the protection and preservation of these historical landmarks and natural property of cultural significance.

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



**JAIME B. FRESNEDI**  
*Representative*  
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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**AN ACT**  
**DECLARING CERTAIN SITES AND STRUCTURES OF THE NATIONAL BILIBID PRISION IN THE CITY OF MUNTINLUPA AS NATIONAL LANDMARKS, PROVIDING FOR THEIR PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT, MAINTENANCE, OR RECONSTRUCTION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

*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 “*National Bilibid Prison Historical Landmarks Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Scope and Coverage.* – The following sites and structures of the National Bilibid Prison, located in the City of Muntinlupa, Metro Manila, are hereby declared as a National Historical Landmarks.

1. Administration Building (Maximum Compound);
2. Japanese Cemetery;
3. Director’s Quarters;
4. Jamboree Lake with Lady Justice Statue; and
5. Memorial Hill (Grotto ng Mahal na Birhen ng Lourdes).

SEC. 3. *Preservation Conservation, Management, Maintenance or Reconstruction.* – The National Historical Landmarks declared shall be preserved, conserved, managed, maintained, or reconstructed in accordance with the provision of Republic Act 10066 otherwise known as the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009.” In case of transfer of the National Bilibid Prison, the

National Landmarks declared herein, the preservation and conservation shall be borne by the local government of Muntinlupa, in cooperation with the NHCP.

SEC. 4. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall come from the special appropriations of the Bureau of Corrections. In case of transfer of the NBP, such amounts shall come from the annual appropriations of the city government of Muntinlupa.

SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.* — If any part, section, or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or any part thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*