

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 824



Introduced by Hon. Julianne L. Baronda

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The issue of missing persons is a matter of significant concern globally. Timely identification and reunification of missing individuals with their families are critical aspects of addressing this issue.

The National Missing Persons Database and DNA Testing Act is designed to establish a comprehensive framework that leverages modern technology and governmental resources to enhance the effectiveness of missing persons investigations. The Act proposes the creation of a government-backed National Missing Persons Database, which will serve as a centralized repository for information related to missing individuals. This database aims to streamline and coordinate efforts across jurisdictions, providing a unified platform for data sharing and collaboration.

To expedite and enhance the identification process, the Act includes provisions for free DNA testing for missing persons. This will not only aid in verifying the identities of individuals but will also facilitate accurate matches within the database, increasing the likelihood of successful reunifications. It likewise encourages interagency cooperation and establishes protocols for sharing information and resources among law enforcement agencies, forensic laboratories, and other relevant entities, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing the challenges associated with missing persons cases.

The ultimate goal of the act is to facilitate the swift reunification of missing individuals with their families, providing much-needed closure and relief to those affected. In conclusion, the National Missing Persons Database and DNA Testing Act is a crucial step toward addressing the challenges associated with any missing persons case. By leveraging the power of technology and interagency collaboration, this Act aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts to locate and reunite missing individuals with their families.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jam L. Baronda', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rep. Julianne “Jam” L. Baronda
District Representative

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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS DATABASE AND
PROVISION OF FREE DNA TESTING FOR CLAIMANTS**

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 Missing Persons Database and DNA Testing Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and rehabilitate missing persons including children gravely threatened by circumstances which affect or will affect their survival and normal development and over which they have no control.

SECTION 3. *National Missing Persons Database.* –The government shall establish and maintain a centralized National Missing Persons Database (NMPD), accessible to law enforcement agencies, relevant government departments, and the public for the purpose of aiding in the search and identification of missing persons. The NMPD shall include, but not be limited to, the following information for each registered missing person:

Photographs

Personal information (name, age, gender, physical description)

Date and location of disappearance Circumstances of disappearance DNA profile (if available)

Any other relevant identifying information

The government shall allocate resources and establish protocols to ensure the accuracy and security of the NMPD, as well as compliance with data privacy laws and regulations.

SECTION 4. *Free DNA Testing for Missing Persons.* - The government shall provide free DNA testing services to verify the identities of missing persons whose remains have been found or those individuals whose identities are in question.

DNA samples shall be collected from the missing person, their relatives or claimants, or other relevant sources, and shall be securely stored in a government-managed database for the purpose of identification.

DNA testing shall be carried out in accredited government laboratories with appropriate quality control measures to ensure accuracy and reliability.

SECTION 5. *Access to the NMPD.* - Law enforcement agencies, government agencies responsible for missing persons cases, and authorized personnel shall have access to the NMPD to aid in investigations and searches. Members of the public shall have limited access to the NMPD to search for missing persons but may not have access to sensitive personal information such as DNA profiles.

SECTION 6. *Reporting Requirements.* - Law enforcement agencies and relevant government departments shall report information on missing persons to the NMPD in a timely manner. The government shall establish reporting guidelines and protocols for the submission of missing persons' information to the NMPD.

SECTION 7. *Confidentiality and Data Privacy.* - The government shall implement strict confidentiality and data privacy measures to protect the personal information and DNA profiles of missing persons and their families in the NMPD. Unauthorized access, use, or dissemination of information from the NMPD shall be subject to penalties and legal action. The provisions of the Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012 shall govern the data stored at the NMPD.

SECTION 8. *Funding.* - The government shall allocate adequate funding for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of the NMPD and the provision of free DNA testing services as outlined in this Act.

SECTION 9. *Implementation and Regulations.* - The relevant government department shall establish detailed guidelines, regulations, and procedures necessary for the implementation of this Act, including the management of the NMPD and the provision of DNA testing services.

SECTION 10. *Effective Date.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation and the Official Gazette.

Approved.