

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
House Bill No. 2192



Introduced by Representative

BRIAN DANIEL POE LLAMANZARES, PhD, MNSA

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING A BURIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NATIONWIDE, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The passing of a loved one is a deeply emotional experience that should be met with compassion, dignity, and respect. However, for countless Filipino families—especially those in marginalized and low-income communities—death often brings not only grief but also financial distress. Funeral and burial expenses can be overwhelming, with even the most modest arrangements costing far beyond the reach of families already struggling to survive. As a result, many are forced into debt, delay burial rites, or are left to seek inconsistent, and often politically driven, sources of assistance.

Although existing government agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), and some Local Government Units (LGUs) offer burial assistance programs, these mechanisms are often fragmented, discretionary, and prone to abuse.¹ The issuance of Guarantee Letters (GLs), which should provide access to funeral services or financial support, is frequently subject to favoritism or personal connections. This creates unequal access to government aid, allowing burial assistance to be used as a tool of patronage politics rather than a public right.

¹ <https://financialassistance.ph/funeral-death-burial-assistance-programs/>

This bill seeks to correct that by institutionalizing a national Burial Assistance Program (BAP) under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), with implementation at the local level by city and municipal mayors. The program will establish clear and consistent eligibility criteria, standardized procedures for issuance of GLs, and strict anti-fraud measures to prevent ghost death claims and other abuses. A centralized database, COA-audited disbursements, and mandatory documentation requirements will ensure that the program is accountable, transparent, and resistant to corruption. This database will be available for all agencies with similar programs to utilize as a means for due diligence.

Institutionalizing burial assistance through legislation means transforming it from a privilege into a guaranteed public service. It depoliticizes access to aid by removing discretionary power from politicians and replacing it with a rules-based, rights-based system that ensures fairness for all. It affirms the dignity of every Filipino, not only in life but also in death, and reflects a compassionate and equitable government that stands by its people during their most vulnerable moments.

This measure also paves the way for a more harmonized government-wide burial assistance framework in the future. By starting with a clear, LGU-led program, the State can immediately respond to the urgent needs of grieving families while laying the foundation for more coordinated and efficient delivery of public funeral support.

For these reasons, the immediate passage of this bill is most respectfully and earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian Poe", with a stylized flourish extending from the end of the name.

HON. BRIAN DANIEL POE LLAMANZARES, PhD, MNSA

Representative

FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-List

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SECTION 1. Title.

This Act shall be known as the “Burial Assistance Institutionalization Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the dignity of every Filipino, including in death, by ensuring that indigent and marginalized families are provided assistance for the dignified burial of their deceased family members. The State shall institutionalize a standardized, accessible, and fraud-proof burial assistance program.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

- (a) **Burial Assistance** – refers to a financial aid provided by the government to eligible beneficiaries to cover the cost of funeral, burial, or cremation expenses.
- (b) **Indigent Beneficiaries** – refer to individuals or families classified as poor by the DSWD or local social welfare offices.
- (c) **Ghost Deaths** – falsified or fabricated death claims made to fraudulently obtain government burial assistance.

- (d) **GLs (Guarantee Letters)** – refer to official documents issued by LGUs certifying that burial assistance will be provided to a qualified beneficiary, and may be used to access funeral or cremation services.
- (e) **Local Government Units (LGUs)** – refer to city and municipal governments as defined under the Local Government Code.

SEC. 4. Institutionalization of the Burial Assistance Program. – A national Burial Assistance Program (BAP) is hereby institutionalized under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Department of Health (DOH).

SEC. 5. Implementing Authority. – The Local Chief Executives (Mayors) shall serve as the primary implementers of the program in their respective LGUs. The DILG shall issue implementing rules and guidelines to ensure the uniform issuance of Guarantee Letters (GLs), which will serve as proof of eligibility for burial assistance and be honored by funeral service providers.

SEC. 6. Eligibility Criteria. – Only the following shall be eligible to receive burial assistance:

- (a) Deceased persons who are Filipino citizens;
- (b) Certified indigent based on DSWD or LGU social welfare assessment;
- (c) Properly registered death in the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) or local civil registry;
- (d) Submission of required documents (see safeguards under Section 8).

SEC. 7. Amount and Mode of Assistance. – A fixed amount of up to ₱20,000.00 shall be allocated per eligible deceased person, subject to adjustment by the DILG in consultation with the DBM. The assistance shall be distributed through the respective LGUs.

SEC. 8. Safeguards and Anti-Fraud Measures. – To prevent fraud and ghost death claims, the following safeguards shall be strictly implemented:

- (a) Mandatory submission of PSA-certified death certificate;
- (b) Physical inspection and validation by a barangay health worker or municipal health officer;
- (c) Submission of burial or cremation photos as supporting documentation;

- (d) Submission of barangay clearance and DSWD indigency certification;
- (e) Use of a centralized digital database for burial assistance claims maintained by the DILG;
- (f) Annual auditing of program funds by the Commission on Audit (COA);
- (g) Random spot-checks and independent validation audits by DILG field officers.

SEC 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DILG, in consultation with the DSWD, DOH, and the League of Municipalities and Cities, shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), including procedures for the standardized issuance of Guarantee Letters (GLs).

SEC 10. Appropriations – The amount necessary for the first year of implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DILG and DSWD. Thereafter, such sums shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. Separability Clause – If any part of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain valid.

SEC. 12. Repealing Clause – All laws, executive orders, rules, or regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. Effectivity – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,


HON. BRIAN DANIEL POE LLAMANZARES, PhD, MNSA
Representative
FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-List