

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2581



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Introduced by **HON. BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN**

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**AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING A MAGNA CARTA FOR COMMUTERS**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The daily commute is a part of the daily lives of millions of Filipinos. However, it is often defined by long and uncomfortable journeys due to inadequate or inaccessible transportation services and infrastructure. This bill seeks to establish a Magna Carta for Commuters, recognizing the right of every person to move safely, affordably, and comfortably.

In 2023, the LRT-2 alone served over 49.42 million passengers.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the EDSA Busway catered to 23.3 million commuters in just the first five months of 2024.<sup>2</sup> With major infrastructure projects underway, like the North-South Commuter Railway which is expected to service around 800,000 passengers daily and the Metro Manila Subway which is expected to cater to 519,000 passengers daily, there is a vital opportunity to center the rights of commuters in future transport systems.

Parañaque City is a key transportation hub in the southern part of Metro Manila. It is home to the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX), the country's first integrated and multi-modal terminal.<sup>3</sup> The city has also seen significant infrastructure developments, including the opening of five new stations under the LRT-1 Cavite

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.lrta.gov.ph/lrt-2-sets-new-ridership-record-with-over-49-million-passengers-in-2023/#:~:text=The%20authority%20is%20projecting%20an,2.57%25%20from%202023's%20record%20figures>

<sup>2</sup><https://insiderph.com/uptrend-edsa-busway-saw-233m-commuters-in-first-five-months-of-2024/#:~:text=The%20EDSA%20busway%20ridership%20program,and%20May%20peaking%20at%206%2C054%2C779.>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pitx.ph/about/about-pitx/>


Extension Project.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the ongoing construction of the Metro Manila Subway includes stations within the city.<sup>5</sup> There are thousands of Parañaqueño commuters, and millions of Filipinos across the country, who stand to benefit from this bill that seeks to institutionalize commuters' rights and ensure their protection and prioritization within our transportation system.

Beyond mobility and access, transportation also has a profound impact on public health. A study linking transportation to health shows that factors beneficial to health include green spaces and mobility independence.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, factors such as air pollution, road travel injuries, noise, and heat, link transportation to detrimental health outcomes. This bill seeks to respond to these public health concerns by guaranteeing every commuter's right to clean air and safe transportation.

This bill is also consistent with the Philippines' international commitments. Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the State shall take measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to transportation, and eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility.

Moreover, this bill also seeks to achieve one of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which is to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



**BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN**  
*Representative*  
2<sup>nd</sup> District of Parañaque

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<sup>4</sup> [https://ppp.gov.ph/in\\_the\\_news/lrt-1-cavite-extension-first-phase-opens-more-to-come-jica/](https://ppp.gov.ph/in_the_news/lrt-1-cavite-extension-first-phase-opens-more-to-come-jica/);  
[https://www.jica.go.jp/english/overseas/philippine/information/press/2024/1555457\\_53492.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/overseas/philippine/information/press/2024/1555457_53492.html)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/business/map-metro-manila-subway-stations/>

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Glazener, Kristen Sanchez, Tara Ramani, Josias Zietsman, Mark J. Nieuwenhuijsen, Jennifer S. Mindell, Mary Fox, Haneen Khreis. Fourteen pathways between urban transportation and health: A conceptual model and literature review, *Journal of Transport & Health*, Volume 21, 2021, 101070, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jth.2021.101070>.

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**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING A MAGNA CARTA FOR COMMUTERS**

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

**CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** — This Act shall be known as the “Commuter Rights Act.”

**SECTION. 2. Declaration of Policy.** — The State recognizes the importance of mobility to the exercise of other fundamental rights, such as education, labor, health, and civic participation. The State affirms the right of every commuter to accessible, efficient, affordable, and safe transport systems. It shall ensure that transport services and infrastructure accommodate the diverse mobility needs of the population. The State shall also promote people-centered modes of transportation and institutionalize the meaningful participation of commuters in policy formulation.

**SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.** — As used in this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a. Commuter - refers to a person that needs to travel from one place to another, using one or a combination of transportation modes to get to their destination;
- b. Mobility - refers to the ability of a person to travel from one place to another to conduct daily and other activities and business;
- c. Public transportation - refers to forms of transportation available to the general public, whether publicly or privately operated, including but not limited to, trains, jeepneys, UV Express, buses, taxis, and tricycles.

## CHAPTER 2. COMMUTER RIGHTS

**SECTION 4. Right to Mobility and Availability of Public Transportation.** – Every commuter shall have access to reliable and efficient public transportation services that meet their mobility needs. The State shall ensure the adequate availability of public transportation, especially in underserved and rural areas.

Public transportation services and infrastructure plans should be updated on an annual basis to review and meet the country's evolving mobility requirements.

The State shall ensure the following:

- a. Every town and municipality shall have a network of safe sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and roads to enable travel around the city entirely by foot, bicycle, or by other non-motorized modes of travel;
- b. Public transportation is available within a 500-meter walk from any place in the city or municipality where people gather regularly for work, education, or leisure; and
- c. Public transportation is in sufficient quantity and frequency, such that commuter waiting time at terminals does not exceed 10 minutes during peak demand hours.

All public transportation terminals shall provide waiting areas with adequate comfort rooms, proper roofing, and ventilation to protect commuters from heat, rain, and other health hazards.

During periods when public transportation is deficient, the State shall employ alternative means of enabling mobility, including the use of existing public resources, such as government-owned vehicles, to fill temporary gaps in services.

**SECTION 5. Right to Safe, Convenient, and Affordable Transportation.** – The State shall ensure that public transportation is safe, dignified, convenient, reliable, and affordable.

Fares must remain reasonable and transparent. Discounted fares shall be offered for students, senior citizens and PWDs. The State shall provide subsidies to operators and drivers of public transportation to compensate for discounted fares. The State shall provide financial and non-financial incentives to promote the frequent use of public transportation.

The State shall also promote safe and efficient driving behavior by public transportation drivers through mandatory training and more stringent licensing. Such training shall be subsidized by the government and shall include modules on commuter rights, PWD accessibility, road safety, and basic emergency response.

**SECTION 6. Right to Inclusive Infrastructure.** – The State shall ensure adequate, accessible, and safe infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), including but not limited to sidewalks, pedestrian lanes, bike lanes, and ramps for wheelchairs and strollers. The State shall also maintain proper lighting on all roads and sidewalks to allow safe travel at night, and tactile paving on sidewalks for the benefit of visually-impaired commuters.

Public transportation and infrastructure shall be designed and implemented so that senior citizens, PWDs, and other persons with special needs are not excluded from their use.

The State shall also ensure that public transportation is supported by adequately-sized and well-maintained terminals and stops, with attention to the safety and comfort of commuters. In this regard, the State shall include in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of every city and municipality the development of a city/municipality-wide network of safe sidewalks, bicycle lanes, pedestrian lanes, and ramps, to enable travel around the city or municipality entirely by foot, bicycle, or by other non-motorized means.

No commuter shall be made to travel above or below street level to cross any street or intersection if it is possible to implement an at-grade crossing.

The State shall promote non-motorized mobility by requiring buildings and terminals to provide sufficient bicycle racks. Bike racks shall be located in visible, well-lit, and secure areas to prevent theft and encourage active transport.

**SECTION 7. Right to a Fair Share of Road Space.** – Commuters and non-motorized road users have the right to equitable allocation of public road space. The State shall prioritize road infrastructure that promotes high-capacity, low-emission modes of travel. Public transportation shall have priority use of road space over private motor vehicles.

**SECTION 8. Right to Clean Air and Environmental Protection.** – Commuters have the right to breathe clean air during travel. The State shall implement measures to reduce vehicle emissions, ensure compliance with the emission standards set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and encourage the use of electric and non-motorized transport.

The State shall measure air quality along major transportation corridors in all cities and municipalities and provide this information to the public in real time.

**SECTION 9. Right to Travel Information.** – Commuters have the right to accurate, real-time, and accessible information on transportation schedules, delays, routes,

fares, and alternatives. The State shall ensure that such information is prominently displayed at all stops and terminals of public transportation and at other locations deemed necessary or beneficial to commuters.

The State shall also ensure that, at all ports and terminals, a 24-hour information or assistance counter will be available to serve the needs of commuters.

A nationwide commuter hotline shall be established to receive reports of road accidents, harassment, and service disruptions. This hotline shall be operational 24-hours a day and connected to appropriate response agencies.

**SECTION 10. Right to Assistance During Service Breakdowns and Compensation for Service Deficiencies.** – In the event of service breakdowns or delays, commuters shall receive timely information, assistance, and a full refund of the fare.

Students and employees shall not be penalized by their school or employer for arriving late by reason of a public transportation service breakdown.

**SECTION 11. Right to Representation and Participation.** – Commuters have the right to participate in transport-related policy making through recognized commuter councils, public hearings, and consultations. Commuter feedback shall be solicited through online and other channels.

Commuters have the right to advance notice on any proposed policy, regulation, or project at the local or national level that affect their mobility, including details on how they will be affected by the proposed initiative. Commuters have a right to provide their comments and suggestions to a proposed initiative. Affected commuters must receive a response to such comments from the concerned public official within twenty (20) working days.

### **CHAPTER 3. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM**

**SECTION 12. Implementing Agencies.** – The Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Interior and Local Government, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, DENR, and the concerned local government units, shall be the implementing agencies for this Act. The DOTr shall be the lead implementing agency, responsible for coordinating and monitoring all implementation activities.

**SECTION 13. Commuter Protection Office.** – A Commuter Protection Office shall be established under the DOTr at the national level, and in all city and municipal government units, to monitor compliance to this Act, conduct reviews, and recommend policies to uphold commuter rights.

**SECTION 14. Functions and Responsibilities of the Commuter Protection Office.**

– The Commuter Protection Office shall perform the following functions and responsibilities:

- a. Coordinate with government agencies dealing with transportation policy to ensure the safe, efficient, and comfortable travel of commuters;
- b. Operate Commuter Help Desks in strategic places in each city and municipality;
- c. Assist commuters whenever the safety and efficiency of travel is compromised;
- d. Receive complaints from commuters regarding public transportation and infrastructure;
- e. Undertake education programs for commuters to know their rights and responsibilities; and
- f. Ensure adequate representation of commuters in any public consultation that will impact the welfare and interest of commuters.

**SECTION 15. National Transport Data and Planning Center.** – The State shall establish a National Transport Data and Planning Center (NTDPC) under the DOTr. The NTDPC shall collect and process the mobility data, such as public transport routes, travel data, road crash data, and air pollution levels, for evidence-based transport planning. The NTDPC shall ensure that data in aid of policy and research on mobility be open and available to the public.

**SECTION 16. Periodic Assessment.** – The DOTr shall monitor the implementation of this Act and report its status at least once every three (3) years to the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines.

**SECTION 17. Penalties.** – Any person or government agency who has been found to have violated any of the commuter rights provided for in this Act shall be fined by not less than two hundred thousand pesos (PhP200,000), but not more than five hundred thousand pesos (PhP500,000).

In addition to the above stated penalties, if the offender is a public official, they shall be dismissed from government service.

**SECTION 18. Appropriations.** — The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the DOTr of the year following its enactment into law. Thereafter, sums necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SECTION 19. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** — The DOTr, in consultation with relevant government agencies, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

**SECTION 20. Repealing Clause.**— All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, superseded, or amended accordingly.

**SECTION 21. Separability Clause.**— If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any reason, the remainder of this Act or the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

**SECTION 22. Effectivity.**—This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

*Approved,*