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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5715



Introduced by REP. JESUS ANGEL MANUEL “BONG” C. SUNTAY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) is the State’s frontline institution in safeguarding national sovereignty, regulating the movement of people, and facilitating lawful travel and migration. Yet, it continues to operate under the Philippine Immigration Act of 1940— a legal framework conceived in a vastly different era, whose provisions no longer reflect the technological realities, global mobility patterns, and governance demands of the 21st century.

The proposed Bureau of Immigration Reform and Modernization Act of 2025 seeks to institutionalize a comprehensive reform of the Bureau through four interdependent pillars: institutional restructuring, digital transformation, professionalization, and governance accountability. The measure transforms the BI into a secure, transparent, and service-oriented agency aligned with global standards of border management and migration governance.

First, the bill reorganizes the Bureau into specialized functional offices, including the Office of Border Security and Intelligence, Office of Digital Systems and Cybersecurity, and Office of Immigration Integrity and Internal Affairs, among others. This reorganization ensures specialization, operational coherence, and internal oversight to prevent abuse and inefficiency.

Second, it establishes the Integrated Immigration Information and Analytics Network (IIIAN)—a unified data system connecting the Bureau with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Justice, National Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Customs, and international partners such as Interpol. The IIIAN will use biometrics, real-time analytics, and artificial intelligence to detect identity fraud, human trafficking, and transnational crime, while ensuring compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 through encryption, access controls, and mandatory cybersecurity audits.

Third, the measure creates a Bureau of Immigration Career Service System (BICSS) and an Immigration Academy and Training Institute to institutionalize merit-based recruitment, continuous capacity building, and mandatory ethical certification for all personnel. These mechanisms aim to dismantle patronage networks, professionalize the service, and embed integrity as a condition of tenure.

1 Fourth, the bill strengthens transparency through the creation of a Digital
2 Whistleblower and Citizen Feedback Portal, quarterly publication of disciplinary
3 reports, and an Oversight Committee on Immigration Modernization composed of
4 legislators, executive officials, and civil society representatives. It also establishes a
5 Bureau of Immigration Modernization Fund, subject to Commission on Audit
6 oversight, to ensure fiscal accountability and sustainability of modernization projects.

7
8 The measure further mandates the creation of a National Border Management and
9 Immigration Coordination Council (NBMICC) chaired by the Secretary of Justice to
10 harmonize immigration, intelligence, and law enforcement policies across agencies—
11 ensuring national security without compromising human rights or international
12 commitments.

13
14 Through this reform, the Bureau of Immigration will transition from a paper-based,
15 transaction-driven agency to a data-driven, meritocratic, and rights-respecting
16 institution. The modernization framework will strengthen border security, improve
17 efficiency for travelers and migrants, curb corruption, and restore public confidence
18 in immigration governance.

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20 In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.
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REP. JESUS "BONG" C. SUNTAY

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2 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
3 Constitution Hills, Quezon City

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8 **HOUSE BILL NO. 5715**
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11 Introduced by REP. JESUS MANUEL BONG SUNTAY
12

13 **AN ACT MODERNIZING THE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION,**
14 **INSTITUTIONALIZING AN INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT**
15 **SYSTEM, ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL IMMIGRATION INFORMATION**
16 **AND ANALYTICS NETWORK, PROFESSIONALIZING IMMIGRATION**
17 **PERSONNEL, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**
18

19 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
20 Congress assembled:
21

22 **SECTION 1. Short Title.**

23 This Act shall be known as the “**Bureau of Immigration Reform and**
24 **Modernization Act of 2025.**”
25

26 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.**

27 It is hereby declared the policy of the State to strengthen border governance and
28 ensure the lawful, transparent, and efficient management of the entry, stay, and
29 departure of all persons within Philippine territory. The State shall modernize the
30 Bureau of Immigration (BI) to:

- 31 (a) Protect the integrity of national borders and uphold national security;
32 (b) Facilitate efficient and secure movement of people and goods;
33 (c) Prevent corruption, abuse of authority, and arbitrary enforcement;
34 (d) Professionalize immigration service through merit-based human resource
35 systems; and
36 (e) Harness modern technologies and data-driven approaches to ensure
37 transparency, efficiency, and accountability in immigration processes.

38 To achieve these goals, the State shall implement institutional reforms, technological
39 upgrades, human capital development, and inter-agency coordination aligned with
40 international standards on border security and migration management.
41

42 **SEC. 3. Objectives.** This Act aims to:
43

- 44 (a) Digitize all core operations of the Bureau of Immigration;
45 (b) Establish an Integrated Immigration Information and Analytics Network (IIAN)
46 for real-time data exchange among relevant agencies;
47 (c) Create a Bureau of Immigration Career Service System (BICSS) to ensure
48 professional competence and integrity;
49 (d) Strengthen oversight mechanisms and citizen feedback channels to ensure
50 accountability;

- (e) Institute fiscal transparency in the use of modernization funds; and
(f) Align national immigration management with global best practices while safeguarding human rights and the rule of law.

SEC. 4. Institutional Restructuring.

The Bureau of Immigration is hereby reorganized to rationalize its functions and improve efficiency. The reorganization shall include the establishment of specialized offices and services, as follows:

(a) **Office of Border Security and Intelligence (OBSI)** – to oversee risk assessment, coordination with law enforcement and security agencies, and intelligence analysis on transnational threats;

(b) **Office of Digital Systems and Cybersecurity (ODSC)** – to manage information systems, biometric databases, and cybersecurity protocols;

(c) **Office of Immigration Integrity and Internal Affairs (OIIA)** – to conduct lifestyle checks, internal investigations, integrity audits, and enforce disciplinary measures;

(d) **Immigration Academy and Training Institute (IATI)** – to design and implement professional certification and continuing education programs for BI personnel; and

(e) **Office for Migrant and Traveler Assistance (OMTA)** – to handle complaints, provide information, and coordinate humanitarian support for travelers and migrants.

Each office shall be headed by a Deputy Commissioner appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Justice, subject to Civil Service qualification standards and merit-based evaluation.

SEC. 5. National Border Management and Immigration Coordination Council (NBMICC).

There is hereby created a National Border Management and Immigration Coordination Council, chaired by the Secretary of Justice, composed of the Secretaries of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Department of Transportation (DOTr), and heads of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine National Police (PNP), and Bureau of Customs (BOC).

The Council shall:

(a) Formulate unified policies on border security, visa facilitation, and inter-agency data exchange;

(b) Oversee interoperability between the IIAN and other government databases;

(c) Coordinate intelligence and enforcement operations; and

(d) Submit an annual State of Philippine Border Management Report to Congress.

SEC. 6. Integrated Immigration Information and Analytics Network (IIAN).

The Bureau of Immigration, in coordination with DICT, shall develop and maintain an Integrated Immigration Information and Analytics Network that will:

(a) Consolidate all immigration-related data, including visas, travel records, blacklists, watchlists, and biometric profiles;

(b) Link databases of DFA, NBI, BOC, PNP, DOH, and the Interpol for real-time verification and monitoring;

(c) Utilize artificial intelligence-based risk assessment tools to flag suspicious

1 transactions and identity inconsistencies; and

2 (d) Ensure strict compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173) through
3 encryption, access control, and audit trails.

4 The IIAN shall be operational within three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act,
5 with a phased implementation plan subject to annual Congressional review.
6

7 **SEC. 7. Bureau of Immigration Career Service System (BICSS).**

8 A professional Bureau of Immigration Career Service System is hereby established to
9 govern the recruitment, promotion, and retention of BI personnel.

10 (a) All appointments and promotions shall be merit-based, subject to competitive
11 examinations and integrity screening;

12 (b) The Immigration Academy and Training Institute shall administer required
13 certification for all entry and promotion levels;

14 (c) Periodic performance evaluations and ethics audits shall be conducted by the
15 Office of Immigration Integrity and Internal Affairs; and

16 (d) No employee shall be assigned to the same port of entry or airport for more than
17 five (5) consecutive years to minimize vulnerability to corruption.
18

19 **SEC. 8. Digital Transformation and E-Governance.**

20 The Bureau of Immigration shall fully digitize its services through:

21 (a) Implementation of e-gate systems and biometric border control at all ports of
22 entry;

23 (b) Deployment of online visa application portals and digital residence permit
24 systems;

25 (c) Creation of automated passenger analytics for real-time data sharing with
26 partner agencies; and

27 (d) Integration of blockchain verification technology for authenticity of visas,
28 passports, and permits.
29

30 All digital systems shall undergo independent cybersecurity audits by DICT every two
31 (2) years, with findings submitted to the NBMICC and Congress.
32

33 **SEC. 9. Immigration Integrity and Accountability Mechanisms.**

34 (a) The Office of Immigration Integrity and Internal Affairs shall maintain a Digital
35 Whistleblower and Citizen Feedback Portal linked to the Anti-Red Tape Authority
36 (ARTA) for reporting corruption, inefficiency, or abuse.

37 (b) The Office shall conduct random integrity testing and lifestyle audits of
38 immigration officers.

39 (c) All BI personnel shall file detailed Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth
40 (SALN) annually and disclose potential conflicts of interest.

41 (d) The Bureau shall publish quarterly compliance reports on its official website
42 detailing disciplinary actions, case resolutions, and reform progress.
43

44 **SEC. 10. Oversight and Transparency.**

45 An Oversight Committee on Immigration Modernization is hereby created,
46 composed of:

47 (a) The Chairpersons of the Senate and House Committees on Justice and Civil
48 Service;

49 (b) The Secretary of Justice;

50 (c) The Commissioner of Immigration; and

51 (d) Two (2) representatives from accredited civil society and business organizations.

1 The Committee shall monitor program implementation, review budget utilization,
2 and ensure that modernization goals are met. It shall submit annual performance
3 reports to Congress and the Office of the President.
4

5 **SEC. 11. Bureau of Immigration Modernization Fund.**

6 A Bureau of Immigration Modernization Fund is hereby established to finance digital
7 transformation, human resource development, and infrastructure upgrading.

8 (a) The Fund shall be sourced from:

- 9 1. Annual appropriations under the General Appropriations Act;
10 2. Service fees from immigration transactions; and
11 3. Grants, loans, or donations from domestic or international institutions.

12 (b) The Fund shall be administered by a Modernization Fund Board chaired by the
13 Secretary of Justice, with the Commissioner of Immigration and a COA representative
14 as members.

15 (c) The Board shall adopt a transparent disbursement policy and publish annual
16 audited financial statements.
17

18 **SEC. 12. Protection of Whistleblowers and Witnesses.**

19 Any person who reports acts of corruption, data manipulation, or misconduct within
20 the Bureau of Immigration shall be granted protection under the Whistleblower
21 Protection Act of 2016, including confidentiality, immunity from retaliation, and
22 relocation assistance when necessary.
23

24 **SEC. 13. Penalties.**

25 (a) Corruption and Bribery. Any official or employee who demands or receives any
26 unauthorized payment or favor in connection with immigration services shall suffer
27 imprisonment of six (6) to twelve (12) years, perpetual disqualification from public
28 office, and forfeiture of benefits.

29 (b) Negligence and Delay. Any employee who willfully causes undue delay or
30 obstruction of modernization activities shall be suspended for the first offense and
31 dismissed for the second.

32 (c) Unauthorized Data Access. Any person who alters, discloses, or misuses
33 immigration data shall be imprisoned for five (5) to ten (10) years and fined not less
34 than ₱1,000,000.00.

35 (d) Private Contractors. Any private individual or entity found complicit in corruption
36 or data manipulation shall be blacklisted from future contracts, compelled to return
37 all payments, and subject to criminal prosecution.
38

39 **SEC. 14. Public Awareness and Stakeholder Engagement.**

40 The Bureau of Immigration, together with the Department of Tourism (DOT), DFA,
41 and the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), shall conduct nationwide campaigns
42 to:

- 43 (a) Inform the public about new immigration systems and procedures;
44 (b) Educate travelers and foreign residents on their rights and obligations; and
45 (c) Promote the Philippines as a transparent, secure, and efficient travel destination.
46

47 **SEC. 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations.**

48 Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Justice, in
49 coordination with the Bureau of Immigration, DICT, DILG, DFA, and NBMICC, shall
50 promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to operationalize the

1 provisions of this Act, including guidelines on digital infrastructure, data
2 management, fund utilization, and career service standards.

3
4 **SEC. 16. Separability Clause.**

5 If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions
6 shall remain in full force and effect.

7
8 **SEC. 17. Repealing Clause.**

9 All laws, decrees, executive orders, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are
10 hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

11
12 **SEC. 18. Effectivity.**

13 This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or
14 in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

15
16 Approved,