



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



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **6776**

Introduced by **Representative GIRLIE E. VELOSO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution mandates the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development that makes essential goods, health, and other social services available to all, with priority for the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women and children, and to endeavor to provide free medical care to the poor.¹ This commitment has progressively been translated into specific social protection statutes, including the institutionalization of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program under Republic Act No. 11310 as the national poverty reduction and human capital investment strategy of government, the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens pursuant to Republic Act No. 9994 which provides a monthly stipend to indigent seniors to help meet subsistence and medical needs, the Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act or Republic Act No. 11037 which establishes a national feeding program to address child hunger and undernutrition, and the Malasakit Centers Act or Republic Act No. 11463 which creates one stop shops in public hospitals to streamline access to medical financial assistance. Together, these enactments affirm that social protection is a legal obligation of the State, and that targeted assistance to the poor and vulnerable is a necessary instrument of social justice and human development.

The Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development has evolved as a core social welfare service that provides medical, burial, transportation, education, food, and other financial assistance to individuals and families in crisis. AICS is a social safety net or stop gap mechanism that supports the recovery of households from unexpected shocks such as illness, death, displacement, or disasters through integrated services that combine direct financial support, material assistance, and referrals for medical, legal and psychosocial services. Administrative issuances, such as DSWD Memorandum Circulars on the Crisis Intervention Program and on revised AICS guidelines, have repeatedly recognized AICS as a key social assistance instrument and part of ongoing efforts to make aid more accessible and better

¹ 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIII, Section 11

targeted. In other words, it is a social safety net that fills an essential space in the country's broader social protection architecture by providing immediate relief to Filipinos who fall outside the reach of longer-term, eligibility-based programs, and by acting as the State's primary channel for urgent, case-based support during crises that demand rapid, flexible and human-centered intervention.

Despite its importance, AICS remains an administrative program grounded primarily on department circulars rather than a dedicated statute, which leaves its mandate, coverage, funding, and governance more vulnerable to changes in priorities, budgets, and guidelines. The World Bank's comprehensive review of social protection in the Philippines underscores that the Philippine social protection system remains constrained by fragmentation across more than sixty programs and multiple implementing agencies, with weak coordination, incomplete monitoring data, and the absence of integrated information systems limiting the State's ability to identify who is reached, what benefits are delivered, and where gaps persist.² In the absence of a law that clearly places AICS within an integrated, data driven, and shock-responsive social protection architecture, crisis assistance risks remaining a patchwork of well-intentioned but uneven interventions that depend on administrative discretion, local implementation capacity, and annual budget negotiations. Institutionalizing AICS enables the State to scale up assistance rapidly when circumstances require it, protect households from falling deeper into vulnerability, and maintain continuity of support even as crises become more frequent and complex.

The proposed bill seeks to address these gaps by institutionalizing the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations Program as a permanent and regular component of the DSWD's social protection mandate. It does so by defining AICS in law as a standing safety net that provides financial, material, and psychosocial support to individuals and families in crisis, clarifying the types of assistance that may be extended, and affirming the central role of licensed social workers and qualified personnel in assessing needs and recommending interventions, while allowing reasonable flexibility for the Department to refine program design in response to emerging risks and evidence. By recognizing AICS as part of the State's integrated social protection system, the bill anchors crisis assistance in the constitutional right to social services, aligns it with existing programs, and affirms that helping families weather emergencies is a matter of right and duty.

Well-designed cash and in-kind social assistance programs yield substantial social and economic returns by preventing deeper poverty, protecting human capital, and speeding recovery from shocks. Timely cash transfers and access to essential goods and services reduce the impact of disasters on household wellbeing and enhance the effectiveness of emergency response and climate resilience investments.³ Anchoring AICS in law is therefore expected to generate returns in the form of reduced consumption volatility, lower risk of catastrophic health and funeral expenditures, better educational continuity for students in crisis, and more efficient use of public resources by minimizing duplication, leakages, and transaction costs for both government and households. When

² World Bank. (2018). Philippines: Social Protection Review and Assessment. Washington, DC: World Bank

³ Oxford Policy Management et al., "Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis Report" (2018)

crisis assistance reaches a large share of households, it can cushion economic contractions and support domestic demand, especially among low-income families. By providing a clear legal framework for AICS, the proposed measure strengthens the platform that can be used in future economic, health, or climate related shocks, thereby improving national preparedness and resilience.

The proposed Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations Act affirms the State's constitutional duty to provide social services and protect the poor and vulnerable in moments when they are most exposed and least able to cope. It brings an administratively vital but legally fragile program into the core of the statutory social protection system, aligns it with existing laws and reforms, and introduces safeguards, systems, and standards that uphold human dignity, transparency, and fairness for both beneficiaries and implementers. It protects Filipino families from the growing frequency and severity of crises, and ensures that crisis assistance is delivered as a right and not as a favor to the Filipino people.

In view of the foregoing, support for the enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.


REP. GIRLIE E. VELOSO
Malasakit@Bayanhan Partylist



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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **6776**

Introduced by Representative **GIRLIE E. VELOSO**

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS IN CRISIS
SITUATIONS (AICS) PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE
AND DEVELOPMENT AS A PERMANENT SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAM, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** — This Act shall be known as the “*Assistance to Individuals in*
2 *Crisis Situations (AICS) Act*”.

3 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** — It is the policy of the State, consistent with Article
4 XIII, Section 11 of the 1987 Constitution, to recognize access to social protection as a right of every
5 Filipino and a duty of the government. The State shall guarantee that individuals and families in crisis
6 are provided with timely, adequate, and accountable assistance as part of a nationally integrated
7 system of social welfare and development. In the exercise of this policy, priority shall be accorded to
8 the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized sectors, while ensuring that all citizens are protected against
9 social and economic shocks in a manner that upholds human dignity, and that is transparent,
10 equitable, and fair.

11 **SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.** — As used in this Act:

- 12 (a) **Assistive technology** refers to assistive products or devices whose primary purpose is to
13 increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities, to
14 enhance overall well-being and help prevent impairments and secondary health

conditions. These include wheelchairs, prostheses, hearing aids, visual aids, and specialized computer software and hardware, and other emerging technologies that increase mobility, hearing, vision, or communication capacities as may be determined by the DSWD;

- (b) **Case management** refers to a process of screening, assessing, planning, implementing, coordinating, monitoring, evaluation, and other interventions as applied by social workers in the Crisis Intervention Program Bureau, field offices, and partner service providers to improve the capability of qualified beneficiaries in addressing their needs;
- (c) **Cash relief assistance** refers to a form of financial assistance provided through outright cash grant to individuals and families who are in difficult circumstances such as but not limited to victims of calamities or disasters, crimes, armed conflict, economic hardship, violence against women and children, human trafficking, or students-in-crisis, and repatriated Overseas Filipinos, and other comparable situations as may be determined by the DSWD through assessment;
- (d) **Crisis situation** refers to a condition of an individual in a stressful economic, psychosocial, or environmental situation that impairs psychosocial functioning or participation in socio-economic activities, including access to education, work, and health care, which requires series of interventions to prevent further exposure to vulnerabilities, exploitation or abuse;
- (e) **Financial assistance** refers to a service provided through monetary support in the form of outright cash, electronic fund transfer, guarantee letter, coupon, check or voucher that has monetary value, intended for funeral assistance, transportation assistance, medical assistance, assistance to student-in-crisis, food assistance, cash relief assistance, and such other comparable forms of monetary aid as may be determined by the DSWD, serving as the umbrella category under which all types of cash assistance in this Act are classified;
- (f) **Food assistance** refers to assistance to those in need due to human-induced and natural calamities, displacement, eviction, demolition, or other circumstances resulting in emergency or chronic food insecurity as may be assessed by the DSWD, which include hot meals, food or meal allowance, or the cash equivalent of the required hot meals and/or food packs;
- (g) **Funeral assistance** refers to assistance to help defray funeral and related expenses such as transfer of cadaver, burial site, cremation, and other related expenses incurred by the family of the deceased, with consideration to context, cultural, and religious backgrounds;
- (h) **Guarantee letter** refers to a document duly approved and issued by the DSWD, which ensures the payment of the amount appearing on the document, that the beneficiary presents to any public or government-owned or controlled hospitals or other institutions, and to accredited private entities providing services, which shall honor such guarantee letters in accordance with this Act;
- (i) **Material assistance** refers to a service providing food and non-food items to clients who need immediate material support, such as food packs or vouchers, hygiene or

1 sleeping kits and assistive technologies, to be provided by the DSWD subject to
2 appropriations made available for the purpose;

- 3 (j) **Medical assistance** refers to financial assistance in the form of coupon, stub, guarantee
4 letter, voucher that has monetary value, or outright cash, given directly to clients or
5 beneficiaries to pay for hospitalization expenses, other medical treatments or procedures,
6 and which include complicated birthing procedures or high-risk pregnancies, as well as
7 professional fees, purchase of drugs, medicines, and purchase of assistive technology,
8 goods or other services prescribed by the physician of a health facility, complementary to
9 benefits under PhilHealth and other government health programs;
- 10 (k) **Student-in-crisis** refers to a learner facing serious circumstances that disrupt their
11 education and well-being, such as the loss of a breadwinner, family health emergencies,
12 abuse, or sudden livelihood crises. It also includes those affected by calamities or
13 disasters, orphans and neglected children, children of solo parents, incarcerated or
14 repatriated OFW parents, and working students struggling to continue their studies. It
15 also covers out-of-school youth in comparable situations of crisis;
- 16 (l) **Target beneficiaries** refer to individuals or families determined to be in a crisis
17 situation, wherein such condition adversely impacts their capacity to adequately provide
18 for their basic needs and/or to effectively recover from socio-economic, psychosocial, or
19 other adverse circumstances based on the assessment of social workers of the DSWD,
20 subject to equity guidelines prioritizing the poor and vulnerable, and with access to an
21 appeal or grievance mechanism established under this Act;
- 22 (m) **Transportation assistance** refers to the monetary support to cover the actual cost
23 incurred on land, sea, and air travel within the Philippines or related to repatriation and
24 reintegration of Overseas Filipinos as may be coordinated with DFA or OWWA,
25 including other related expenses as facilitated by the social workers of the DSWD.
- 26 (n) **Psychosocial support** refers to a service provided by trained or professional
27 psychosocial support workers and other qualified service providers accredited by the
28 DSWD to help meet the psychological, emotional, and social needs of beneficiaries and
29 their families. It is a set of interventions that intends to positively improve a person's
30 behavior to reduce the impact of stress brought about by a crisis through behavioral
31 modification interventions;
- 32 (o) **Voucher** refers to a document issued by DSWD with an equivalent monetary value that
33 serves as an authorization or proof for a client to receive goods or services from an
34 accredited partner such as but not limited to pharmacies, grocery stores, funeral parlors,
35 transport services, which accredited partners shall honor in accordance with this Act.

36 **SECTION 4. Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS).** — The Assistance
37 to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program is hereby institutionalized as a permanent and
38 regular program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, and shall form part of the
39 State's integrated social protection system. It shall provide financial, material, and psychosocial
40 support to individuals and families who are determined to be in crisis, as defined under this Act.

Each qualified beneficiary, upon assessment and recommendation of a licensed social worker of the DSWD, shall be entitled to appropriate forms of assistance, which may include medical, transportation, food, funeral, material, and cash relief assistance, as well as psychosocial or other professional interventions that the Department is mandated to provide.

The DSWD shall administer the program in accordance with the principles of timeliness, adequacy, equity, accountability, and respect for human dignity, and shall ensure its alignment with existing social welfare programs and available appropriations.

SECTION 5. Types of Assistance. — The following are the types of assistance that qualified beneficiaries may receive under this Act, based on the assessment and recommendation of licensed social workers or authorized personnel of the Department, duly approved by authorized officials:

- (a) **Financial assistance** – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (e);
- (b) **Material assistance** – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (i);
- (c) **Psychosocial support** – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (n);
- (d) **Medical assistance** – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (j);
- (e) **Food assistance** – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (f);
- (f) **Funeral assistance** – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (g);
- (g) **Transportation assistance** – as defined in Section 3, paragraph (m);
- (h) **Referral services** – services provided when the requested support is not within the range of services of the AICS Program, through coordination and endorsement to other appropriate programs of the Department, or to other agencies such as the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Department of Health, Public Attorney's Office, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, local government units, and such other government or non-government institutions, civil society organizations, and international organizations; and
- (i) **Other forms of assistance** – such additional services as the Department may determine necessary to respond to evolving needs and emerging crises, subject to appropriations and consistent with the objectives of this Act.

The Department shall regularly review and enhance the scope of assistance provided under this Act to ensure timeliness, adequacy, and effectiveness in addressing the needs of individuals and families in crisis situations.

SECTION 6. Modes of Delivery of Services. — The DSWD shall adopt different modes of service delivery to efficiently, expeditiously, and effectively provide financial or material assistance, psychosocial support, and referral services to individuals and communities in crisis, which shall include but not be limited to:

- (a) Service delivery within the Central Office and Field Offices of the Department;

- (b) Setting up of offsite or satellite service venues, including mobile service units, as may be necessary;
- (c) Implementation through Malasakit Centers established pursuant to Republic Act No. 11463; and
- (d) Transfer of funds to local government units (LGUs) and national government agencies (NGAs), subject to the execution of a memorandum of agreement, Commission on Audit rules, and mandatory liquidation and reporting requirements.

The DSWD is hereby authorized to procure or construct the necessary office systems, information and communication technology equipment, and such capital outlay as vehicles, vaults, and other facilities required for the effective implementation of this Act, subject to appropriations under the annual General Appropriations Act.

The DSWD is likewise authorized to establish and maintain an automated system for the processing and release of assistance, including digital payments and electronic fund transfers. For this purpose, the appropriations needed for the payment of cash-out fees or other service fees charged by partner financial institutions shall form part of the Department's annual budget under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. Cash Equivalents. — It shall be mandatory for accredited public and private entities providing services under this Act to honor guarantee letters, coupons, checks, or vouchers duly issued and validated by the DSWD as full or partial payment for services rendered or goods provided to qualified beneficiaries, subject to the submission of the required supporting documents and compliance with DSWD procedures.

The DSWD shall settle the corresponding verified obligation with the concerned public or private entity within three (3) months from the date of acceptance, in accordance with government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

SECTION 8. Authority to Receive and Administer Donations. — The Department is hereby authorized to receive and accept donations, contributions, grants, or bequests from government agencies, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, private entities, international institutions, or individuals, and to administer the same strictly and exclusively for the benefit of AICS beneficiaries, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations, including auditing and reporting requirements of the Commission on Audit.

Provided, That all such donations shall be fully accounted for and reported in the Department's annual report to Congress;

Provided, further, That no donation shall be accepted subject to conditions inconsistent with the objectives and provisions of this Act; and

1 Provided, finally, That all donations made under this Act shall be exempt from donor's tax
2 and shall be deductible in full for purposes of determining the taxable income of the donor, in
3 accordance with the National Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and relevant issuances of the
4 Bureau of Internal Revenue.

5 **SECTION 9. Integrated Program Delivery System.** — To improve the delivery of
6 services to eligible beneficiaries under this Act, there is hereby established an Integrated Program
7 Delivery System to be managed by the DSWD.

8 In keeping with the principle of equitable access and in order to maximize assistance under
9 the AICS Program, a mechanism for real-time data sharing between the DSWD and local
10 government units (LGUs) shall be institutionalized, subject to the provisions of Republic Act No.
11 10173, otherwise known as the "Data Privacy Act of 2012," and other applicable laws.

12 Under this mechanism, concerned agencies such as the Philippine Statistics Authority, the
13 Department of Health through Malasakit Centers, LGUs, and such other relevant government
14 entities as may be determined by the DSWD, may share and access information from a centralized
15 database for the following purposes:

- 16 (a) to identify the assistance already received by a beneficiary under this Act;
17 (b) to facilitate augmentation of assistance when necessary; and
18 (c) to prevent duplication, fraud, or abuse in the availment of services under this Act.

19 The DSWD is hereby authorized to promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to
20 operationalize the Integrated Program Delivery System, in coordination with the National Privacy
21 Commission, the Department of Information and Communications Technology, and other relevant
22 agencies.

23 **SECTION 10. Crisis Intervention Program Bureau, Divisions, and Units.** — To
24 ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services under this Act, there shall be established a
25 Crisis Intervention Program Bureau at the Central Office of the DSWD, Crisis Intervention
26 Program Divisions at the DSWD Field Offices, and Crisis Intervention Program Units at the Social
27 Welfare and Development satellite offices.

28 These offices shall be responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the
29 AICS Program nationwide, and for ensuring the proper operation of the program as an enterprise
30 information system within the DSWD.

31 The Crisis Intervention Program Bureau shall consolidate and evaluate the reports submitted
32 by the field offices and shall prepare a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation report for
33 submission to the Secretary of the DSWD.

1 The monitoring and evaluation report shall be made available and accessible to relevant
2 stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels, consistent with applicable laws on
3 transparency, accountability, and data privacy.

4 **SECTION 11. Personnel Complement.** — The DSWD is hereby authorized to create and
5 fill the necessary plantilla positions and adopt an appropriate staffing pattern required for the
6 effective implementation of this Act, in coordination with the Department of Budget and
7 Management (DBM) and in accordance with the revised compensation and position classification
8 system, the civil service laws, rules, and regulations, and other pertinent laws.

9 **SECTION 12. Program Monitoring and Evaluation.** — The DSWD shall conduct
10 regular monitoring and evaluation to assess the responsiveness, effectiveness, and impact of the
11 AICS Program. For this purpose, the DSWD shall develop and adopt applicable indicators,
12 frameworks, models, and tools, including a client and stakeholder feedback mechanism, and shall
13 establish standard reporting templates and procedures in accordance with applicable laws, rules, and
14 regulations.

15 The results of the monitoring and evaluation shall be consolidated in an annual report and
16 shall be submitted to Congress and other relevant oversight agencies, and made accessible to the
17 public, consistent with transparency and data privacy laws.

18 **SECTION 13. Program Transparency and Reporting.** — The DSWD shall annually
19 publish a comprehensive report on the implementation of the AICS Program for the preceding fiscal
20 year. The report shall include, among others, information on the total number of beneficiaries
21 served, disaggregated by geographical area and sectoral category, the types and amounts of assistance
22 granted, and the corresponding budget utilization.

23 The DSWD shall likewise post and periodically update on its official website a summary of
24 financial disclosures and beneficiary information in aggregated form, subject to the provisions of
25 Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the *Data Privacy Act of 2012*, and other relevant laws on
26 transparency and access to information.

27 **SECTION 14. Unlawful Acts.** — The following acts are hereby declared unlawful:

- 28 (a) The exercise of undue influence, control, or pressure by any public official, private
29 individual, or organization to obtain, divert, or deny assistance under this Act for
30 purposes of corruption, personal gain, or other forms of undue advantage: Provided,
31 That nothing herein shall prohibit lawful coordination, endorsement, or facilitation of
32 assistance by public officials or private organizations in good faith and without
33 discrimination, consistent with DSWD rules and within the bounds of their lawful
34 functions;

- (b) The submission, use, or presentation of falsified, fabricated, or misleading documents, or the commission of any fraudulent act to acquire or cause another to acquire assistance not lawfully due;
- (c) The coercion, inducement, or solicitation of any beneficiary to remit, share, or surrender any portion of the assistance received, or to apply or act on behalf of another for profit or favor;
- (d) The false representation of connection, authority, or affiliation with the DSWD, or the making of false promises of priority, special access, or expedited processing in exchange for money, influence, or material benefit;
- (e) The misuse, diversion, or misappropriation of funds, goods, or materials intended for AICS beneficiaries, whether by a public officer, private individual, or organization, including the deliberate delay, favoritism, or withholding of assistance to secure a personal or financial benefit;
- (f) The unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of beneficiary data obtained under this Act, in violation of Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012; and
- (g) The commission, assistance, or concealment of any other act of fraud, coercion, or deception that obstructs, manipulates, or undermines the fair and lawful implementation of this Act.

SECTION 15. Penalties. — The Any person who commits any of the unlawful acts defined under Section 13 of this Act shall, upon conviction, suffer the penalty of imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than six (6) years, or a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (₱100,000.00) but not more than Five hundred thousand pesos (₱500,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court, without prejudice to prosecution under the Revised Penal Code, the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, and other applicable penal laws.

When the offender is a public official or employee, whether of the DSWD or of any national or local government office, the commission of such act shall likewise constitute grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service, and shall be punishable with perpetual disqualification from public office, forfeiture of benefits, and such other administrative sanctions as may be imposed under civil service laws, rules, and regulations.

When the offender is a juridical person, the president, manager, director, trustee, or officer who participated in, consented to, or tolerated the offense shall be personally liable, without prejudice to the suspension or revocation of the organization's license or accreditation by the appropriate government agency.

Conspiracy to commit any of the acts prohibited under this Act shall be punished as a principal offense.

1 Any person who voluntarily provides information, testifies, or otherwise cooperates in the
2 investigation or prosecution of offenses under this Act may be entitled to protection and benefits
3 under Republic Act No. 6981, otherwise known as the “Witness Protection, Security and Benefit
4 Act,” subject to the determination and approval of the Department of Justice.

5 The DSWD, through the Department of Justice, is authorized to institute criminal and civil
6 actions on behalf of aggrieved beneficiaries or the government for violations of this Act.

7 **SECTION 16. Congressional Oversight.** — The DSWD shall keep the Senate Committee
8 on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development and the House Committee on Social Services
9 regularly informed of the implementation of this Act and shall submit annual reports and data
10 necessary for the conduct of oversight in aid of legislation.

11 **SECTION 17. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days from the
12 effectivity of this Act, the DSWD shall, in consultation with the Department of Budget and
13 Management (DBM), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the
14 Department of Health (DOH), and other concerned government agencies and stakeholders,
15 promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

16 **SECTION 18. Appropriations.** — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of
17 this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DSWD and other concerned
18 government agencies. Thereafter, the funds necessary for the continued implementation of this Act
19 shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

20 **SECTION 19. Repealing Clause.** — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
21 regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
22 modified accordingly.

23 **SECTION 20. Separability Clause.** — If, for any reason, any section of this Act shall be
24 deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions shall not be affected and shall
25 remain in force and in effect.

26 **SECTION 21. Effectivity Clause.** — This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from
27 its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general
28 circulation, whichever comes earlier.

29 Approved.