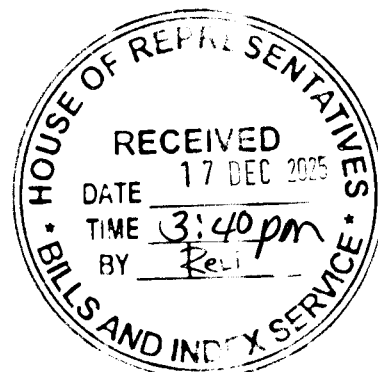




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6956

Introduced by Representative Nelson S. Legacion
Third Congressional District, Camarines Sur

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This proposed measure seeks to urgently address the growing crisis of stress, burnout, and declining psychological well-being affecting the workforce across both the public and private sectors in the Philippines.

Stress, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. While a natural human response that can push us to act on challenges, high and frequent stress is detrimental to both health and productivity.

The need for this dedicated leave is particularly acute given the alarming statistics. According to a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey conducted in September 2025, 34% of Filipinos say they feel stressed "frequently" in daily life. This represents a significant upward trend from December 2019, when only 27% reported frequent stress, wherein 32% experienced stress sometimes, 30% rarely, and 4% never. Furthermore, the Philippines' Mental Health Quotient (MHQ) has worsened to 68.76 in 2024 from 78.44 in 2023, based on the Mental State of the World report by Sapien Labs, non-profit organization based in Washington DC, United States of America.

This escalating problem is further marked by sustained burnout, job insecurity, and severe financial pressure from inflation and the high cost of living in the post-pandemic era.

This measure is consistent with the State's mandate under Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the Mental Health Act of 2018. This leave is supported as a proactive, preventative measure to promote holistic health and is in line with the findings that led to Civil Service Commission (CSC) Resolution No. 2501292.

The core of this bill establishes a five (5) working day paid Mental Health and Wellness Leave for all public and private employees, supplementing existing sick and vacation credits.

This intervention ultimately leads to higher morale, reduced absenteeism, increased employee loyalty and retention, and demonstrably benefits the operational efficiency and fiscal health of agencies and private firms.

This measure builds on significant legislative momentum established across the 18th and 19th Congresses. The initiative was originally pioneered in the House of Representatives by Rep. Romulo "Kid" Jr. Peña and was further championed in the 19th Congress by Representatives Camille Villar, Faustino "Inno" Dy V, Gus Tambunting, and Alfred Delos Santos, all of whom filed related mental health leave bills. In the Senate, a parallel measure was actively pursued in the 19th Congress by Senator Raffy Tulfo.

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


NELSON S. LEGACION
Representative, Third District, Camarines Sur



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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **6956**

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**AN ACT INSTITUTING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS LEAVE FOR ALL
EMPLOYEES IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "*Mental Health and Wellness Leave Act*".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State recognizes the right of all Filipinos to mental health and a healthy work environment. Consistent with the Republic Act No. 11036 otherwise known as the *Mental Health Act of 2018*, it is the policy of the State to promote the holistic well-being of all workers in both the public and private sectors by providing a dedicated, paid leave benefit to support their mental health, prevent burnout, and foster psychological resilience.

SECTION 3. Coverage. - This Act shall cover all employees in the Philippines, regardless of employment status, in both the Public Sector and the Private Sector.

SECTION 4. Mental Health and Wellness Leave Benefit. - Every employee covered by this Act shall be entitled to a Mental Health and Wellness Leave of five (5) working days per year.

This leave shall be a paid benefit with full compensation based on the employee's basic salary and shall be granted in addition to all existing statutory leave entitlements.

The leave is specifically intended for the employee's mental well-being, including, but not limited to, preventing burnout, recovering from work-related or personal stress, or addressing emotional and psychological concerns.

The Mental Health and Wellness Leave shall be non-cumulative (cannot be carried over to the succeeding year) and non-commutable (cannot be converted to cash).

The leave can be used in combination with other existing leave types, such as sick or vacation leave, subject to existing rules and regulations.

SECTION 5. *Usage and Requirements.* - The three (3) working days of Mental Health and Wellness Leave shall be granted on a “no questions asked” basis, requiring only the timely submission of the appropriate leave application form. This leave shall not require a medical certificate, attestation, or specific explanation of the psychological concern. The leave may be availed of consecutively for a maximum of three (3) working days at a time or on separate non-consecutive days, as the employee deems necessary.

SECTION 6. *Non-Discrimination and Confidentiality.* - Discrimination against any employee who avails of this leave, or who is managing a mental health condition, shall be strictly prohibited.

All information pertaining to an employee's mental health, including the use of this leave, shall be treated with the strictest confidentiality and processed in accordance with R.A. No. 10173 otherwise known as the *Data Privacy Act of 2012*.

SECTION 7. *Penalties.* - Any employer, official, or employee who willfully and knowingly violates the provisions of this Act, particularly the non-granting of the mandated paid leave or the commission of discriminatory practices prohibited under Section 6, shall be held liable.

For the Public Sector, any official or employee found responsible shall be subject to administrative sanctions under existing Civil Service laws, which may include suspension or dismissal from the service.

For the Private Sector, the employer, company, corporation, or entity shall be subject to a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00). The responsible officers shall also be held liable.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* - The necessary funds to implement this mandatory paid leave benefit shall be sourced as follows:

For the Public Sector, the amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the respective budgets of the national government agencies (NGAs) and in the annual budget ordinances of the local government units (LGUs) and government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCCs).

For the Private Sector, the cost of the paid leave shall be borne solely by the employer.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), shall jointly promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and effective.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,