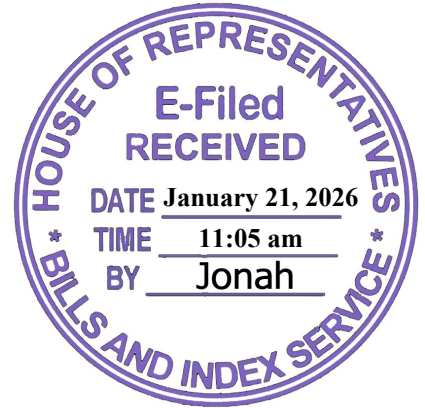




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7219



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez, and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR AN ANNUAL FIVE (5)-DAY SPECIAL EMERGENCY
LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
SECTOR DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY NATURAL CALAMITIES OR
DISASTERS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 18, Article II of the 1987 Constitution guarantees the protection of workers' rights and the promotion of their welfare. One way to promote workers' welfare is to entitle them to paid leave. Such leaves are a cornerstone of worker welfare, providing essential financial and personal support, which in turn promotes the well-being and productivity of the employees.

The Philippines consistently ranks as the most disaster-prone country in the world. According to the 2024 and 2025 World Risk Reports, the Philippines placed first among 193 nations, with very high disaster risk scores of 46.91 and 46.56, respectively. The country's exposure to a wide range of natural hazards, including typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding, landslides, and droughts, compounded by its geographic location along the Pacific Ring of Fire and within the Pacific typhoon belt. On average, the country experiences around twenty tropical cyclones annually, several of which result in significant destruction to lives, property, and livelihoods.

While the government continues to adopt measures to improve disaster preparedness and community resilience, a large portion of the population remains highly vulnerable. For many workers living in high-risk areas, natural calamities force them to evacuate, protect their homes, care for family members, and recover from losses, leaving them unable to report to work or fulfill employment obligations.

This bill seeks to institutionalize an annual five-day special emergency leave for employees directly affected by natural disasters. By granting this leave, the measure recognizes the real-life disruptions faced by workers during times of calamity and provides them with the time and protection they need to respond to emergencies without risking their income or employment status.

This proposed bill reinforces the State's commitment to labor protection, social justice, and disaster resilience. Further, this bill aims to promote a more humane and responsive workplace environment, especially for those who are most vulnerable to the increasing frequency and severity of natural hazards.

A similar bill was previously filed in the 19th Congress by Representative Gus Tambunting.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



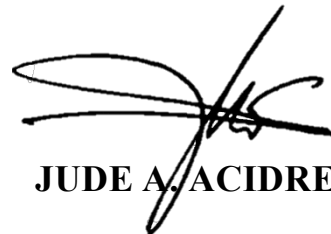
FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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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 “*Calamity Leave Law.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State under Article II, Section 18 of the 1987 Constitution to protect the right of workers and promote their welfare. In compliance therewith, it is of utmost importance that workers and their right to safe and healthful working conditions must always be upheld.

Towards this end, and consistent with legal instruments that protect and promote the rights of the workers, the State shall institutionalize a mechanism to grant special emergency leave to an employee affected by natural calamities or disasters. Labor, as a primary social economic force, shall be given the protection that the exigencies of time and circumstances mandate.

SEC. 3. *Applicability.* – All rights and benefits granted to employees under this Act shall apply to all officials, workers and employees, whether in the public or private sector: *Provided*, That this Act shall not apply to government workers or employees who render services during or on the occasion of natural calamities or disasters.

SEC. 4. *Calamity Leave.* –

- (a) Every employee who has rendered at least six (6) months of service shall be entitled to five (5)-days of special emergency leave each year, with pay, in times of natural calamities or disasters, based on any of the grounds specified in Section 6 of this Act.
- (b) This provision shall not apply to: (1) those already enjoying the benefit herein provided regardless of nomenclature; (2) those enjoying similar emergency leave of at least five (5) days in times of natural calamities, disasters, or personal emergencies; and, (3) those employed in establishments regularly employing less than ten (10) employees or in establishments exempted from granting this benefit by the Secretary of Labor and Employment after considering the viability of such establishment.
- (c) The grant of benefit over than that provided herein shall not be made a subject of arbitration or any court or administrative action.

SEC. 5. *Grant of Calamity Leave.* – The five (5)-day special emergency leave with pay shall be available upon the declaration of a state of calamity by the President of the Philippines or by any Local *Sanggunian* pursuant to Section 16 of Republic Act No. 10121, otherwise known as the “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010.” However, in case a specific area was not declared under a state of calamity but was nonetheless severely affected by the natural calamity or disaster, the head of the office or employer in the exercise of his or her sound discretion, may grant the special emergency leave to an affected employee based on proof of evidence presented or news account.

The special emergency leave can be applied for five (5) straight working days or on a staggered basis and will not be deducted from the employee’s leave credits. This special emergency leave may be availed of by employees within ten (10) days from the date when the natural calamity or disaster occurred.

SEC. 6. *Purpose of the Calamity Leave.* – Any qualified employee may avail of this special emergency leave on any of the following grounds:

- (a) Being stranded in affected areas where no means of transportation can ensure safe travel to and from work;
- (b) Disease or illness of employee incurred because of the natural calamity or disaster;
- (c) Attending to or caring for immediate family members affected by the natural calamity or disaster; and,
- (d) Urgent repair and clean-up of the damaged house.

SEC. 7. *Verification and Validation.* – The granting of the special emergency leave under this Act shall be the duty of the head of the office upon verification of the employee’s eligibility thereto. In determining the eligibility of an employee

for the leave granted herein, the head of office or employer shall take into consideration the following:

- (1) Place of residence based on the latest available records of the affected employee;
- (2) Declaration of calamity by the proper government agency;
- (3) Medical Certificate stating that the illness or disease was suffered by the employee or his or her immediate family member as a consequence of the natural calamity or disaster;
- (4) Availability of and access to public transportation on the day of the natural calamity or disaster;
- (5) Road closure due to the natural calamity or disaster along the route taken and could be taken by the employee to and from work; and,
- (6) Other matters that may aid the head of the office in his decision on the eligibility of the employee to avail of the said grant.

SEC. 8. *Suspension or Cancellation of Work.* – If the head of office or employer suspended or cancelled work on the occasion of such natural calamity or disaster, the employee may not be required to apply for the special emergency leave during such suspension or cancellation.

SEC. 9. *Non-cumulative and non-commutative.* – Unused leaves under this Act shall not be cumulative and may not be converted into its cash equivalent.

SEC. 10. *Non-diminution of Benefit.* – Benefits granted under this Act shall not in any manner mean any reduction, diminution, discontinuation, or elimination of other existing benefits already enjoyed by workers. Rights already vested

before the effectivity of this Act shall remain to be in full force and effect upon the passage of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Construction in favor of labor.* – All doubts in the interpretation and implementation of the provision of this Act shall be resolved in favor of labor.

SEC. 12. *Rules and Regulation.* – The Department of Labor and Employment and other government agencies charged with the administration and enforcement of this Act shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All law decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,