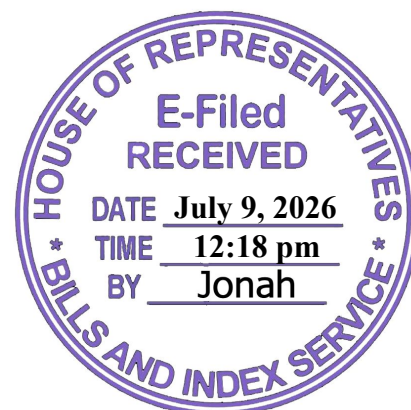


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10044**



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING HALFWAY HOUSES FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, FAMILY VIOLENCE, AND OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE, PROVIDING PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, TEMPORARY SHELTER, RECOVERY, REINTEGRATION, SUPPORT SERVICES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority's 2026 Factsheet on Women and Men, 3,343 cases of violence against girls were recorded in 2025, representing 54.6% of all documented cases of violence against children for that year¹.

As of 2022, 19,228 women have been documented as survivors of violence². These figures, however, capture only what has been reported, and only within particular demographics. Survivors across other gender identities continue to face violent acts and systemic discrimination that perpetuate harm³, yet remain inadequately recognized under existing law. Compounding this, only approximately 15% of Filipinos live in areas covered by local ordinances that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, leaving a vast majority without even baseline legal protection⁴.

Ideally, when victims are subjected to abuse or at risk of being abused, they must have a safe place to go to. Having immediate access to a secure environment is

¹ Philippine Statistics Authority. (30 April 2026). 2026 Fact Sheet on Women and Men in the Philippines. Philippine Statistics Authority. Retrieved from https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/phdsd/2026-Fact-Sheet-on-Women-and-Men_30Apr2026.pdf.

² Id.

³ Human Rights Watch. (21 June 2017). Just Let Us Be: Discrimination Against LGBT Students in the Philippines. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/06/22/just-let-us-be/discrimination-against-lgbt-students-philippines>.

⁴ Id.

essential not only to ensure their physical safety and protect them from further harm, but also to provide a stable foundation where they can begin the vital process of healing, rehabilitation, and rebuilding their lives.

Currently, the challenge lies not in the lack of designated shelter facilities to cater to these victims, but rather that these facilities are limited in number and geographic distribution, leaving many provinces, municipalities, and remote areas without dedicated shelter infrastructure.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) currently operates shelter facilities like the Haven for Women, which offer temporary shelter and protective custody for women ages 18-59 years old who are victims of involuntary or forced prostitution, illegal recruitment, battered/abused women, victims of sexual abuse, women in detention, women victims of armed conflicts and others⁵ and Home for Girls, for girl children aged 7 to below 18 years old⁶, but these facilities are still too few to provide sufficient coverage nationwide. At present, DSWD operates and manages about seventy-seven (77) Centers and Residential Care Facilities (CRCF) nationwide⁷. Of these facilities, eight (8) are dedicated as Havens for Women, eight (8) serve as Homes for Girls, seven (7) function as combined facilities serving both demographics, and none of which particularly cover survivor populations on persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC)⁸.

Thus, this proposed measure.

This measure aims to protect survivors of domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence by establishing inclusive halfway houses in every city and province. It ensures immediate, non-discriminatory protective custody and emergency shelter. Furthermore, the initiative mandates trauma-informed, child-sensitive care, strengthens local government capacity to deliver integrated services, and upholds survivors' rights to safety, dignity, and justice.

The establishment of a nationwide halfway house system represents a more inclusive and rehabilitative approach to the State's obligation to protect those who have experienced or remain vulnerable to violence. As both a mechanism and a framework for protection, recovery, and reintegration, it ensures that all survivors, regardless of gender, age, or sexual orientation, receive the protective rehabilitation and sustained support they are owed.

⁵ Department of Social Work and Development. Haven for Women. Retrieved from: <https://fo2.dswd.gov.ph/about-us/centers-and-institutions/haven-for-women/>

⁶ Department of Social Work and Development. Home for Girls. Retrieved from: <https://fo1.dswd.gov.ph/programs/center-based-services/home-for-girls/>

⁷ Department of Social Work and Development. Centers and Residential Care Facilities (CRCF). Retrieved from: <https://www.dswd.gov.ph/crcf/>

⁸ id

This bill draws direct inspiration from Quezon City's Bahay Kanlungan, the first-ever LGU-run shelter providing comprehensive medical, psychological, police, and legal assistance to women, children, and LGBTQ+ victim-survivors of gender-based violence. Recognizing the immense success of this local initiative, this bill seeks to enact a formal law that replicates and institutionalizes this protective model across the entire country.

Early approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



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ESTABLISHING HALFWAY HOUSES FOR SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, SEXUAL VIOLENCE, FAMILY VIOLENCE, AND OTHER FORMS OF ABUSE, PROVIDING PROTECTIVE CUSTODY, TEMPORARY SHELTER, RECOVERY, REINTEGRATION, SUPPORT SERVICES, 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 “*Bahay Kanlungan*
2 *Act of 2026*”

3
4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 uphold the dignity, equality, bodily autonomy, safety, and human rights of all persons,
6 and to protect survivors of violence, abuse, exploitation, and coercion through
7 accessible, survivor-centered, gender-responsive, child-sensitive, disability-inclusive,
8 culturally appropriate, and trauma-informed services.

9
10 The State recognizes that violence may be experienced by women, men,
11 children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and persons of diverse sexual
12 orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC),
13 and that barriers to reporting, protection, and recovery are often compounded by
14 poverty, discrimination, stigma, geography, disability, age, and unequal access to
15 services.

16
17 Toward this end, the State shall establish and maintain inclusive halfway
18 houses and related support systems that provide temporary shelter, protective
19 custody, medical care, psychosocial services, legal assistance, safety planning, and
20 pathways to reintegration and long-term recovery for survivors of gender-based

1 violence, sexual violence, family violence, dating violence, trafficking-related abuse,
2 and other analogous forms of abuse.

3
4 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* — For purposes of this Act:

5
6 (a) *Child* refers to any person below eighteen (18) years of age, or a person
7 eighteen (18) years or older who is unable to fully take care of or protect
8 themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because
9 of a physical, mental, intellectual, psychosocial, or similar condition.

10
11 (b) *Family Violence* refers to violence or abuse committed by a family member,
12 household member, caregiver, former spouse, current or former intimate
13 partner, dating partner, co-parent, or any other person similarly situated,
14 including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, verbal, digital, or economic
15 abuse.

16
17 (c) *Gender-Based Violence* refers to acts or threats of physical, sexual,
18 psychological, verbal, emotional, digital, or economic harm or suffering directed
19 against a person on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity,
20 gender expression, sex characteristics, or perceived nonconformity with social
21 gender norms, including coercion, threats, harassment, intimidation, stalking,
22 deprivation of liberty, and other analogous acts.

23
24 (d) *Halfway House* refers to a government-operated or government-accredited
25 facility that provides temporary shelter, protective custody, and integrated
26 support services to survivors. Such services shall include, as appropriate:
27 residential care, food and clothing, medical and mental health services, trauma-
28 informed psychosocial support, crisis intervention, case management, legal
29 assistance, child protection services, education support, livelihood and skills
30 training, transportation, security and safety planning, family assessment, where
31 appropriate, referral services, and aftercare.

32
33 (e) *Protective Custody* refers to temporary care and protection extended to a
34 survivor in order to secure their safety, recovery, privacy, and access to
35 services, subject to applicable laws, the best interests of the child, and the
36 informed participation of the survivor whenever possible.

37
38 (f) *Qualified Guardian or Caregiver* refers to a fit and proper person, family
39 member, accredited foster carer, institution, or other legally authorized
40 custodian found by the appropriate authority or social worker to be capable of
41 ensuring the safety and welfare of the survivor, consistent with existing laws.

42
43 (g) *Sexual Violence* refers to rape, sexual assault, acts of lasciviousness,
44 sexual harassment, exploitation, incest, online sexual abuse or exploitation,

1 and other acts of a sexual nature committed without free and informed consent
2 or under conditions where consent cannot be validly given.

3
4 (h) *SOG/ESC* refers to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression,
5 and sex characteristics.

6
7 (i) *Survivor* refers to any person who has experienced, is at risk of, or is in need
8 of protection from any form of violence, abuse, exploitation, coercion, or serious
9 threat thereof, whether committed in private or public settings, including within
10 the home, family, intimate or dating relationships, workplaces, schools,
11 institutions, online spaces, communities, evacuation settings, or other
12 environments.

13
14 SEC. 4. *Creation of Halfway Houses for Survivors* — The Department of Social
15 Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall procure, build, establish, operate, manage,
16 maintain, or accredit at least one (1) Inclusive Halfway House in every province in the
17 country, geographically accessible to the municipalities therein.

18
19 Every highly urbanized city, independent component city, and component city
20 shall likewise establish, operate, maintain, or accredit at least one (1) Inclusive
21 Halfway House within its jurisdiction.

22
23 These Halfway Houses shall accommodate survivors in need of immediate
24 relief, protection, recovery, stabilization, reintegration, or referral, without
25 discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, age, disability, civil status, religion,
26 ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender
27 expression, sex characteristics, or other analogous status.

28
29 Temporary accommodation may be provided for a period not exceeding ninety
30 (90) days, unless extension is justified by the survivor's safety needs, ongoing case
31 management, court processes, medical condition, child-protection concerns, or other
32 meritorious circumstances as may be provided in the implementing rules and
33 regulations.

34
35 SEC. 5. *Admission, Custody, Referral, and Discharge*. – Admission to a
36 Halfway House may be initiated through walk-in requests, referrals from barangays,
37 local social welfare offices, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, schools, courts,
38 women and children protection desks, anti-trafficking or child protection units,
39 community organizations, hotlines, or other authorized sources.

40
41 Adult survivors with full decision-making capacity shall, to the fullest extent
42 possible, participate in decisions affecting their shelter, services, safety planning,
43 referral, and discharge.

1 In the case of children and persons requiring supported decision-making or
2 protective intervention, custody, guardianship, placement, referral, and discharge shall
3 be determined in accordance with the Family Code and other relevant laws, always
4 guided by the best interests of the child and the safety and welfare of the survivor.
5

6 No survivor shall be returned, referred, discharged, or released to any alleged
7 perpetrator, abusive environment, or unsafe setting.
8

9 Upon the end of the period of stay, survivors may, depending on their
10 circumstances and informed preference where applicable, be:
11

- 12 a) Returned to a safe family or community setting;
- 13 b) Referred to longer-term shelter, foster care, residential care, or
14 supported independent living arrangements;
- 15 c) Endorsed for continued medical, psychosocial, educational, or legal
16 support; or
- 17 d) Linked to other appropriate government or accredited community-based
18 services.
19

20 SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation
21 of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of
22 Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Thereafter, such sums as may be
23 necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual
24 General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the respective budget of the DSWD.
25

26 SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from
27 the effectivity of this Act, DSWD shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations
28 to effectively implement the provisions of this Act, including the identification of eligible
29 beneficiaries, distribution mechanisms, monitoring, and reporting systems.
30

31 SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
32 unconstitutional, the provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force
33 and effect.
34

35 SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
36 presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
37 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
38 accordingly.
39

40 SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
41 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the
42 Philippines.

Approved,