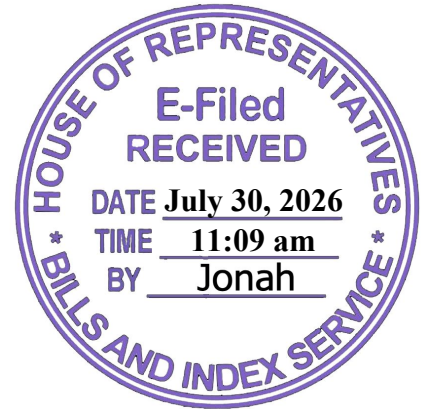


**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City**

**Twentieth Congress
Second Regular Session**

House Bill No. 10441



**Introduced by Honorable Representatives
DADAH KIRAM ISMULA (Akbayan Partylist)
JOSE MANUEL TADEO "CHEL" I. DIOKNO (Akbayan Partylist)
PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA (Akbayan Partylist)
KAKA BAG-AO (Dinagat Islands)**

**AN ACT PREVENTING, MITIGATING, AND RESPONDING TO RISKS
AFFECTING CHILDREN AND OTHER TOURISTS WHILE ON VACATION,
ENGAGING IN LEISURE, OR PARTICIPATING IN ANY OTHER ACTIVITIES
RELATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism in the Philippines is both a showcase of the nation's natural wealth and a vital engine of economic progress. With its extensive coastlines, rich marine ecosystems, and world-class destinations, the country has consistently drawn international acclaim. In 2023, the Philippines was recognized at the World Travel Awards as the World's Leading Dive Destination and World's Leading Beach Destination. That same year, the industry contributed ₱2.09 trillion or 8.6 percent of the gross domestic product¹. These achievements highlight the sector's importance not only to national revenue but also to local communities whose livelihoods depend on tourism.

However, the enjoyment of these attractions is not without risk. Visitors, especially children, remain vulnerable to accidents and health hazards such as drowning, jellyfish stings, animal bites, spinal injuries, and infectious diseases. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that in 2021, accidental drowning or submersion claimed 3,604 lives, with children aged 1 to 14 comprising 1,056 of the fatalities. Drowning was the second leading cause of death among children aged 5 to 9 that year.

Recent tragedies illustrate the urgency of stronger safeguards. On October 30, 2023, six-year-old Sandy O. Garovillas died after a box jellyfish sting at a resort where

¹ Philippine News Agency. (2024). Focus on tourism brings record-high figures for PH. Retrieved from <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1229430>

trained responders and adequate medical supplies were absent². Emergency care was delayed due to difficulties in contacting services and the distance to health facilities, leaving passers-by, a foreign medical student and a U.S. Army medic, to administer first aid. Pharmacies and hospitals nearby also lacked the equipment needed to treat the sting, despite the Philippines being identified by experts as “ground zero” for lethal jellyfish encounters. A similar incident occurred on June 8, 2021, when a seven-year-old girl died and two others were injured after contact with a box jellyfish in Camarines Sur³.

Tourism must therefore be pursued hand-in-hand with safety. Protecting visitors is essential to sustaining the industry’s growth and ensuring that the Philippines remains a trusted destination. Establishing emergency response systems, equipping local facilities, and deploying trained lifeguards and first responders are practical measures that can save lives and prevent injuries.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize mechanisms that will prevent, mitigate, and respond to risks affecting children and other visitors in tourist areas. It mandates the availability of life-saving equipment, medicines, and medical services in destinations across the country, thereby strengthening both public safety and the resilience of the tourism sector.

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



DADAH KIRAM ISMULA
Akbayan Representative



JOSE MANUEL TADEO
“CHEL” I. DIOKNO
Akbayan Representative



PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA
Akbayan Representative



KAKA BAG-AO
Dinagat Islands Representative

² Mangaluz, J. (2025). Her name was Sandy: Family’s tragedy inspires bill for child tourist safety. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/03/06/2426354/her-name-was-sandy-familys-tragedy-inspires-bill-child-tourist-safety>

³ GMA News. (2021, June 8). 7-year-old girl dies due to jellyfish sting at Camarines Sur resort. Retrieved from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/790737/7-year-old-girl-dies-due-to-jellyfish-sting-at-camarines-sur-resort/story/>

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RELATED TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as "**Child Tourist Safety Act**"
2 or "**Sandy Garovillas' Act.**"
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It shall be the policy of the state to ensure the
5 safety of tourists, especially children, while on vacation, engaging in leisure, or
6 participating in any other activities related to the tourism industry as part of the State's
7 efforts to strengthen its tourism industry by securing the safety of all tourists. Children,
8 who are most vulnerable to risks and hazards, require special attention, consistent
9 with the Constitutional mandate to safeguard their right to assistance including proper
10 care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty,
11 exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development. Furthermore, there
12 is also a need to study and determine the appropriate safety measures for children
13 participating in the aforementioned activities.
14

15 **SEC. 3. Covered Establishments.** - This Act shall apply to all individuals,
16 partnerships, cooperatives, corporations, or other legal entities operating tourism
17 industry-related facilities, attractions, and accommodations, whether accredited or
18 not, such as, but not limited to, hotels, resorts, water parks, and surfing camps, where
19 minors are allowed or reasonably expected to be present as guests, customers, clients,
20 or patrons. Tourism areas such as public beaches, natural parks, waterfalls, and other

1 non-privately owned tourist sites fall under the responsibility of the applicable local
2 government unit (LGU) concerned.

3
4 For avoidance of doubt, this is without prejudice to the definition of tourism enterprises
5 under R.A. No. 9208 as amended by R.A. No. 11862 or the *Expanded Anti-Trafficking*
6 *in Persons Act of 2022* and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

7
8 **SEC. 4. Emergency Planning and Risk Mitigation.** – To prevent and address the
9 risks affecting tourists, especially children, while on vacation, covered establishments
10 shall, in accordance with rules and regulations to be promulgated pursuant to this Act,
11 develop and implement a Tourism Emergency and Risk Mitigation Plan, to ensure that
12 minors and other visitors, guests or patrons are provided with timely, adequate and
13 age-appropriate access to medical, emergency, and other health care services, as well
14 as protection from other risks such as, but not limited to, those related to marine
15 hazards, drownings, abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

16
17 The Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Health (DOH), the Philippine
18 Statistics Authority (PSA), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources
19 (DENR), the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), and the Department of Interior
20 and Local Government (DILG), shall jointly develop and maintain a Tourist Safety Risk
21 Map identifying, mapping, and designating areas with hazards and threats to the
22 safety of tourists, especially children, on an annual basis. The Tourist Safety Risk Map
23 shall include data from community-based reporting mechanisms, peer-reviewed
24 scientific studies, and other relevant data for up-to-date monitoring.

25
26 Within six months from the effectivity of this Act, the DOT, DOH, DENR, CWC, and
27 DILG, in consultation with other relevant civil society organizations, shall promulgate
28 Tourist Safety Risk Map, covering the various levels and types of risk. These shall be
29 cascaded to the LGUs, by the DILG, and to accredited tourism industry-related
30 facilities, attractions, and accommodations by the DOT, which shall develop and
31 implement their respective Tourism Emergency and Risk Mitigation Policies.

32
33 The policies required shall include:

- 34
35 (a) Prevention Plan. – A prevention plan addressing the risks affecting tourists that
36 is age-appropriate which may include but is not limited to accidents, drowning,
37 animal bites, exploitation, trafficking, and other potential harms. The plan shall,
38 where applicable, include the installation of appropriate warning signs,
39 community education and awareness initiatives, and other preventive measures
40 stipulated in the Tourist Safeguarding and Protection Rules and Regulations.

1 (b) Health and Safety Services. – Provision of the services of health care
2 professionals, either on-call or on a full-time basis, depending on volume of
3 operation and distance to the nearest medical facility, as well as necessary
4 medical equipment and medicines identified by the DOH, and means of
5 transport to the nearest hospital or medical facility. In addition, they shall
6 ensure that there are, at all times, a sufficient number of staff members on
7 their premises with first aid training certified by accredited training institutions.

8
9 (c) Lifeguard Requirement. – Covered Establishments and Areas operating
10 swimming pools, or those in close proximity to beaches, lakes, rivers, and other
11 bodies of water used for recreational activities, shall ensure that there are an
12 adequate number of duly-certified lifeguards on duty at all times during opening
13 hours.

14
15 (d) Emergency Response Plan. – An Emergency Response Plan must be integrated
16 with the municipal or city disaster response framework. This Emergency
17 Response Plan shall be developed in coordination with the Local Disaster Risk
18 Reduction and Management Office (LDRRMO) to ensure that the establishment
19 has a clear and active communication line to local emergency responders,
20 ambulance services, and the nearest hospital or medical facility in the event of
21 a mass casualty incident or severe medical emergency.

22
23 **SEC. 5. Permits and Accreditations.** – LGUs shall ensure that all Covered Tourism
24 Establishments comply with the provisions of this Act prior to the issuance or renewal
25 of any license, clearance, or permit required for their operation. LGUs shall conduct
26 regular inspections of Covered Tourism Establishments and Areas to ensure the
27 effective implementation and enforcement of this Act.

28
29 Non-compliant Tourism Establishments shall face suspensions imposed by the LGU
30 following a graduated system based on gravity, frequency, and impact of the violation.
31 For non-compliant areas managed by respective LGUs, administrative sanctions
32 compliant with existing laws, rules, and regulations, shall be imposed by the DILG.

33
34 The DOT shall ensure that tourism industry-related establishments comply with the
35 provisions of this Act prior to the grant or renewal of accreditation. The DOT shall
36 conduct periodic inspections of accredited tourism-related establishments to ensure
37 full compliance of this Act.

38
39 Non-compliant Covered Establishments shall face sanctions imposed by the DOT
40 following a graduated system based on gravity, frequency, and impact of the violation.
41 There shall be coordination and data sharing between the DILG and DOT regarding
42 non-compliant tourism establishments for the other agency's appropriate action.

43
44 The DOT and the DILG shall establish and maintain accessible reporting mechanisms
45 in their respective agencies for citizens to report violations of this Act.

SEC. 6. Capacity Building and Training Subsidy. – To ensure compliance with this Act without imposing undue financial burden on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the DOT, in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), DOH, DENR, and the Philippine Red Cross, Philippine Life Saving Society shall establish a subsidized training program for tourism workers.

The program shall provide accessible and affordable certification courses on Basic Life Support (BLS), Standard First Aid, and Water Safety/Lifeguarding. The DOT shall allocate a portion of its training budget to subsidize the certification of costs for employees of qualified MSME tourism establishments.

SEC. 7. Penal Clause. - Any person or entity who violates any of the provisions of this Act or its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall, upon conviction by final judgment after due notice and an opportunity to be heard, be punished by imprisonment of not less than six (6) months nor more than two (2) years, or a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand pesos (PhP100,000), nor more than Five Hundred Thousand pesos (PhP500,000), or both, at the discretion of the court. If the violation is committed by a juridical person, the officer responsible therefor shall serve the imprisonment when imposed. If violation is committed by an alien, he or she shall be immediately deported after service of sentence, without need of further proceedings.

Negligence or failure to immediately provide first-aid to a minor who suffers physical injuries due to the use of a Covered Establishment's facilities, shall make the Covered Establishment liable for any hospital expenses incurred. In the event that these injuries result in death, a Covered Establishment shall also shoulder the burial expense of the deceased. If the death was due to non-compliance with this Act, the permits or licenses of the Covered Establishment shall also be revoked in accordance with this Act's Implementing Rules & Regulations.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The Department of Tourism, Council for the Welfare of Children, Department of Health, Philippine Coast Guard, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Interior and Local Government, in consultation with the Philippine Red Cross, Philippine Life Saving Society, and other civil society organizations and scientists, shall issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days from the effectivity thereof.

SEC. 9. Separability Clause. - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

1
2 **SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
3 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or
4 inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended
5 accordingly.

6
7 **SEC. 11. Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

9
10 *Approved.*