

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10474



Introduced by Representative KAREN HOPE F. GARCIA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Civil registration is a core function of the State. By recording births, marriages, deaths, and other vital events, government formally recognizes each person's legal identity and civil status and enables the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Despite previous reforms, the Philippines still faces serious gaps in civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) coverage.¹

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), as the central authority for official statistics and civil registration under Republic Act No. 10625, or the Philippine Statistical System Act of 2013, has advanced the modernization of civil registration and improved the production of vital statistics. However, several persistent challenges prevent the attainment of a universal, timely, and fully responsive CRVS system.

Delayed birth registration remains common, especially in unserved and underserved areas (UUAs) and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs)². Many children reach school age, or even adulthood, without a birth certificate. Since a birth certificate is frequently required for school enrollment, access to social protection, formal employment, land titling, and other services, these delays directly translate into exclusion. Existing late-registration procedures can be complex, time-consuming, and costly, which further disadvantages poor and marginalized families.

¹ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). 2025 Review of Progress Made on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific After a Decade of Getting Every One in the Picture. UNESCAP, 2025. <https://crvs.unescap.org/2025-review-progress/overview>

² WeSolve Foundation, Inc. Everyone Should Count: Barriers and Opportunities for Birth Registration in the Philippines. WeSolve Foundation, November 2025, citing data from the Philippine Statistics Authority and the Child Rights Network. <https://serp-p.pids.gov.ph/publication/public/view?slug=everyone-should-count-barriers-and-opportunities-for-birth-registration-in-the-philippines>

Registration is also incomplete among Indigenous Peoples (IPs), internally displaced persons (IDPs), foundlings, and children in conflict situations. A 2024 World Bank report, produced jointly with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, and the PSA, found that many IP communities are located in remote areas, rely on customary institutions, and face linguistic and cultural barriers that impede regular engagement with government offices³. IDPs displaced by armed conflict, natural disasters, or development projects often lose their documents or are separated from their place of origin and local civil registry. Foundlings and abandoned infants, as well as children born amid armed conflict, disasters, or displacement, are particularly vulnerable to non-registration and even statelessness, which may result in lifelong exclusion from formal systems and services.

Coordination across institutions is fragmented. The PSA, Local Civil Registry Offices (LCROs), barangay health facilities, the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and local government units (LGUs) all play roles in recording or using vital events. Births and deaths frequently occur in health facilities or in communities served by barangay health workers, teachers, and social workers. Yet mechanisms to systematically and consistently transmit information from these front-line providers to LCROs and PSA remain weak. In practice, many events are either never recorded, or reported late, and data across health, education, and social protection systems are not harmonized.

Interoperability among civil registration, health, and social protection databases is limited. At the local level, many LGUs still depend heavily on manual and paper-based processes. Numerous LCROs use paper logbooks and manual encoding, with insufficient storage, back-up, and disaster-proofing of records.

Given these legal, institutional, and operational gaps, there is a strong need for a new legislative framework that will transform the Philippine CRVS system into a comprehensive, inclusive, digital, and responsive backbone for governance and social protection. The proposed “Civil Registration Inclusion and Accessibility Act” seeks to:

- 1) Guarantee universal, inclusive, and timely registration of all vital events, with special attention to Indigenous Peoples, internally displaced persons, foundlings, children in conflict situations, and other marginalized groups. The bill

³ World Bank, in partnership with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, and the Philippine Statistics Authority. No Data, No Story: Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. World Bank, May 2024.

institutionalizes mobile registration, outreach programs, and mechanisms for fee waivers or penalty condonation for indigent applicants and those in exceptional circumstances.

- 2) Create a robust inter-agency governance mechanism through a National CRVS Inter-Agency Council chaired by the PSA, with mandatory participation from DILG, DOH, DepEd, DSWD, DFA, DOJ, DICT, LGU leagues, and other relevant bodies. This Council will be responsible for policy harmonization, standard-setting, performance monitoring, and coordinated implementation across national and local levels.
- 3) Integrate health, education, and social protection systems with CRVS by mandating electronic notification of births, deaths, and other vital events by health facilities and relevant front-line service providers. The bill provides for secure and privacy-compliant interoperability among CRVS, health information systems, and social protection registries to enable more accurate targeting, reduce duplication, and improve service delivery.
- 4) Accelerate digitalization and modernization of civil registration processes. The bill mandates a phased transition from manual and paper-based systems to electronic civil registration, the digitization and back-up of existing records, and the establishment of secure, interoperable platforms that link LCROs with the PSA. It aligns these efforts with existing national ICT and digital government policies, while embedding privacy and data protection principles.
- 5) Strengthen the capacity and resourcing of LCROs, especially in GIDAs and low-income LGUs. The bill obliges LGUs to maintain adequately staffed and trained LCROs, with budgetary allocations for CRVS operations, ICT investments, and outreach. It also authorizes national government support through technical assistance, funding grants, and performance-based incentives to encourage improvements in completeness and timeliness of registration.
- 6) Institutionalize the systematic use of vital statistics for evidence-based planning, disaster risk reduction and management, public health surveillance, and social welfare programming. The PSA is mandated to produce regular, disaggregated vital statistics and to work with national agencies and LGUs to embed these data in their planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes. The bill requires an annual “State of CRVS” report to Congress, fostering transparency and legislative oversight.

By addressing these legal, institutional, and operational gaps, the proposed Act will help ensure that every person in the Philippines is counted, recognized, and protected from birth to death. It will equip government at all levels with reliable, timely, and disaggregated data to design and deliver more equitable, effective, and

accountable policies and programs, particularly for those who are currently invisible to the State.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KHFG' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Rep. KAREN HOPE F. GARCIA
3rd District, Province of Cebu

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **10474**

Introduced by Representative KAREN HOPE F. GARCIA

AN ACT
ENSURING INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE CIVIL REGISTRATION FOR
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, FOUNDLINGS,
AND OTHER MARGINALIZED GROUPS, STRENGTHENING LOCAL CIVIL
REGISTRY OFFICES, PROMOTING DIGITAL AND INTEROPERABLE
REGISTRATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Civil Registration Inclusion and Accessibility Act."

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to recognize that civil registration is essential to the protection and realization of the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of all persons. Pursuant to Article II, Sections 1, 5, 11, and 15 of the Constitution, and consistent with the Philippines' international human rights and development commitments, the State shall guarantee that all persons, especially those in unserved and underserved areas (UUAs), geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs), and marginalized and vulnerable populations, have accessible, affordable, and timely access to civil registration services and documents.

Section 3. Definition of Terms. For the purpose of this Act:

- (a) **Civil Registration** – refers to the continuous, permanent, compulsory, and universal recording of the occurrence and characteristics of vital events pertaining to the population, as provided by law, in appropriate registers.
- (b) **Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) System** – refers to the integrated institutional, legal, technical, and operational arrangements by which civil registration is conducted, records are stored and managed, and vital statistics are produced, disseminated, and used.
- (c) **Data Privacy and Protection** – refer to the principles and rules embodied in Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012,” and its implementing rules and regulations.
- (d) **Digital or Electronic Civil Registry** – refers to systems and processes where civil registry records and related services are generated, recorded, stored, transmitted, and retrieved in digital or electronic form using secure information and communications technology.
- (e) **Foundling** – refers to a deserted or abandoned child or infant with unknown facts of birth and parentage, as defined under Republic Act No. 11767, otherwise known as the "Foundling Recognition and Protection Act."
- (f) **Indigenous Peoples (IPs)** – refer to groups of people as defined in Republic Act No. 8371, otherwise known as the “Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act of 1997.”
- (g) **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** – refer to individuals or groups who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of or in order to avoid armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, natural or human-made disasters, or development projects, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.
- (h) **Interoperability** – refers to the ability of different information systems, devices, applications, or components to connect, communicate, exchange, and make use of data in a coordinated and secure manner, based on agreed standards.
- (i) **Local Civil Registry Office (LCRO)** – refers to the office established in a city or municipality that is responsible for the registration of vital events occurring within its territorial jurisdiction and for the issuance of certified copies and certifications thereof.
- (j) **National Authority for Child Care (NACC)** – refers to the agency created under Republic Act No. 11642, otherwise known as the "Domestic Administrative Adoption and Alternative Child Care Act," which exercises jurisdiction over the registration, alternative care, and protection of foundlings under Republic Act No. 11767.

- (k) **Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)** – refers to the central statistical authority of the Philippines created under Republic Act No. 10625, which is responsible for civil registration and the production of official vital statistics, among others.
- (l) **Unserved and Underserved Areas (UUAs) and Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs)** – refer to areas that experience physical, economic, social, or security-related barriers to accessing civil registration and other basic services, as defined by the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the PSA.
- (m) **Vital Events** – refer to events that have a bearing on the civil status of individuals, including but not limited to: live birth, death, fetal death, marriage, divorce or legal separation, annulment of marriage, declaration of nullity of marriage, adoption, legitimation, recognition, and changes of name or civil status.
- (n) **Vital Statistics** – refer to the statistical information derived from civil registration records and other administrative sources that relate to the occurrence and characteristics of vital events in the population.

Section 4. Lead Implementing Agency. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) shall be the principal implementing agency of this Act, with primary jurisdiction over civil registration standards, systems development, production of vital statistics, and overall coordination of the CRVS system. The PSA shall:

- (a) Formulate national policies, standards, and guidelines for civil registration and vital statistics;
- (b) Develop and maintain the national CRVS information system and central civil registry database;
- (c) Provide technical assistance, training, and capacity-building to LCROs and other implementing agencies;
- (d) Ensure the regular compilation, analysis, and dissemination of disaggregated vital statistics; and
- (e) Coordinate with relevant agencies for the secure interoperability of CRVS with health, education, and social protection databases, subject to data privacy and security safeguards.

CHAPTER II

UNIVERSAL AND INCLUSIVE CIVIL REGISTRATION

Section 5. Universal, Compulsory, and Timely Registration. All vital events occurring in the Philippines, and those involving Filipino citizens abroad as provided by law, shall be registered in accordance with existing substantive laws and the standards set under this Act.

Registration of births and deaths shall be compulsory and shall be free of charge at the point of registration for the initial recording. Reasonable fees may be imposed for certified copies and other services, subject to national and local regulations: Provided, That such fees may be reduced or waived for indigent applicants as determined under this Act and its implementing rules and regulations. As a minimum standard, applicants certified as indigent by the concerned barangay or the Department of Social Welfare and Development shall be entitled to a full waiver of fees for the registration of births and deaths, including late registration, without prejudice to more favorable terms that the implementing rules and regulations may provide.

Section 6. *Inclusion of Marginalized and Vulnerable Groups.* The State shall adopt special measures to ensure the registration of vital events affecting:

- (a) Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Cultural Communities;
- (b) Internally displaced persons and residents of conflict-affected or disaster-affected areas;
- (c) Foundlings, abandoned infants, and children without known parentage;
- (d) Children in conflict situations, including those in conflict with the law and those affected by armed conflict or disasters;
- (e) Persons with disabilities; and
- (f) Other marginalized or vulnerable groups as may be identified in the implementing rules and regulations.

The PSA, in coordination with the DILG, LCROs, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), the National Authority for Child Care (NACC) with respect to foundlings pursuant to Republic Act No. 11767, and other relevant agencies, shall develop simplified, culturally appropriate, and accessible procedures for the registration of such persons, including mechanisms for late registration, documentary substitution, and fee waivers, subject to safeguards against fraud.

For foundlings, the registration procedure under Republic Act No. 11767 and its implementing rules shall govern, and the Local Civil Registry Office shall issue the Certificate of Live Birth on the basis of the documentary requirements prescribed therein. For purposes of this Act, delayed registration shall refer to registration made more than thirty (30) days from the occurrence of the vital event, and shall remain subject to the simplified requirements and fee waivers provided herein.

Section 7. *Mobile Registration and Community Outreach.* LCROs, with the support of LGUs, PSA, and other agencies, shall conduct regular mobile registration

and community outreach activities in UUAs, GIDAs, IP communities, evacuation centers, and other priority areas identified under this Act. The PSA shall issue guidelines for planning, funding, and monitoring these activities.

Section 8. *Registration of Vital Events Concerning Filipinos Abroad.* The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), through Philippine Foreign Service Posts, shall facilitate the reporting and registration of births, deaths, marriages, and other vital events involving Filipino citizens abroad, and shall transmit such records to the PSA in electronic form, consistent with existing laws, treaties, and the standards set by the PSA.

CHAPTER III INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND COORDINATION

Section 9. *National CRVS Inter-Agency Council.* – There is hereby created a National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Inter-Agency Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Council,” to ensure policy coherence, coordination, and accountability in the implementation of this Act.

(a) **Composition.** – The Council shall be chaired by the PSA and composed of representatives, at least at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level, from the following:

- (1) Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- (2) Department of Health (DOH);
- (3) Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- (4) Department of Education (DepEd);
- (5) National Authority for Child Care (NACC);
- (6) Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA);
- (7) Department of Justice (DOJ);
- (8) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- (9) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP);
- (10) National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF);
- (11) Office of Civil Defense (OCD);
- (12) Commission on Human Rights (CHR); and
- (13) Leagues of Provinces, Cities, and Municipalities of the Philippines.

The Council may invite other agencies, development partners, and civil society organizations as observers or resource persons.

(b) **Functions.** – The Council shall:

- (1) Formulate and periodically update a National CRVS Strategy;
- (2) Harmonize policies, procedures, and standards on civil registration and vital statistics across agencies;
- (3) Coordinate capacity-building, funding, and technical support for LCROs and other implementers;
- (4) Oversee the integration and interoperability of CRVS with relevant sectoral databases, subject to privacy and security safeguards;
- (5) Establish performance indicators and targets for CRVS; and
- (6) Submit an annual “State of CRVS in the Philippines” report to Congress and the Office of the President.

Section 10. Roles of Key Agencies. – In addition to their existing mandates, the following agencies shall have the specific responsibilities:

- (a) **Department of Interior and Local Government** – Ensure that LGUs establish, staff, and adequately resource LCROs; issue directives and performance standards for LCROs; and integrate CRVS targets into local governance performance systems.
- (b) **Department of Health** – Require all public and private health facilities to routinely record and electronically submit notifications of births, deaths, and fetal deaths to LCROs and the PSA; integrate CRVS requirements into health information systems; and support cause-of-death certification.
- (c) **Department of Social Welfare and Development** – Integrate civil registration assistance into social protection programs; prioritize support for late registration of indigent families, IPs, IDPs, and other vulnerable groups; and use CRVS data in targeting and monitoring.
- (d) **National Authority for Child Care** – Register foundlings and process the issuance of Certificates of Live Birth in accordance with Republic Act No. 11767; coordinate with LCROs and the PSA on data collection and case referrals involving foundlings.
- (e) **Department of Education** – Facilitate linkages between school enrollment processes and civil registration; support awareness campaigns among learners and parents on the importance of birth registration; and use CRVS data for education planning.
- (f) **Department of Foreign Affairs** – Facilitate reporting and registration of vital events involving Filipinos abroad and ensure timely electronic transmission of records to the PSA.
- (g) **Department of Justice** – Provide legal guidance and adjudication for civil registry issues, including petitions for correction or change of entries under existing laws.

- (h) **Department of Information and Communications Technology** – Provide technical guidance and support for the establishment, security, and interoperability of digital CRVS systems in coordination with the PSA and LGUs.
- (i) **Local Government Units** – Establish and maintain functional LCROs; allocate adequate budget for personnel, operations, and digitalization; undertake outreach and mobile registration; and ensure compliance with PSA standards and reporting requirements.

CHAPTER IV

DIGITALIZATION, INTEROPERABILITY, AND DATA PROTECTION

Section 11. *Transition to Digital Civil Registration.* – All LCROs shall gradually transition from purely manual, paper-based systems to electronic civil registration systems, in accordance with a phased implementation plan to be issued by the PSA and DICT, in consultation with the Council.

The plan shall include timelines and minimum service-level standards, prioritizing UUAs and GIDAs for early support and capacity-building.

Section 12. *Digitization and Back-up of Existing Records.* – The PSA, in coordination with LGUs, shall implement a national program to digitize existing paper-based civil registry records, establish secure electronic back-up systems, and ensure appropriate physical and digital archiving to protect records from loss, damage, and disasters.

Section 13. *Interoperability with Health, Education, and Social Protection Systems.* – Subject to the Data Privacy Act and other relevant laws, the CRVS information system shall be designed to enable secure and standards-based interoperability with:

- (a) Health information systems of DOH and health facilities;
- (b) Social protection databases and registries maintained by DSWD and other agencies;
- (c) Education-related databases of DepEd and other relevant agencies; and
- (d) The Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) established under Republic Act No. 11055; and
- (e) Other government information systems consistent with this Act and its implementing rules.

Such interoperability shall be governed by data-sharing agreements, privacy impact assessments, and security protocols approved by the PSA, DICT, and the National Privacy Commission (NPC).

Section 14. *Data Privacy, Security, and Confidentiality.* – All personal data and records processed under this Act shall be subject to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and its implementing rules and regulations. The PSA and all implementing agencies shall:

- (a) Adopt and maintain appropriate organizational, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of civil registry data;
- (b) Limit access to civil registry information to authorized personnel and to lawful purposes;
- (c) Ensure that any disclosure of civil registry data for statistical or research purposes uses anonymized or aggregated data, except as otherwise provided by law; and
- (d) Establish mechanisms for data-subject rights, including access, correction, and redress, consistent with applicable laws.

CHAPTER V

CAPACITY, FINANCING, AND USE OF VITAL STATISTICS

Section 15. *Strengthening Local Civil Registry Offices (LCROs).* – LGUs shall ensure that each city and municipality maintains a functional LCRO headed by a duly appointed Civil Registrar with appropriate qualifications, and staffed with sufficient personnel to perform their mandates under this Act.

The PSA, DILG, and Civil Service Commission (CSC) shall develop competency standards, training curricula, and professional development programs for civil registrars and their staff.

Section 16. *Funding Support and Incentives.* –

- (a) LGUs shall allocate sufficient funds from their local budgets to support LCRO operations, including personnel, equipment, facilities, mobile registration, and ICT investments.
- (b) The national government may provide financial assistance, matching grants, and performance-based incentives to LGUs, with priority for UUAs, GIDAs, and low-income LGUs that demonstrate improvements in completeness, timeliness, and quality of civil registration.

- (c) The PSA and DILG shall develop guidelines for the allocation and utilization of such national support, including performance indicators and reporting requirements.

Section 17. *Production and Use of Vital Statistics.* – The PSA shall regularly compile, analyze, and disseminate vital statistics derived from civil registration records, disaggregated by sex, age, geographic location, and other relevant variables, subject to data privacy safeguards. National government agencies and LGUs shall:

- (a) Integrate CRVS data into their planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes, particularly in the sectors of health, education, social protection, disaster risk reduction and management, and local development;
- (b) Coordinate with the PSA to identify data needs and standards; and
- (c) Use CRVS-derived indicators in monitoring national and international development commitments.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 18. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the PSA, in coordination with the Council, the DILG, DOH, DSWD, DepEd, DFA, DOJ, DICT, LGU leagues, and relevant stakeholders from civil society and development partners, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 19. *Monitoring and Evaluation; State of CRVS Report.* – The PSA, in consultation with the Council, shall establish a monitoring and evaluation framework and performance indicators for the CRVS system. The Council shall submit to Congress and the Office of the President an annual “State of CRVS in the Philippines” report, which shall include:

- (a) Coverage and completeness of birth, death, and other vital-event registration;
- (b) Progress in digitalization and interoperability;
- (c) Capacity and resource gaps at LCRO and LGU levels;
- (d) Use of vital statistics in policy-making and program implementation; and
- (e) Recommendations for legislative, regulatory, and budgetary actions.

Section 20. *Sanctions and Administrative Liability.* – Without prejudice to the penalties under Republic Act No. 11767 and other applicable laws, any local government official or employee, or any responsible officer of a public or private health facility, who unjustifiably fails or refuses to comply with the mandatory reporting,

notification, or registration duties under this Act shall be subject to administrative disciplinary action under Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code, and applicable civil service rules and regulations, upon complaint filed with the Department of the Interior and Local Government or the Civil Service Commission, as the case may be. The Council shall issue guidelines for the monitoring, documentation, and referral of such cases.

Section 21. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the PSA and concerned agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 22. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 23. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly. In particular, Act No. 3753, otherwise known as the Civil Registry Law, and Republic Act No. 9048, as amended by Republic Act No. 10172, are hereby amended accordingly to conform with the provisions of this Act.

Section 24. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,