

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10913**



Introduced by **Representative ELMER V. CATULPOS**
(I Tahanan Party-List)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

At 7:45 in the morning of the eighteenth of August, two thousand twenty-six, the school gate at Barangay Tumaga, Zamboanga City, was doing its job. The guards were posted. The fence held. The parents who gathered there within the hour — gripping the bars, phones hot in their hands, listening past the sirens for one particular voice — were kept safely outside. The gate worked. But the danger had not come through the gate that morning. It had left a house, zipped inside a bag, hours earlier. Fifty-seven days before that, in Tacloban City, it had left two other houses the same way.

Here is what most Filipinos do not know. The law already commands every licensed gun owner in this country to keep a vault or locked container for every firearm — Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10591 has said so since 2013. But for the ordinary owner — license Types 1 and 2, the overwhelming majority — no one has ever been required to show that the vault exists. No photograph. No inspection. No question at renewal. And when a firearm goes missing, Section 40 of the same law gives its owner thirty (30) days to mention it, on pain of a ten-thousand-peso fine. Thirty days. A firearm can cross the archipelago in three.

The verified record is brief and terrible. On 22 June 2026, three students of San Jose National High School in Tacloban City were killed and some twenty others wounded by schoolmates aged fourteen and fifteen, using firearms traced to a police non-commissioned officer and to a security agency. On 18 August 2026, fifty-seven days later, a Grade 9 student carried into the Ateneo de Zamboanga Junior High School a government-issued service pistol and a licensed private firearm from his own home, killed a schoolmate, and took his own life. There are approximately *[four million]* registered firearms in the hands of more than *[one*

million] license holders nationwide, and as of February 2024 the Philippine National Police counted 703,703 firearms whose registrations had lapsed. Every firearm used in both shootings was legal. Every owner was licensed or state-issued. Every child still reached them.

This Representation is grateful. The President, within hours of the Zamboanga tragedy, grieved with the families and directed every agency to strengthen the protection of our students, having earlier declared that our schools must be among the safest places in our country. The Secretary of the Interior and Local Government told the nation plainly on 25 June 2026: *“Walang concomitant responsibility ang gun owner kung gagamitin ng iba ang baril nila para pumatay ng tao.”* The Chief of the Philippine National Police affirmed that gun ownership “is a privilege that comes with a big responsibility.” The Commissioner of Customs, within a day of the Zamboanga shooting, ordered a bureau-wide firearms inventory and called for screening standards “on par” with the PNP. These men are correct, and they are acting. But they are enforcing a law that gives them almost nothing to enforce. Directives expire. Inventories gather dust. The gap they named is not a gap of will. It is a gap in the statute — and only Congress can close it.

Let it be said clearly: the antagonist of this bill is not the police aunt in Tacloban, nor the father in Zamboanga who buried his own son. Their grief is not on trial. The antagonist is the missing system — the law that commands a vault but never looks at one; the law that hears of a lost firearm a month late and answers with a fine smaller than the price of the gun; the law that issues a service weapon into a home and never once asks where, in that home, it sleeps.

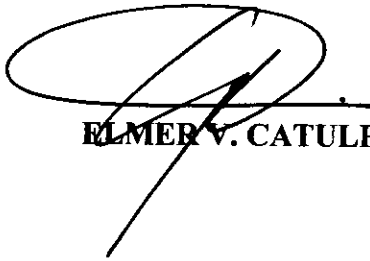
The clock is the fear. Two school shootings in fifty-seven days. Somewhere tonight, by the plain arithmetic of millions of unverified households, another firearm lies where a child can reach it.

The architecture of this Act is one principle in three duties, each the answer to one failure: **Bawat baril, may kandado. Bawat pagkawala, may ulat. Bawat kapabayaang, may pananagutan.** Every firearm secured in a certified safe — verified, not presumed, at issuance and renewal, yet reachable by its lawful owner in seconds through certified quick-access technology. Every loss reported within forty-eight hours — with the honest owner who reports within twenty-four sheltered by law. Every negligence answerable — not for another man’s crime, but for the owner’s own proven carelessness, in measure to the harm it caused, whether the firearm is private, corporate, or issued by the Republic itself.

In candor and by way of disclosure, stated here before any other argument: this Representation founded and leads a conglomerate that includes a licensed security services company whose firearms, officers, and custody practices will fall under the stricter obligations of Article V of this Act. We file it nonetheless — precisely because two decades of keeping armed personnel accountable has taught us that discipline in custody is not a burden on responsible owners; it is their vindication. The measure this Representation asks of every gun owner in the country, it first asks of itself.

Hindi pa ito batas. Panukala pa lamang — mula sa mga kuwento ng Tacloban at Tumaga, tungo sa batas na dapat sana'y naroon na. *Ang baril na nakakandado ay hindi nakakaulila.*

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



ELMER V. CATULPOS

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10913

*Introduced by Representative **ELMER V. CATULPOS***
(I Tahanan Party-list)

**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE SAFEKEEPING, CUSTODY, AND
ACCOUNTABILITY OF FIREARMS, ESTABLISHING VERIFIED SECURED
STORAGE, RAPID REPORTING OF LOST OR STOLEN FIREARMS, AND
CUSTODIAL LIABILITY FOR NEGLIGENT STORAGE, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10591, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN
AS THE “COMPREHENSIVE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION REGULATION
ACT,” AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

ARTICLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “**Bantay-Baril Act**” or the “**Firearms Safekeeping and Owner Accountability Act of 2026.**”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — The State recognizes that the ownership and possession of firearms is a privilege granted by law, conditioned at all times upon the capacity and demonstrated diligence of the owner to keep such firearms secure from unauthorized persons, especially minors. It is the policy of the State that every firearm lawfully present in Philippine territory — whether privately owned, corporately held, or issued by the government to its personnel — shall be, at every hour it is not under the immediate control of its lawful holder, secured against unauthorized access; that its loss or theft shall be known to the State swiftly; and that negligence in its custody shall carry accountability proportionate to the harm such negligence permits. Toward this end, the State shall make secured storage verifiable, rapid reporting simple, and compliance affordable to owners of modest means, so that lawful defensive access by the owner and absolute inaccessibility to the unauthorized are achieved together, not traded against each other.

SECTION. 3. *Definitions.* — As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

(a) ***Certified firearm safe*** refers to a vault, safe, or lockable container certified by the Firearms and Explosives Office (FEO) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) under Section 6 of this Act as meeting the standards for secured storage;

- (b) ***Quick-access certified safe*** refers to a certified firearm safe employing biometric, electronic keypad, or equivalent technology certified under Section 6 that permits access by the licensed owner within a reasonable period while preventing unauthorized access. by the authorized owner within seconds while remaining secured against unauthorized persons;
- (c) ***Secured storage*** refers to the keeping of a firearm inside a locked certified firearm safe whenever the firearm is not under the immediate control of its lawful holder;
- (d) ***Immediate control*** refers to the firearm being carried on the person of, or within arm's reach and in the same room as, the licensed owner who is awake and capable of exercising control over it;
- (e) ***Unauthorized person*** refers to any person other than the licensed owner or a duly authorized custodian under Republic Act No. 10591, and includes any minor, any person disqualified under Section 4 of Republic Act No. 10591, and any person not named in the owner's household attestation under Section 9 of this Act;
- (f) ***Discovery*** refers to the time the licensed owner or custodian acquired actual knowledge that a firearm is lost or stolen, or the time a reasonably diligent owner, given the circumstances, should have acquired such knowledge, whichever is earlier;
- (g) ***Government-issued firearm*** refers to any firearm issued by any agency or instrumentality of the government, including government-owned or -controlled corporations, to its officers or personnel;
- (h) ***Custodian*** refers to any person to whom the care, storage, or control of a firearm is lawfully entrusted, including agency personnel issued government firearms.

ARTICLE II SECURED STORAGE

SECTION 4. *Universal Duty of Secured Storage.* — Every person licensed to own or possess a firearm, and every custodian of a firearm, shall keep each firearm in secured storage at all times that the firearm is not under his or her immediate control. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10591 is hereby amended to require, for all license Types 1 to 5, a certified firearm safe in lieu of the general requirement of “a vault or a container secured by lock and key or other security measures.

SECTION 5. *Ammunition.* — Ammunition shall be kept within a certified firearm safe. In any household where a minor resides, ammunition shall be stored inside a quick-access certified safe together with the firearm.

SECTION 6. *FEO Certification of Safes; Standards.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the FEO shall promulgate and publish standards for the certification of firearm safes, which shall at minimum prescribe: (a) resistance to forced opening and to tampering by minors; (b) approved locking mechanisms, including biometric and electronic keypad systems for quick-access certification; (c) maximum authorized-access opening time for quick-access certification; and (d) anchoring requirements for safes below a threshold weight. The FEO shall maintain and publish a list of certified models and accredited local manufacturers and suppliers, and shall accept for certification safes tested under equivalent foreign standards. No single brand or supplier shall be mandated, endorsed, or given exclusivity.

SECTION 7. *Verification of Storage at Issuance and Renewal.* — Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10591 is further amended such that:

(a) For license **Types 1 and 2**, every application for issuance or renewal of a License to Own and Possess Firearms (LTOPF) or of a firearm registration shall include (i) proof of ownership or possession of a certified firearm safe, and (ii) a geotagged photograph of the safe installed at the declared residence or place of business, accompanied by a sworn attestation of compliance.

(b) For license **Types 3 to 5**, the existing physical inspection and bond requirements are retained and shall include verification of certified firearm safes;

(c) A false attestation or staged photograph under this Section shall constitute submission of falsified documents under Section 41 of Republic Act No. 10591, without prejudice to liability for Perjury or other offenses under the Revised Penal Code.

SECTION 8. *Lawful Defensive Access Preserved.* — Nothing in this Act shall be construed to impair the lawful defensive use of a firearm. A firearm under the immediate control of its lawful holder, or kept in a quick-access certified safe, is in full compliance with this Act. The FEO certification standards under Section 6 shall expressly ensure that quick-access certified safes permit the authorized owner to retrieve the firearm within a reasonable time in an emergency.

SECTION 9. *Household Attestation.* — Every applicant for issuance or renewal of an LTOPF shall declare whether a minor or a person disqualified under Section 4 of Republic Act No. 10591 resides in the same household.

The declaration shall be used solely to determine the applicable storage precautions and shall not, by itself, constitute a ground for denial, suspension, or revocation of a license.

Where a minor or a disqualified person resides in the household, the licensed owner shall undertake and ensure that the firearm is secured in a quick access certified safe or a certified safe and that the key, combination, biometric credential, or equivalent means of access is not accessible to such person.

ARTICLE III RAPID REPORTING OF LOST OR STOLEN FIREARMS

SECTION 10. *Duty to Report Lost or Stolen Firearms; Forty-Eight-Hour Rule.* — Section 40 of Republic Act No. 10591 is hereby amended to read: *Duty to Report Lost or Stolen Firearms; Forty-Eight-Hour Rule.*- Any licensed firearm holder or lawful custodian shall report the loss or theft of a firearm, ammunition, or major part thereof to the FEO within forty-eight (48) hours from discovery.

The report may be made through the electronic reporting portal of the FEO, any police station, or any other reporting facility designated by the PNP. A police station receiving the report shall transmit it to the FEO within twelve (12) hours from receipt.

The report shall be recorded in the official registry, and the reporting person shall be furnished a written or electronic acknowledgment free of charge.

The period shall not apply where the reporting person is physically incapable of making the report because of circumstances directly arising from the loss, theft, or emergency, provided that the report is made as soon as reasonably practicable.

SECTION 11. *Safe Harbor for Prompt Reporting.* — An owner or custodian who reports a lost or stolen firearm within twenty-four (24) hours from discovery, and who was at the time of loss in compliance with Article II, shall enjoy a disputable presumption of diligence, and shall incur no criminal liability under this Act for any subsequent unlawful use of the reported firearm by another person.

SECTION 12. *Penalties for Failure or Delay in Reporting.* — (a) Failure to report within forty-eight (48) hours from discovery shall be punished by a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) and suspension of the license; (b) where the unreported firearm is thereafter used in the commission of a crime before any report is made, the owner or custodian shall suffer the penalty of *prision correccional* in its medium period and a fine of not less than Three hundred thousand pesos (P300,000.00), without prejudice to liability under Article IV; (c) willful concealment of a loss to evade the duties of this Act shall be punished by *prision correccional* in its maximum period.

SECTION 13. *Lost and Stolen Firearms Registry.* — The FEO shall establish and maintain a secure real-time electronic registry of reported lost and stolen firearms. The registry shall be searchable by serial number and interoperable, subject to law and appropriate security safeguards, with relevant PNP crime-laboratory, investigation, and case-management systems. Access shall be limited to authorized law-enforcement personnel and shall be logged, audited, and protected against unauthorized disclosure or misuse.

ARTICLE IV CUSTODIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

SECTION 14. *Offense of Negligent Custody of a Firearm.* — Any licensed owner or custodian who, through reckless imprudence or simple negligence, fails to keep a firearm in secured storage as required by Article II shall be punished by *arresto mayor* in its maximum period to *prision correccional* in its minimum period, and a fine of not less than Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00), and revocation of the license.

SEC. 15. *Qualified Negligent Custody.* — The penalty for Qualified Negligent Custody shall be imposed upon any person who, by reason of gross negligence, recklessness, or failure to exercise the degree of care required by law, allows, permits, or causes the loss, escape, injury, or other harm to the person or property placed under his or her custody, care, or supervision. The penalty shall be:

(a) *Prision correccional* in its medium to maximum periods, and a fine of not less than Three hundred thousand pesos (P300,000.00), where an unauthorized person, including a minor, actually gains access to the negligently stored firearm;

(b) *Prision mayor* in its minimum period, and a fine of not less than Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00), where the negligently stored firearm is used by an unauthorized person in the commission of a crime, or where such access results in death or serious physical injuries; the penalty herein shall be imposed in its maximum duration where the unauthorized person is a minor or where the resulting harm occurs within a school or its premises.

SECTION 16. *Nature of Liability.* — Liability under Sections 14 and 15 arises from the owner's or custodian's own negligence and is distinct and separate from the criminal liability, if any, of the person who used the firearm. Nothing in this Act shall render an owner

or custodian liable as principal, accomplice, or accessory in the intentional felony of another by reason of ownership alone.

SECTION 17. *Disputable Presumption of Negligence.* — Proof that an unauthorized person obtained a firearm registered to, or issued to, the accused gives rise to a disputable presumption that the firearm was not kept in secured storage. The presumption is overcome by proof that (a) the firearm was kept in a certified firearm safe in compliance with Article II; (b) the keys, combinations, or biometric access were under the exclusive control of the owner or custodian; and (c) the access was obtained through theft, robbery, force, or other means independent of the owner's negligence, duly reported under Article III.

SECTION 18. *Civil Liability.* — The owner or custodian of a firearm negligently stored in violation of this Act shall be presumed civilly liable, jointly and solidarily with the person who used the firearm, for damages caused by its unlawful use, consistent with Articles 2176 and 2180 of the Civil Code, without prejudice to proof of due diligence as provided in Section 17.

SECTION 19. *Exemption from Liability.* — No criminal liability under this Article shall attach to an owner or custodian who was in full compliance with Article II at the time of loss or access and who reported the loss in accordance with Article III.

ARTICLE V GOVERNMENT-ISSUED AND ENTITY-HELD FIREARMS

SECTION 20. *Agency Custody Rules.* — Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, every agency or instrumentality of the Government that issues firearms to its personnel shall promulgate rules governing the issuance, custody, transport, storage, inventory, return, reporting of loss and theft of government-issued firearms. The rules shall require at the minimum that any issued firearm kept at a personal residence be secured in a locked storage device compliant with the standards under Section 6, unless the firearm is under the immediate control of the authorized officer or employee in the performance of official duties.

SECTION 21. *Screening Parity.* — No agency shall issue a firearm to any officer or personnel without neuro-psychiatric and drug screening at least equivalent to the standards required of civilian LTOPF applicants under Republic Act No. 10591, renewed at intervals prescribed in the agency rules.

SECTION 22. *Command Accountability.* — The head of office or unit commander responsible for the enforcement of agency custody rules shall be administratively liable for failure to enforce the same, and criminally liable under Article IV, as custodian, where such failure amounts to negligence that permits unauthorized access to an issued firearm. Personnel to whom firearms are issued shall be liable under Article IV as custodians, without prejudice to liability for malversation under the Revised Penal Code where applicable.

SECTION 23. *Annual Inventory and Report.* — Every issuing agency shall conduct an annual physical inventory of all issued firearms, verified by serial number against FEO records, and shall submit a consolidated report to the FEO and to both Houses of Congress within the first quarter of every year.

SECTION 24. *Private Security Agencies and Juridical Entities.* — Firearms held by private security agencies and other juridical entities under Republic Act No. 5487 and Republic Act No. 10591 shall be subject to Articles II, III, and IV of this Act. The responsible officers identified under Section 30 of Republic Act No. 10591 shall be liable under Article IV of this Act, as custodians, for negligent storage by the entity.

ARTICLE VI INCENTIVES, EQUITY, AND TRANSITION

SECTION 25. *Fiscal Incentives for Certified Safes.* — The purchase of one certified firearm safe per licensed owner shall be deductible from gross income for income tax purposes in the year of purchase, and certified firearm safes shall be exempt from import duties, under rules to be issued by the Department of Finance and the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

SECTION 26. *Poorest-First Compliance Assistance.* — The FEO, in coordination with accredited suppliers, shall establish an installment-purchase and bulk-discount program for certified firearm safes for security guards, watchmen, and licensed owners whose income does not exceed the threshold to be defined in the implementing rules, so that no Filipino loses a livelihood-connected license for inability to afford a safe.

SECTION 27. *Transition Period.* — Existing licensees shall comply with Article II at the first renewal of their LTOPF or firearm registration following the effectivity of this Act, or within eighteen (18) months from such effectivity, whichever comes first. The duties and penalties under Article III shall take effect immediately upon effectivity of this Act. During the transition period, non-compliance with Article II shall be penalized administratively only.

SECTION 28. *Public Information.* — The PNP and the Department of the Interior and Local Government shall conduct a sustained nationwide information campaign on the duties under this Act, integrated with school-safety programs, in coordination with the Department of Education and local school boards.

ARTICLE VII FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 29. *Relationship to Existing Laws.* — This Act amends Sections 9, 40, and 41 of Republic Act No. 10591, as amended by Republic Act No. 11766, to the extent herein provided. All other provisions of Republic Act No. 10591, the Revised Penal Code, Republic Act No. 9344, and Republic Act No. 5487 remain in full force and shall be applied in harmony with this Act. This Act complements, and shall be construed together with, measures strengthening the physical security of schools.

SECTION 30. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — The PNP, jointly with the DILG and the Department of Justice, and in consultation with issuing agencies and stakeholder organizations of licensed firearm owners, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity. Sections 10, 11,

12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are self-executing and shall not be conditioned on the issuance of such rules.

SECTION 31. *Appropriations.* — The amounts necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations and fee income of the PNP-FEO. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 32. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 33. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 34. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,