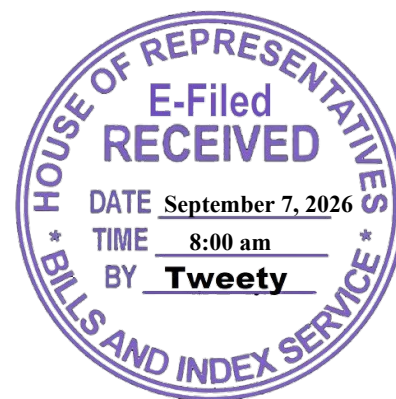


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11132



Introduced by **Representative FERDINAND L. HERNANDEZ**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE JUDICIAL HAZARD COMPENSATION FOR ALL
MEMBERS OF THE JUDICIARY IN THE FIRST AND SECOND-LEVEL COURTS,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The strength of our democratic institutions rests upon the bedrock of a judiciary that is not only competent but, more importantly, insulated from the chilling effects of external pressures, physical threats, and other occupational hazards. Under Section 1, Article VIII of the 1987 Constitution, judicial power is vested in one Supreme Court and in such lower courts as may be established by law. To ensure the effective exercise of this power, the 1987 Constitution provides several safeguards to maintain the independence of the members of the Bench. Section 3, Article VIII also guarantees the fiscal autonomy of the Judiciary, ensuring that appropriations may not be reduced by the legislature below the amount appropriated for the previous year, and shall be automatically and regularly released. Furthermore, Section 10, Article VIII protects the stability of the Bench by mandating that the salary of the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court, and of judges of lower courts, shall be fixed by law and shall not be decreased during their incumbency in office.

In light of these constitutional protections, the 2025 Code of Judicial Conduct and Accountability (CJCA) adopted by the Supreme Court of the Philippines was implemented to ensure that judicial independence is upheld as a precondition to the rule of law. The CJCA demands that judges stay resolute and fearless of threats, as Canon I of the CJCA requires that a judge must pursue their actions independently, resisting and rejecting any form of undue influence, intimidation, or pressure from whatever source.

Despite the Herculean efforts of the members of the Bench, the grim reality on the ground presents a bleak outlook for achieving these ideals. In recent decades, the Philippine legal community, and the judges in particular, have faced an unprecedented surge in violence,

with at least 61 lawyers, judges, and prosecutors having been killed since 2016. From 2004 to 2021, public reports indicate that only seven (7) cases have resulted in charges filed in court. As of 2022, documented attacks on legal professionals reached 271. These targeted assaults have continued into 2025 and 2026. Such violence constitutes a direct assault on the judiciary and threatens to diminish the public's trust in the administration of justice.

Tragically, the physical and psychological threats are not confined to the courtroom. Judges frequently risk their lives in transit to remote court stations, navigating land, air, and sea to serve as Acting Presiding Judges in areas lacking permanent appointees. For these magistrates, the journey itself is as hazardous as the high-stakes cases they adjudicate. In fact, there were noted incidents of death by accidents while judges were in transit, an ominous fact staring the members of the Bench in the face.

Moreover, it is worth emphasizing that the adoption of Republic Act No. 11576, or the Act expanding the jurisdiction of first-level courts, has significantly increased the workload of first-level court judges, who are now tasked with adjudicating the heavier, more complex civil cases once reserved for second-level courts. The shift in the jurisdictional threshold, however, has not created a distinction in safety. Current threat assessments reveal that judges in both first and second-level courts face the same level of professional risks and physical threats. Accordingly, while their legal duties are differentiated, the danger to their personal security remains a shared and equally urgent reality across both tiers.

Complementing the preventive approach of Republic Act No. 11691, or the “Judiciary Marshals Act,” a monumental step toward securing the physical safety of the Bench, with a measure that aims both to recognize the devotion to duty of magistrates and to augment their financial resources for security, is vital to maintaining the judiciary as a public institution and a workplace. The persistent threat of retaliation, the necessity of living under constant surveillance, and the hazards inherent in the judicial robe remain occupational risks that even the Judiciary Marshals Act itself recognizes by granting hazard compensation to the Marshals themselves. If such compensation is mandated for those sworn to protect, it is only fair and just that it be equally mandated for the judges who are the primary targets of those very threats. This would effectively place judges on a similar footing with public health workers,¹ public social workers,² and scientists (and science and technology personnel),³ among others, whose indispensable presence on the ground define the fulfilment of the service-oriented purposes of their organizations.

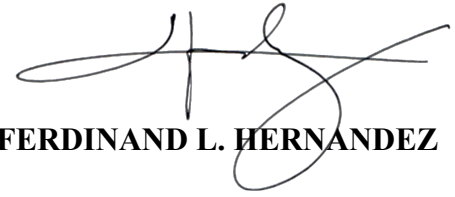
Finally, this bill provides a long-overdue legislative response to the Supreme Court's call for protection. By instituting tax-exempt hazard compensation, the State recognizes that while the judge is responsible for upholding ethical and legal standards, the State is accountable for safeguarding the judge's physical and economic security.

¹ Republic Act No. 7305

² Republic Act No. 9433

³ Republic Act No. 8439

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'F' and 'H' connected together, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right and a large loop at the bottom right.

FERDINAND L. HERNANDEZ

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Judicial Hazard Compensation Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – In accordance with the State’s duty to protect those who stand as the last bulwark of democracy, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the welfare of the judges by recognizing the life-threatening risks inherent in judicial service. The State shall ensure that judicial independence is not compromised by physical threats, the economic burden of personal security, and the occupational hazards encountered while in transit to and from their places of work.

SECTION 3. *Judicial Hazard Compensation.* – All duly appointed members of the Judiciary in the first and second-level courts shall be entitled to a monthly Judicial Hazard Compensation, which shall be a percentage of their basic monthly salary based on the following schedule:

- a. All duly appointed judges in Regional Trial Courts (RTC) and Regional Trial Judges-at-large shall be granted a hazard compensation during their incumbency in the amount equivalent to thirty percent (30%) of their basic monthly salary.
- b. All duly appointed judges in the Metropolitan Trial Courts (MeTC), Municipal Trial Courts in Cities (MTCC), Municipal Trial Courts (MTC), Municipal

Circuit Trial Courts (MCTC), Shari'a Courts, and Municipal Trial Judges-at-large shall be granted a hazard compensation during their incumbency in the amount equivalent to thirty percent (30%) of their basic monthly salary.

SECTION 4. *Tax Exemption and Non-Diminution of Benefits.* – The Judicial Hazard Compensation mandated under this Act is a recognition of the occupational risks, including but not limited to, the threat of retaliation and the perils of transit to remote stations across land, air, and sea. As a consequence, the Judicial Hazard Compensation granted under this Act shall not be subject to tax. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish any benefit granted by existing laws, rules, or local ordinances favorable to judges.

SECTION 5. *Appropriations.* – The initial funding required to implement this Act shall be sourced from the current appropriations of the Judiciary under the General Appropriations Act (GAA). For subsequent years, the necessary budget shall be specifically earmarked and included in the annual GAA of the year following its enactment.

SECTION 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Budget and Management, in close coordination and consultation with the Supreme Court of the Philippines, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to ensure the seamless release of these funds.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, parts of provisions of this Act which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, presidential decrees, Implementing Rules and Regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,