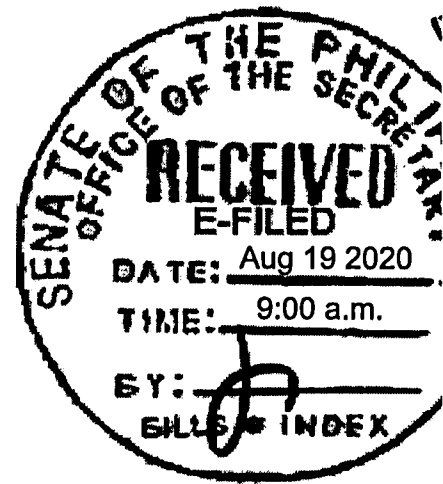


**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**
Second Regular Session

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SENATE
S. No. 1777



Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HEALTHCARE WORKERS,
FRONTLINERS, AND PERSONS SUSPECTED OR INFECTED OF COVID-19,
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution provides that, *"the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."*

On the 11th of March 2020, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as pandemic. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed Proclamation No. 922 and Proclamation No. 929 which declare the Philippines under the state of public health emergency and state of calamity, respectively, due to COVID-19. There has already been a total of more than one hundred sixty-one thousand (161,000) confirmed cases and around two thousand six hundred sixty-five (2,665) deaths as of the 17th of August 2020. Looking at the statistics from the Department of Health regarding the cases in the country for the past few months, it shows a pattern of exponential increase. Despite all the measures of enhanced quarantine and social distancing protocols, there is no sign of "flattening the curve" anytime soon.

Unfortunately, in the past weeks, there have been increasingly frequent reports of discriminatory acts committed against healthcare and other frontline workers, PUM's, PUI's, and COVID-positive suspects. Some have been evicted from their homes, while others were prevented from returning to their communities. Others were allegedly doused with water or bleaching solutions or refused service in eateries or public transport facilities due to fears of infection. Similarly, healthcare workers have been sometimes shunned by local stores, boarding houses and even their own barangay and townmates.

According to an article by Asia Times¹, "A mounting culture of fear is also targeting medical frontline workers, who are now seen by many agitated locals as potential virus carriers, which in certain instances has led to violence." Unfortunately situations like this don't only happen in Metro Manila but in different provinces as well. As stated in the article for example, On the 27th of March 2020, a nurse in Sultan Kudarat province on the southern island of Mindanao became one of the first reported victims of pandemic-related physical harassment when he was attacked by five men who thought he was a Covid-19 carrier.

As an act of compassion, some local government units have enacted ordinances in order to immediately address the discrimination experienced by healthcare and other frontline workers, PUM's, PUI's, and other COVID-positive suspects.

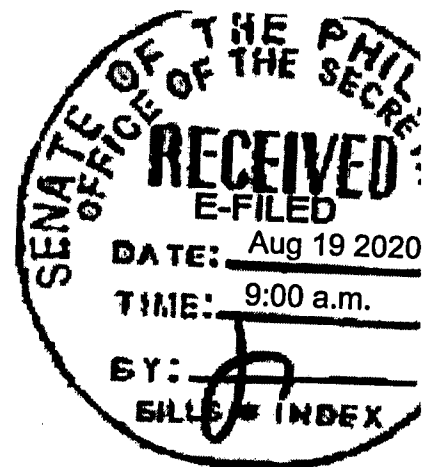
In view of the foregoing, the urgent approval of this bill is earnestly sought to penalize those who are found to have committed acts that discriminate, shame, humiliate, or stigmatize healthcare and other frontline workers, and other victims due to their medical condition.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

¹ <https://asiatimes.com/2020/03/covid-19-panic-turns-on-philippine-docs-and-nurses/>
This bill was originally filed by Senator Imee Marcos during the First Regular Session of the Eighteenth Congress

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the Philippines in the Congress assembled.

1 **Section 1. Short Title.**-This Act shall be known as the Anti-Coronavirus2019
2 (COVID-19) Discrimination Act."

3
4 **SEC. 2. Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act, the following terms shall be as
5 follows:

6 (a) Health workers refer to those who deliver care and services to the sick and ailing,
7 either directly or indirectly, including but not limited to, doctors, nurses, hospital
8 and clinic aides, and laboratory technicians.

9
10 This also include those engaged as temporary Human Resources for Health in
11 accordance with Republic Act No. 11469, also known as the " Bayanihan to Heal
12 as One Act', such as medical and allied medical staff to complement or supplement
13 the current health workforce or to man the temporary medical facilities to be
14 established under the aforementioned law.

1
2 (a) Persons infected, Patients Under Investigation (PUIs) are those persons 2
3 suspected of contracting, have probably contracted COVID-19, or are
4 confirmed to 3 have contracted COVID-19, in accordance with the guidelines
5 issued by the Department of Health (DOH).

6 (b) Frontliners refers to the officers and members of the Philippine National Police
7 (PNP), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine Coast Guard
8 (PCG), and instrumentalities of the government rendering emergency frontline
9 services, border control and other critical services. Also included are workers
10 in private establishments providing essential services and necessities and such
11 activities relate to food and medicine production, such as public markets,
12 supermarkets, groceries, convenience stores, hospitals, medical clinics,
13 pharmacies and drug stores, food, preparation and delivery services, water-
14 refilling stations, manufacturing and processing plants of basic food products
15 and medicines, banks, money transfer services, power, energy,
16 telecommunications and water supplies and other related facilities.
17

18 **SEC. 3. Prohibited Acts.** - It shall be unlawful for any person, natural or juridical,
19 to commit any act, such as prevention of entry to residences or establishments, or make
20 utterances which cause or tend to cause stigma, disgrace, shame, humiliation,
21 harassment or otherwise discriminate against persons suspected or infected of COVID-
22 19, a health worker, or a frontliner, as defined under this Act.

23 *Provided that,* any public officer who refuses or fails, without justifiable reason, to
24 give assistance to a person suspected or infected of COVID-19, a health worker, or a
25 frontliner that intends to return to his place of residence or domicile, after obtaining
26 clearance of the COVID-19 Infection from the proper health officials, shall be equally
27 liable under Section 4 of this Act.
28

29 **SEC. 4. Penalties.** - Any person in violation of Section 3 hereof shall suffer the
30 penalty of imprisonment not exceeding six (6) months or a fine of fifty thousand pesos

1 (Php 50,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court. If the offender is a public officer,
2 the maximum penalty herein shall be imposed. In cases where the offender is a
3 corporation, association, partnership or any other juridical person, the penalty shall be
4 imposed upon the president, directors, managers, managing partners, as the case may
5 be, who participated in the commission of the offense or who shall have knowingly
6 permitted or failed to prevent the commission of the same.
7

8 In cases where the offender is an alien, he shall, in addition to the penalties herein
9 prescribed, be deported without need of further proceedings.
10

11 **SEC. 5. Separability Clause.** - If for any reason any provision of this Act is declared
12 unconstitutional or invalid, such parts or portions not affected thereby shall remain in full
13 force and effect.
14

15 **SEC. 6. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
16 presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations or parts thereof
17 which are inconsistent with the provisions of this are hereby repealed or modified
18 accordingly.
19

20 **SEC. 7. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following
21 completion of its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
22

23 *Approved,*