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SENATE
S. B. No. 953

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator SONNY ANGARA

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE MARINE CORPS, DEFINING ITS POWER
AND FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The archipelagic makeup of the Philippines necessitates the need for a comprehensive yet rapidly deployable amphibious force primarily mandated to conduct both seaborne and on-shore tactical operations to protect the country's territories, communities, and inhabitants. Duty requires that this group shall be competent in responding to extraordinary exigencies and developing multinational cooperation and engagements to preserve peace and order within the country.

Under the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) General Orders Nr. 319, s. 1950, the Philippine Marine Corps was initially established to extinguish insurgent threats in the post-war decade. Beyond successfully accomplishing their missions, the Philippine Marine Corps remain steadfast to the call of duty being instrumental in improving the welfare of all Filipinos and protecting the stability of the country.

Philippine history is replete with significant campaigns executed by the Philippine Marine Corps: During the 1960s, the Marines spearheaded the conduct of strategic maneuvers against the HUKBALAHAP. In the following decade, the Marines were in most parts of Luzon neutralizing communist-terrorists. While in the 1980s, the group skillfully maintained order despite the country's political turmoil. The Marines also curtailed the lawlessness of extremist groups in Mindanao from 1990s to 2000s. At present, the Philippine Marine Corps are not only challenged by growing criminality, but are also tested by worsening natural disasters that harm the people in the same manner.

The Philippine Marine Corps might be few but they remain proud and always faithful in their sworn honored duty to the country. While the Constitution mandates that there be an Army, an Air Force and a Navy in the AFP, the Philippine Marine Corps, since its establishment, remains an integral part of the nation's psyche—a force in readiness.

Despite the lack of a charter, the Philippine Marines Corps has provided seamless transition of military power between sea and land domains. It is clear that the Marines will be empowered to further perform their duty with the proper legislation to provide such mandate.

Hence, this bill seeks to provide a Charter that would institutionalize the Philippine Marines Corps—a branch of service distinct, autonomous, and yet complementary to the Army, Air Force and Navy under the AFP—and, in the process, generate an initiative to guarantee peace, safety, and order of the entire Philippines.


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



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

- 1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Philippine Marine Corps*
2 *Act*”.
- 3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – In accordance with Article II, Section 3 of the
4 Constitution which mandates the supremacy of civilian authority over the military, and
5 Article XVI, Section 4 of the same which provides, “the Armed Forces of the Philippines
6 (“AFP”) shall be composed of a citizen armed force that shall undergo military training
7 and serve, as may be provided by law”, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to
8 maintain, organize, and enhance the AFP for the continuing development of national
9 defense to maintain peace and order.
- 10 Sec. 3. *Establishment.* – The Philippine Marine Corps (PMC), is hereby
11 established as an armed uniformed service, amphibious in character; distinct,
12 autonomous, but complementary to the Army, the Air Force and the Navy, as an
13 independent branch of service of the AFP.
- 14 The PMC shall include ground combat, combat support, combat service support,
15 aviation component, and such other units as may be necessary for the pursuit of its
16 mandate

1 Sec. 4. *Powers and Functions.* – The PMC shall have the following powers and
2 functions:

- 3 (a) To conduct combined arms operations in the littoral battle space and beyond
4 under the AFP;
- 5 (b) To coordinate with the other branches of service in developing various phases
6 of amphibious operations, which pertain to the tactics, techniques, and
7 procedures with the necessary equipment employed by landing forces and that
8 of a joint maneuver force;
- 9 (c) To organize, train, equip, maintain, develop, deploy, and supervise the PMC
10 Reserve Force (PMCRF) for the purpose of assisting the PMC in carrying out its
11 functions;
- 12 (d) To formulate and develop doctrines, concepts, systems, policies, procedures,
13 strategies, tactics, and techniques for operations peculiar to the Marines;
- 14 (e) To develop its capabilities for seaborne maneuvers; sustain maneuver ashore;
15 and multinational cooperation and engagement that is amphibious in character,
16 multi-role in nature, a seaborne arms force with on-shore defense capability
17 possessing combined arms with supporting air components ensuring its
18 capability and effectiveness as a major combatant in the protection of the
19 islands of the Philippine Archipelago;
- 20 (f) To deploy such forces necessary for strategic defense under the Joint Defense
21 Force and for employment of operational commands;
- 22 (g) To deploy forces for disaster response, relief, and rehabilitation efforts of the
23 AFP;
- 24 (h) To deploy forces in support to the law enforcement agencies in the performance
25 of their duties and responsibilities in implementing the laws of the land;
- 26 (i) To perform such other functions that may be necessary in the attainment of
27 the objectives of this Act; and
- 28 (j) To determine its requirements which shall be addressed by a fiscal allocation
29 and modernization efforts of the Department of National Defense (DND).

30 Sec. 5. *Philippine Marine Corps Bases and Facilities.* – To carry out the powers
31 and functions of the PMC and the enhancement of its capabilities, three (3) PMC
32 Headquarters, shall be established—one (1) in Luzon, one (1) in Visayas, and one (1)

1 in Mindanao. The PMC Headquarters in Mindanao shall serve as the National
2 Headquarters of the PMC. All of the PMC Headquarters shall be in strategic locations
3 where it can sustain its deployed forces given both spectrums of war condition. A
4 Marine Division may be established to effectively respond to the needs of the
5 operational commands based on its distinct characteristics and operating concept, as
6 may deem necessary.

7 Sec. 6. *PMC Commandant.* – The Commandant shall head the PMC, and shall
8 carry the rank of Lieutenant General. The Commandant shall be directly appointed by
9 the President from among its Marine Corps Generals, upon the recommendation of
10 the AFP Chief-of-Staff and the Secretary of the DND.

11 Sec. 7. *Creation of the Marine Reserve Component.* – The PMC shall maintain,
12 supervise, develop and train the PMC Reservists as a reserve force under the direct
13 control and supervision of the PMC Commandant and shall assist the PMC in the
14 conduct of efforts on force development as a whole.

15 Sec. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Commandant of the PMC
16 shall promulgate rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act, as well as
17 the provision of acts, decrees, and orders, related to the implementation of the PMC
18 functions, to be approved by the President and the Commander-in-Chief, with the
19 conformity of the Secretary of DND, and recommendation by the Chief-of-Staff of the
20 AFP.

21 Sec. 9. *Appropriations.* – The PMC Commandant shall immediately prepare the
22 necessary guidelines to cover the establishment of the PMC as a service branch of the
23 AFP, the initial funding of which shall be charged against the current year's
24 appropriations of the PMC and, thereafter, in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

25 Sec. 10. *Transitory Provisions.* – The incumbent two-star officer, Major General,
26 shall be the Acting PMC Commandant, pending the appointment by the President.
27 Likewise, the existing organizational structure of the PMC shall be followed until new
28 rules and regulations have been promulgated, and approved by the President.

29 Further, this Act shall not diminish, reduce, or remove the existing benefits and
30 privileges of PMC personnel under existing laws, rules, and regulations.

1 Sec. 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is
2 subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are
3 not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

4 Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive
5 orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
6 which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby
7 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

8 Sec. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
9 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,