

20 JAN 21 AM 11:00

SENATE

S. No. 1284

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

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**AN ACT**  
**GRANTING DISASTER RESPONSE VOLUNTEERS LEAVE WITH PAY TO**  
**QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES IN THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR AND FOR**  
**OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Climate change is indeed upon us. As years pass, our country continue to experience first-hand the escalating negative effects of climate change. Considering the Philippines' geographic position, our country is highly vulnerable and the third most disaster prone country in the world due to our proximity to the "Pacific Ring of Fire".<sup>1</sup> These natural disasters, such as typhoons, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, landslides and fires exposes the country and our people to a wide range of risks, billion-worth destruction and losing the lives of our citizens.

In view of these realities, a proactive approach to disaster-response, which includes putting in place state-of the art technologies, developing an up-to-date disaster-response plan and increasing the required number of competent pool of volunteers with the necessary support, is imperative. These volunteers play an important role in increasing the government's response capacity especially at the community level.

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance (March 2018) *Disaster Management Reference Handbook*. Hawaii USA. pgs 50-51

As a country who has suffered increasing levels of calamity, it behooves our government to continue to rise to the occasion. One such measure is to activate our civil servants as reserve emergency responders in times of extraordinary disasters. Legislation must be made not only to allow our government employees to join the disaster response contingent but to encourage them to do so by protecting their tenure and granting paid leaves to those who are truly qualified.

We have always been resilient in recovering from natural disasters such as typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes. But that does not mean that we were necessarily successful in our previous tussles with Mother Nature. We have a lot more to learn in terms of our response capabilities and we need more competent volunteers in our disaster response teams.

This bill grants public and private employees, who will be accredited disaster response volunteers, paid leave from work to participate in specialized disaster response services for the government-led and government-accredited institutions like the Philippine Red Cross.

Early approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

  
LEILA M. DE LIMA

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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 "Disaster Response  
2 Volunteer Leave Act of 2020".

3       Sec. 2. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall  
4 mean:

5       a) "*Department*" or "*agency*" refers to any of the various units of the  
6 government including a department, bureau, office, instrumentality or government-  
7 owned or controlled corporations;

8       b) "*Disaster*" refers to a serious disruption of the functioning of a community  
9 or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses  
10 and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope  
11 using its own resources. Disasters are often described as a result of the combination  
12 of: the exposure to a hazard; the conditions of vulnerability that are present; and  
13 insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative  
14 consequences, Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and other



1 negative effects on human, physical, mental and social well-being, together with  
2 damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, social and economic  
3 disruption and environmental degradation, as defined under R.A. No. 10121;

4 c) "*Covered Employees*" refers to all persons employed in government, whether  
5 regular, casual, or contractual, who is a Certified Disaster Response Volunteer;

6 d) "*Certified Disaster Response Volunteer*" refers to any person who has  
7 completed the necessary training for specific disaster response activities which may  
8 include search and rescue, damage assessment, medical services, emergency  
9 operations center (EOC) work by the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), Office of Civil  
10 Defense or Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA);

11 e) "*Disaster Response Government Agencies*" refers to departments or agencies  
12 which are members of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council  
13 (NDRRMC) under R.A. No. 10121.

14 Sec. 3. *Disaster Response Volunteer Leave.* –

15 (a) Covered employees, when called upon to render disaster response service  
16 by any of the Disaster Response Government Agencies (DRGA) or the PRC, shall be  
17 entitled to disaster response volunteer leave with pay, for up to an aggregate of fifteen  
18 (15) days, consecutively or non-consecutively, in any twelve-month period. This leave  
19 shall be subject to approval by the government department or agency in which the  
20 covered employee is employed;

21 (b) A covered employee granted leave pursuant to this Section shall be  
22 compensated by the employing agency at the employee's regular rate of pay for those  
23 regular work hours during which the employee is absent from work, but shall not  
24 receive overtime pay, night shift differential pay, hazardous duty pay or any other form  
25 of pay or compensation in addition to the employee's regular pay.

26 A covered employee who is granted leave pursuant to Subsection (a) of this  
27 Section shall not lose any seniority or any already accumulated vacation time, sick time  
28 or earned overtime due to such leave.

1           Sec. 4. *Insurance.* – The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management  
2 Council (NDRRMC) shall enter into an agreement with the Government Service  
3 Insurance System (GSIS) to provide for insurance coverage for all covered employees  
4 rendering disaster response services.

5           Sec. 5. *Promotion of Volunteerism.* – The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and  
6 the NDRRMC shall promote volunteerism in all government offices and ensure that  
7 all government employees shall have access to training and certification to be CDRVs;

8           Sec. 6. *Adjustment of Organization in Cases of Disaster.* – The CSC shall  
9 establish guidelines for government offices to follow in situations when covered  
10 employees are called upon to render disaster response to ensure that critical  
11 government services are not impaired;

12           Sec. 7. *Disciplinary Action.* – Covered employees who availed of disaster  
13 response volunteer leave without actually rendering services shall be subject to  
14 disciplinary action under existing CSC Rules;

15           Sec. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Civil Service Commission  
16 (CSC), after consultation and coordination with the government agencies and/or  
17 instrumentalities affected by this Act, including, but not limited to, the NDRRMC, the  
18 PRC, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Social  
19 Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Department of Interior and Local  
20 Government (DILG), shall promulgate and issue the appropriate rules and regulations  
21 for the proper implementation of this Act

22           Sec. 9. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be found  
23 unconstitutional by a court of law, such provision shall be severed from the remainder  
24 of this Act, and such action shall not affect the enforceability of the remaining  
25 provisions of this Act.

26           Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, letters of instruction,  
27 resolutions, orders or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this  
28 Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

1           Sec. 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
2 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,