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**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**  
*First Regular Session*

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**SENATE**

S.B. No. 940

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**Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN**

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**AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING EVACUATION CENTERS IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY AND CITY,  
PROVIDING FOR THE NECESSARY FACILITIES, ENSURING THEIR  
STRUCTURAL CAPACITY, AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

In its website, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) highlights that more tropical cyclones (TCs) are entering the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) than anywhere else in the world at an average of 20 TCs in the region per year, with about 8 or 9 of them crossing the Philippines.<sup>1</sup>

This vulnerability to typhoons makes the Philippines one of the most flood-prone countries in the world. For the last ten years, there have been over 60 reported major floods in the country, with nearly 14 million people affected, more than 700 dead, and over \$400 million estimated damages<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/climate/tropical-cyclone-information>

<sup>2</sup> Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. Data from EMDAT International Disaster Database, contained in the paper *Enhancing Risk Analysis Capacities for Flood, Tropical Cyclone Severe Wind and Earthquake for the Greater Metro Manila Area Component 3 – Flood Risk Analysis*

Clearly, when a typhoon or any disaster hits the country or any part thereof, many people are displaced and need to be relocated. It is common practice in the Philippines to use schools as evacuation centers in times of calamities, which disrupts school activities. In November 2020, Department of Education (DepEd) reported that 869 public schools were used as evacuation centers with 44 divisions and 4,367 classrooms, temporarily housing some 21,000 families or 82,584 individuals.<sup>3</sup> In fact, DepEd issued Department Order No. 33, dated August 20, 2021, providing a Manual for School-Based Disaster Preparedness and Response Measures for Tropical Typhoons, Flooding and Other Weather-Related Disturbances and Calamities.

Another problem when calamity occurs is the lack of or inadequacy of typhoon or calamity-proof school buildings and classrooms. After the typhoon or calamity strikes, many classrooms are also damaged, and cannot be utilized as evacuation centers. When Super typhoon Odette ravaged the country in December 2021, DepEd recorded damages worth P700 million on 71 public schools,<sup>4</sup> and 166 damaged public schools in Western Visayas alone. DepEd Region 6's Rapid Assessment of Damages Report (RADAR) showed 380 classrooms totally destroyed and 397 more partially damaged. By DepEd Region-6's estimate, it needs P1.1 billion to reconstruct the destroyed classrooms and repair those with damages.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, this measure seeks to establish a dedicated evacuation center in every municipality and city in the country, providing for necessary facilities and structural capacity, in addition to DepEd classrooms which will be sustained as evacuation centers in case a site for a new evacuation center is not available. It also emphasizes the need to ensure the structural capacity of existing evacuation centers and those that will be constructed in the future. It is imperative that strict compliance with the National Building Code of the Philippines is observed, and that inputs of structural engineers are integrated

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<sup>3</sup> <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1355855/deped-226-schools-damaged-over-800-schools-used-as-evacuation-centers-after-rollys-onslaught#ixzz7UqhuPHuO>

<sup>4</sup> <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/427708/deped-lapu-lapu-says-damages-in-public-schools-due-to-odette-reach-p700m#ixzz7Uqjcfqu9>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.panaynews.net/wvs-166-public-schools-damaged-p1-1-b-rehab-fund-needed-deped-6-exec/>



Senate

Office of the Secretary

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FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the  
2 "*Evacuation Center Act.*"

3  
4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is a declared policy of the State to protect life,  
5 liberty, and properties of all Filipinos, promote their general welfare, and provide  
6 adequate social services to them. Towards this end, the State, in recognition of the  
7 vulnerability of the Philippines to climate change, the occurrence of severe floods,  
8 typhoons, and other natural or human-induced disasters, illnesses, diseases and other  
9 factors that  
10 affect the environment, shall institutionalize the government's efforts to  
11 establish and maintain fully equipped and fully-operational evacuation

1 centers, and provide the necessary facilities to sites used as evacuation  
2 centers to make them responsive to environmental or climatic events.

3 It shall be the continuing policy of the State to ensure the structural capacity of  
4 evacuation centers and to provide the necessary and appropriate support facilities.

5  
6 *SEC. 3. Establishment of Evacuation Centers.* -There shall be established an  
7 evacuation center in every city and municipality in the Philippines which shall provide  
8 immediate and temporary accommodation for people who have been evacuated or  
9 displaced from their homes due to disasters, calamities or other emergency events, such  
10 as typhoons, floods, storm surges, drought and other severe climate disturbances, as  
11 well as fire, and the outbreak of illnesses and diseases that presents imminent danger to  
12 life and property.

13  
14 *SEC. 4. Facility Requirements.* - The following shall be the minimum requirements  
15 for every evacuation center that will be established under this Act:

16 a) *Location* - The evacuation center should not be at risk of isolation. It should be  
17 located at a safe distance from danger areas or hazards. The Local Disaster Risk  
18 Reduction and Management Council (LDRRMC) of the local government unit (LGU)  
19 concerned shall coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources  
20 (DENR) to utilize the Mines and Geosciences Bureau's (MGB) geohazard maps in  
21 determining the appropriate location of the evacuation center.

22 The following shall be considered in identifying an ideal site for an evacuation  
23 center:

- 24 1) Drainage;
- 25 2) Elevation;
- 26 3) Protection from strong winds;
- 27 4) Accessibility to and proximity from the vulnerable  
28 community;
- 29 5) Availability of the following in the immediate vicinity:
  - 30 i) Parking areas for emergency and other vehicles;

- 1           ii) Allocated area for additional portable toilets;
- 2           iii) Storage tanks for potable and non-potable water; and
- 3           iv) Safe shelter for livestock.

4           b) *Structural Capacity* - New evacuation centers and improvements in schools  
5 used as an evacuation center which will be constructed after the effectivity of this Act  
6 must be made of construction materials which are in accordance with the specifications  
7 of Republic Act No. 6541, otherwise known as the "*National Building Code of the*  
8 *Philippines,*" and be able to withstand wind speeds of three hundred twenty (320)  
9 kilometers per hour or two hundred (200) miles per hour and moderate seismic activity  
10 of at least 7.2 magnitude.

11           The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall be responsible in  
12 formulating the appropriate specifications for evacuation centers and to ensure  
13 compliance with these specifications during the construction of evacuation centers. The  
14 specifications shall be periodically reviewed and, if necessary, revised by the DPWH every  
15 three years.

16           c) *Suitability and Capacity of Premises* - If the building is not primarily built as a  
17 shelter or permanent site for use as an evacuation center, considerations should be  
18 made on its impact to normal business if its operation as an evacuation center is  
19 prolonged or its normal function is taken off for an extended period of time.

20           The number and diversity of evacuees as well as public health and safety concerns  
21 should be considered in the suitability of the premises.

22           It must likewise be able to provide electricity, back-up power supply, water,  
23 sewerage system, solid waste management, and physical mobility for people with  
24 mobility aids.

25           d) *Physical Amenities* - The evacuation and relief center should  
26 be able to provide the following minimum facilities:

- 27           1. Sleeping area;
- 28           2. Eating area;
- 29           3. Shower and toilet facilities which should accommodate  
30           twenty (20) people per shower or toilet room, and should be utilized according

- 1 to gender;
- 2 4. Kitchen or food preparation area;
- 3 5. Trash collection area;
- 4 6. Clinic area including an isolation area for potentially infectious people;
- 5 7. Laundry area;
- 6 8. Recreation area; and
- 7 9. Pet and livestock holding area.

8 e) *Food Safety* - Kitchen and dining facilities should be able to cater for the number  
9 of people in the evacuation center. Food preparation and storage facilities should comply  
10 with satisfactory standards of the Department of Health on cleanliness to minimize the  
11 potential for contamination and invasion of insects and pests.

12  
13 SEC. 5. *Priority in the Establishment of Evacuation Centers.* -  
14 The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) shall, in  
15 coordination with local chief executives of provinces, cities, and municipalities, identify  
16 areas to be given the highest priority in the establishment of new evacuation centers.

17 Upon determination by the NDRRMC and the chief executives of LGUs, the  
18 NDRRMC shall make a priority list of LGUs needing evacuation centers. The frequency of  
19 occurrence of calamities, whether natural or human-induced, and the number of  
20 displaced persons in the LGU during said calamities in the past three years may be  
21 considered in coming up with the priority list.

22  
23 SEC. 6. *Improvement of Schools or Structures Used as Evacuation Centers.* - When  
24 an LGU is included in the priority list of LGUs which need an evacuation center pursuant  
25 to Section 5 of this Act and there is no available site where the government can construct  
26 a new evacuation center, the NDRRMC may instead consider the improvement of facilities  
27 in schools or other structures already being used as evacuation center by the LGU to  
28 make it comply with the provisions of Section 4 of this Act, particularly on the  
29 requirement on location and structural capacity.

30

1           SEC. 7. *Role of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.* -  
2 The NDRRMC shall be the lead agency in implementing this Act. It shall ensure that the  
3 requirements of this Act are faithfully complied with.  
4

5           SEC. 8. *Coordination Among Agencies.* - The NDRRMC shall coordinate with the  
6 DPWH and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) with regard to the design  
7 specifications, cost estimates and construction details of new evacuation centers that  
8 will be constructed pursuant to this Act.

9           All government agencies and instrumentalities, when necessary, shall provide  
10 assistance to the NDRRMC to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of this  
11 Act.  
12

13           SEC. 9. *Operation and Maintenance of Evacuation Centers.* - The operation and  
14 management of evacuation centers shall be under the auspices of the LGU where the  
15 evacuation center is situated while the DPWH shall be tasked with the maintenance of  
16 evacuation centers that will be constructed under this Act.

17           The local Sanggunian shall promulgate guidelines and procedures for the use and  
18 operation of the evacuation centers under their jurisdiction. The guidelines shall include  
19 provisions on the use of the evacuation center when it is not being utilized as an  
20 evacuation center including its utilization as a classroom, livelihood center, youth center,  
21 or multi-purpose center to benefit the constituents of the LGU.

22           The Department of Education (DepEd) shall be in-charge with the maintenance,  
23 repair and upgrading of the additional facilities of schools which will be constructed in  
24 accordance with Section 6 of this Act.  
25

26           SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the implementation of this  
27 Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the DPWH with respect to the construction  
28 and maintenance of new evacuation centers. For this purpose, the DPWH shall include  
29 in its programs and annual budget the maintenance of evacuation centers constructed  
30 under this Act.

1           The amount necessary for the operation of the evacuation centers shall be charged  
2 to the funds of the LDRRMC.

3           The construction and maintenance of additional facilities for schools already used  
4 as evacuation centers shall be charged to the appropriations for the DepEd. Thereafter,  
5 such amount needed by the concerned Department for the continued implementation of  
6 this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

7  
8           SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Chairperson of the NDRRMC,  
9 in close coordination with Administrator of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD)/ NDRRMC  
10 Executive Director, and the member-Secretaries of the NDRRMC, shall issue the  
11 necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

12  
13           SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid  
14 or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full  
15 force and effect.

16  
17           SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and  
18 other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified  
19 accordingly.

20  
21           SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication  
22 in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

*Approved,*