

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4216



Introduced by **HON. TEDDY BRAWNER BAGUILAT, JR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is in the best interest of the State to maintain a functional and reliable civil registration system that is (1) efficient and responsive to the needs of the Filipino people; and (2) appropriately aligned with international standards.

Through the official registration of births, deaths, marriages and adoption, Filipinos have the documentary evidence needed to secure recognition of their legal identity, family relationships, nationality, and all other related civil rights. This recognition is increasingly important in light of the anticipated acceleration of cross-border movements of Filipinos globally and within the ASEAN Economic Community.

Ensuring birth registration within a comprehensive civil registry is also crucial in the child protection framework. It contributes to protecting children from the risks of exploitation, abuse, child labor, early marriage and erroneous inclusion in the adult justice system. The lack of a birth certificate condemns a person to lifelong exclusion because identification is needed to access various services, entitlements and opportunities. Indigenous peoples are among the most marginalized populations who do not have birth certificates and other civil registration documents. According to the NCIP Commissioner for the Cordillera, ninety-two percent of indigenous peoples are not included in the planning statistics of the government. This in turns affects the responsiveness and appropriateness of policies and programs to address the needs of indigenous peoples.

A functional and reliable civil registration system also facilitates efficient and effective social services planning and delivery, and produces accurate statistics that are the foundation for building a modern, efficient and informed public administration system. Thus, it helps realize human, legal and economic rights as well as provide for social protection. They play a key role in realizing good governance from the local to national levels of our government.

This bill seeks to mandate a more efficient and locally-responsive system for recording vital events through simplified procedures and the application of appropriate technologies. It also aims to standardize civil registration procedures to aid the national government, local government units, and the general public. Specific provisions are included for the establishment of a Culturally-sensitive Registration System that is appropriate to the unique cultural practices and identification systems of IPs. The bill will strengthen the provisions in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act regarding the registration of indigenous peoples and seeks to encourage increased participation of IPs in the civil registration system.

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



HON. TEDDY BRAWNER BAGUILAT, JR

Lone District, Ifugao

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4216**

Introduced by HON. TEDDY BRAWNER BAGUILAT, JR

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A MORE RESPONSIVE CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "Civil Registration Act of 2016".

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State shall promote and maintain a more responsive civil registration system. Towards this end, standardization amid modernization of civil registration procedures is necessary to establish the identity of the individual for administrative and legal purposes. Moreover, efficient and simplified procedures in recording vital events must be applied in civil registration for the benefit of the general public.

Section 3. Coverage. - This law shall embrace all acts affecting the civil status of persons in the Philippines and all Filipino citizens abroad.

Section 4. Definition of Terms.

- a) Civil Registration - refers to the continuous, permanent, universal and compulsory documentation of occurrence and characteristics of vital events, including any modifications thereof during the lifetime of a person, namely births, deaths, marriages, judicial and administrative orders and legal instruments.
- b) Civil Register - refers to the various civil registry books where events and judicial decrees concerning the civil status of persons shall be recorded and kept in the archives of the Local Civil Registry Office, Philippine Consulates, National Statistics Office, and Shari'a District/Circuit Courts.

- c) Civil Registry Documents - refers to all certificates and documents relating to civil status of person which are recorded and kept in the archives of the Local Civil Registry Office, Philippine Consulates, National Statistics Office, and Shari'a District/Circuit Courts.
- d) Philippine Association of Civil Registrars (PACR) – refers to the national professional association of Civil Registrars of the Philippines.
- e) Civil Registrar General (CRG) - refers to the National Statistician of the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) in his/her ex-officio capacity, formerly the head of the Office of the Civil Registrar General (OCRG).
- f) Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) – refers to the central Statistical Authority of the Republic of the Philippines headed by the National Statistician, formerly known as the National Statistics Office (NSO).
- g) Local Civil Registrar (LCR) - refers to the head of the Local Civil Registry Office (LCRO).
- h) Consul General/Consul/Vice Consul (CG) – refers to the Consular Officials in Philippine Consular Offices acting as Registrars of civil registry documents involving Filipinos in a foreign country.
- i) District/Circuit Registrar (D/CR) - refers to the Clerk of a Shari'a District/Circuit Court performing civil registration functions with regards to Muslim marriages, Divorces, Revocation of Divorces and Conversions under Title VI, Book Two of Presidential Decree No.1083, otherwise known as the Code of Muslim Personal Laws.
- j) Barangay Registration Agents (BRA) – refers to the Barangay Secretary or his/her authorized representative who is mandated by law to assist in civil registration, particularly in the compulsory reporting of all occurrences of births, deaths and marriages from all Barangays of the Philippines using appropriate electronic devices.
- k) Local Archive Authority (LAA) – refers to the LCR or his authorized official of the LCRO of each Local Government Unit who has the duty to establish, keep and maintain the local archives, to include its mandatory digitization of all civil registry documents for the herein provided Digital Linkages and Interconnection of All Participating LCROs.
- l) National Civil Registry Database (NCRD) – refers to all digitized civil registry documents from all LCRO, CG and D/CR officially linked for multilateral benefits.

- m) National Security Paper (NSECPA) – refers to the Security Paper, printed by a government printer with overt and covert features, to be exclusively used for all certifications from LCROs using the NCRD digitized archives.
- n) Barangay Civil Registration System (BCRS) – refers to a strategy to facilitate civil registration at the barangay level involving all barangay officials assisting the City/Municipal Civil Registrar (C/MCRs) in civil registration work, as stated in Section 394 (d) (5) R.A. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of the Philippines.
- o) Local Health Authority – refers to the Local Government Department Head of the City or Municipal Health Office of the every Local Government Unit.
- p) Legal Instruments - refers to the affidavits/affirmations pertaining to civil registration.
- q) Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples – Pursuant to the definition in the Indigenous People’s Rights Act of 1997, refers to a group of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. ICCs/IPs shall likewise include peoples who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures, or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled outside their ancestral domains;

Section 5. Duties and Functions of the Civil Registrar General (CRG). - The Office of the Civil Registrar General shall have the following duties and functions:

- a) prepare and promulgate the implementing rules and regulations pertaining to civil registration laws and all subsequent issuances relative thereto, in close collaboration with the DILG and the PACR;
- b) exercise technical supervision over the City/Municipal Civil Registrars (C/MCRs) and other Local Civil Registry Officers;
- c) issue circulars and memoranda pertaining to civil registration enhancements as part of the functions of the OCRG;
- d) provide ways and means to assist Civil Registrars for the reconstruction of Local Archives as the need arises; and,

c) act as the national central repository of all civil registry documents submitted to the OCRG for archiving from all civil registry offices of the Philippines, for back up database and statistical analysis purposes only.

Section 6. Duties of the City/Municipal Civil Registrar. - The appointment of C/MCRs shall be mandatory for city and municipal governments.

The C/MCR shall be responsible for the civil registration programs in the local government unit concerned, pursuant to this Act, other existing laws, rules and regulations.

The C/MCR shall develop plans and strategies and upon approval thereof by the mayor, implement the same, particularly those which pertain to civil registry programs and projects.

The C/MCR shall:

- a) As much as practicable, assist in the preparation, accept and register all registrable events and documents occurring within his or her jurisdiction affecting the civil status of persons;
- b) File registrable certificates and documents presented to him or her for entry;
- c) Compile and transmit copies to CRG every document registered within the first ten (10) calendar days of the succeeding month;
- d) Issue certified transcripts or copies of any certificate or document registered, upon payment of the prescribed fees;
- e) Classify, digitize, index and preserve all registered documents in accordance with the appropriate archiving procedures;
- f) Administer oaths, free of charge, for civil registry purposes;
- g) File, keep and preserve in a secured place the civil registry books as required by law;
- h) Receive all registrable documents and transcribe in the corresponding civil register all documents accepted for registration;
- i) Receive applications for the issuance of a marriage license and after determining that the requirements and supporting certificates and publication thereof for the prescribed period have been complied with, shall issue the license upon payment of the authorized fee to the local treasurer;

- j) Conduct community education campaigns on vital registration and assist in the preparation of demographics and other statistics for the local government unit concerned;
- k) Recommend to the legislative bodies and collaborate with administrative agencies in the formulation of systems, procedures, policies, rules and regulations on civil registration;
- l) Submit status reports to the CRG on the condition of civil registry documents filed in his civil registry office whenever there are substantial changes in the status of his files, in cases of fire, flood, earthquake and other natural and or manmade calamities;
- m) Reconstruct destroyed civil registry records upon compliance with the requirements following the procedures established by the CRG;
- n) Make available at all times the civil registry forms in the civil registry office;
- o) Be responsible for the issuance of certifications as the Local Archive Authority (LAA) and in the management of the local outlet of National Security Paper (NSECPA) using the NCRD;
- p) Be authorized to solemnize marriage within his or her jurisdiction;
- q) Exercise quasi judicial functions in all cases involving changes and correction in the civil register as provided for by law; and
- r) Employ lawful measures to ensure the integrity of the civil register, preserve the same against any form of corruption pertaining to both its hard copies and digital copies on file. This endeavor shall pertain not only to the local archives but to the files of its counterparts in the use of NSECPA in all processes of the NCRD operations.

Section 7. Civil Registry Books - The C/MCRs shall keep and preserve in their offices the following books: (1) Register of Births; (2) Register of Foundlings; (3) Register of Deaths; (4) Register of Marriages; (5) Register of Court Decrees or Orders; (6) Register of Legal Instruments; (7) Register of Applications for Marriage License; (8) Register of Conversion to Islam; (9) Register of Muslim Divorces; (10) Register of Revocation of Muslim Divorces; (11) Register of ICCs/IPs Marriage Dissolutions; (12) Register of ICCs/IPs Revocation of Marriage Dissolutions.

Section 8. Culturally-sensitive Registration System - In collaboration with the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), Philippine Association of Civil Registrars, National Commission on Culture and Arts (NCCA), and distinguished anthropologists and selected elders and leaders of IPs shall establish an Indigenous Peoples Civil Registration System (IPCRS) that is sensitive and appropriate to the unique cultural practices and identification systems of IPs: Provided, that the IPCRS shall be harmonized with existing laws and systems on civil registry.

The IPCRS shall take into account the various ethnic affiliations of the IPS in the country. For this purpose, the NSO Administrator, acting as the Civil Registrar General, instead of issuing separate forms for the IPCRS, shall cause the amendment of the existing civil registry forms, for uniformity of all civil registry documents to ensure acceptability by end-user agencies or institutions of the facts and information contained in said documents and ease of establishing filial bonds between or among parent or parents and child.

In the absence of any identifying document, the self-ascription or ascription by any of the parents or tribal leader or elder shall suffice to establish the identity of IPs when applying with the LCR for recording birth, marriage or death.

Section 9. Registration and Certification of Birth - The declaration of the physician, midwife, nurse, attendant at birth, or in default thereof, the declaration of either or both parents or any person who has knowledge of the facts of birth of the newborn child shall be sufficient for the registration of birth in the civil register. The duly accomplished Certificate of Live Birth (COLB) containing the above declaration shall be submitted for registration to the C/MCR where the birth occurred within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of birth by the aforementioned persons, declaring the following: a.) name of the child; b.) sex; c.) date of birth; d.) place of birth; d.) name of mother; e.) citizenship of the mother; f.) name of father; g.) citizenship of the father; h.) date and place of marriage of parents; and i.) such other data as may be required in the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

Birth and other civil registry records of persons not bearing the usual middle initial or middle name shall have equal acceptability and respect before all government and private transactions where these documents are presented.

Abandoned children or foundlings, with parents, guardians or relatives being unknown, or a child committed in an orphanage or charitable institution with unknown facts of birth and parentage, shall be registered by the finder or charitable institution concerned within thirty (30) calendar days before the office of the C/MCR after the date of commitment.

A person who has not been registered before the office of the C/MCR where he or she was born within the prescribed period of thirty (30) calendar days shall apply for delayed registration.

A deceased person's birth may also be registered on a delayed registration basis by his or her nearest kin.

The informant and affiant must show authentic proof of the identity of the person to be registered, the facts of his birth, his parentage and other relevant data.

Out-of-town registration of birth may be allowed, where the place of application for registration is other than the place of birth of the person seeking to be registered.

The record of a person's birth shall be kept strictly confidential and no information relating thereto shall be issued except upon request of the following:

- a) The concerned person himself, or any person authorized by him;
- b) His spouse, his parent or parents, his direct descendants, or guardian or institution legally in-charge of him, if he is a minor;
- c) The Court or proper public officials whenever absolutely necessary in administrative, judicial or other official proceedings to determine the identity of the child's parents or other circumstances surrounding his or her birth; and
- d) In case of person's death, the nearest kin.

In recording the birth of IPs delivered in the traditional customs and practices of the indigenous community, the report as to the circumstances of the birth by any of the parents or by the tribal doctor or tribal midwife who attended to the delivery shall be conclusive upon the Local Civil Registrar (LCR without need for further proof).

Section 10. Registration and Certification of Death. - The physician who attended the deceased or, in his default, the health officer concerned, or in default of the latter, any member of the family of the deceased, or any person having knowledge of the death, shall cause the registration of the same before the office of the C/MCR of the place of death.

The death certificate which shall be issued by the attending physician of the deceased or, in his default, by the proper health officer shall contain the following data which shall be furnished by the person reporting the death: a) full name of the deceased; b) sex; c) age; d) civil status; e) nationality; f) date of death; g) place of death; h) full names of the deceased's parents; i.) cause of death; and j.) such other data which may be required.

Informants shall register the death of a deceased legally married woman using the surname of her immediate surviving husband.

Registration shall be made within thirty (30) calendar days after the time of death before the office of the C/MCR where the death occurred.

In the absence of the health officer or his authorized representative in the place of registration, or when it is a non-working day and the health officer or his authorized representative is not expected

to be in his office, the death should be reported within forty-eight (48) hours after its occurrence by the nearest of kin of the deceased or by any person having knowledge of the death to the mayor, or to the vice mayor or any member of the Sangguniang Bayan or to the municipal secretary, who shall issue and sign the medical certification portion of the Certificate of Death for burial and registration purposes.

When the death is under medico-legal examination, or where the case of death is under investigation by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) or other investigative agency of the government and where the body of the deceased is subjected to autopsy or examination of the medico-legal officers and the deceased has not been registered in the place of the death, the head of the NBI or of other investigative agency or his authorized representative shall cause the registration of such death through the health officer of the city or municipality where the death occurred.

The medico-legal officer shall accomplish and sign the medical certification portion of certificate of death, subject to the review of the Local Health Authority.

Registration of fetal death shall follow the same procedures in the registration of death.

A deceased person's facts of death that has not been registered within thirty (30) calendar days period after the time of death shall be allowed delayed registration before the office of the C/MCR where he died.

Out-of-town registration of death may be allowed.

The report as to the circumstances of death of IPs by any member of the family of the deceased or by the tribal doctor in attendance during such death shall likewise be conclusive on the LCR without need of further proof. Section 6 of Act No. 3753 shall apply only when the death happened in a hospital and was attended to by a physician.

Section 11. Registration of the application for Marriage License. - The local civil registrar concerned shall enter all applications for marriage licenses filed before his office in the application for marriage license register strictly in the order in which the same are received. He shall record in said register the names of the applicants, the date on which the marriage license was issued, and such other data as may be necessary.

Section 12. Application for Marriage License. - All applications for marriage license shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Executive Order No. 209, otherwise known as the Family Code of the Philippines, as amended.

Section 13. Registration and Certification of Marriage. - All solemnizing officers shall send four (4) copies of the certificate of marriage for registration before the office of the C/MCR where the

marriage took place within fifteen (15) calendar days after an ordinary marriage and within (30) calendar days for marriages exempt from license requirement.

A person whose marriage has not been registered within the prescribed period shall be allowed for delayed registration.

Out-of-town registration of marriage shall be allowed.

The report of marriage among and between IPs solemnized in accordance with customary laws, rites, traditions and practices by the person duly authorized to perform the ritual or ceremony and by the parties to the marriage shall be conclusive upon the LCR without need for further proof. For this purpose, the NCIP shall submit to the NSO a list of IPs recognized by each indigenous community to solemnize marriage according to its customary laws or practices. The NSO shall issue a Certificate of Registration of Authority to Solemnize Marriage (CRASM) to such IPs for free.

In the case of indigenous communities whose traditional marriage ceremony does not require the presence of a solemnizing officer, as determined by the NCIP, the report by the contracting parties shall be conclusive upon the LCR without the need for further proof except personal confirmation, orally or in writing, by any of the parents or by a tribal leader or elder of the indigenous community to which any of the spouses belong. For this purpose, the NCIP shall furnish the NSO and the LCRs with a list of indigenous communities falling under this paragraph: Provided, That pending the submission of such list, the oral or written confirmation of the tribal leader or elder shall be conclusive upon the LCR.

The dissolution of marriage of IPs following customary indigenous laws and practices shall be directly recorded with the LCR without the need of court intervention: Provided, That such facts and information shall be confirmed orally or in writing by a tribal leader or elder of the indigenous community to which any of the spouses belongs.

Section 14. Multiple Registration. - In cases of multiple registrations of birth, marriage and death, the first duly registered document shall prevail unless the Court orders otherwise.

For multiple marriages by and between same parties, their first marriage shall prevail, not the first registered marriage of such parties.

Section 15. Registration of Solemnizing Officers. - All solemnizing officers shall be registered with the CRG, except those who are not required to be so registered as provided by law or existing rules.

The C/MCRs may assist the Local Chief Executive in determining documents pertaining to the existence of religious sects.

Section 16. Registration of Court Orders. - In case a court issues an order concerning the status of a person, it shall be the duty of the clerk of court to advise the successful petitioner to have the order registered before the C/MCR where the court is functioning.

In the cases where another person may apply to register a court order other than the petitioner before the office of the C/MCR, the later shall verify if the copy of the order is authentic, otherwise, he shall deny registration thereof.

The local civil registry office where the event of the order was registered shall forward a certified true copy of the order to the C/MCR where the event affected was originally registered. The latter shall make the proper annotations in the document and at the applicable registry book. He shall likewise send a certified true copy of the annotated document and the registered court order to the Civil Registrar General.

Each registered document shall be submitted to the Civil Registrar General during the usual reporting month.

All court orders shall be registered within fifteen (15) days upon its finality, otherwise it shall be considered as delayed registration.

All court orders shall be effected through annotations in the civil registry document except in adoption where the child shall be entitled to the issuance of an amended birth certificate.

Section 17. Registration of Adoption. - After the court decision on adoption cases has become final and executory, the original birth certificate shall be amended. An amended certificate of live birth of the adopted shall be issued by the C/MCR where the birth of the adopted child was recorded. Such certificate of live birth of an adopted child shall not bear any mark or annotation or any indication of the facts of adoption. It shall have the same entries as those appearing in the original records of birth, except for the following items of information:

a) Name of the adopted - the first name of the adopted child shall be the same in the original certificate of live birth unless the order of adoption carried an order changing it to another name. The middle name of the adopted child shall be the same as the middle name of the adopter, except when the husband and the wife jointly adopted the child, in which case, the middle name of the adopted shall be the surname of the adopting mother.

The surname of the adopted child shall be that of the adopter. If the husband and wife jointly adopt the child, the adopted child shall use the surname of the adopting father.

- b) Names of parents - the name of the natural parents of the adopted child shall be substituted by the names of the adopting parents, to be indicated in the appropriate spaces in the certificate of live birth as the father or mother, as the case may be; and
- c) Other information - other information about the adopting parents such as citizenship and religion shall be indicated in the appropriate spaces of the amended certificate of live birth. In cases where legally married husband and wife jointly adopt the child, the date and place of marriage of the adopting parents shall be entered in the appropriate spaces of the amended certificate of live birth of the adopted child.
- d) No amendment or changes in the civil registry books – in all cases of adoption, no changes in the civil registry books where the original birth records was duly registered shall be effected, except for the marginal annotation by virtue of the adoption decree.

In case the adopted child is a foundling, the basis for issuance of an Amended Certificate of Live Birth shall be the court order.

Section 18. Registration of Presumptive Death. - A judicial order or decree declaring a person presumably dead for purposes of remarriage shall be registered at the C/MCR where the first marriage was registered. For the purpose of contracting a subsequent marriage, annotation shall be recorded in the marriage register as well as in the marriage certificate.

Section 19. Registration of Foreign Court Orders Decided Abroad. - All foreign court orders involving civil status of persons residing in the Philippines shall be registered before the Local Civil Registry Office where the affected document is registered. These foreign court orders, to be legal and binding in Philippine jurisdiction, must first be confirmed by the appropriate Regional Trial Court which have the lawful jurisdiction over such case.

Section 20. Registration of Legal Instruments. - As a general rule, all legal instruments shall be registered in the civil registry of the place where they were executed except the following:

- a) Affidavit of reappearance - where the parties to the subsequent marriage are residing;
- b) Marriage Settlement- where the marriage was recorded;
- c) Admission of Paternity, Acknowledgment, Legitimation, Voluntary Emancipation of Minor, Artificial Insemination - where the birth of the child was recorded.

All legal instruments executed abroad shall be registered before the Philippine consulate of that country or at the Local Civil Registry Office where the affected document is registered including all legal instruments which may be executed in the Philippines.

All legal instruments shall be effected through marginal annotations on the civil registry document and at the appropriate civil register.

Section 21. Registration of Affidavit of Reappearance. - A sworn statement of the facts and circumstances of reappearance of the absentee spouse shall be recorded in the civil registry office where subsequent marriage of the present spouse was recorded, at the instance of any interested person, with due notice to the spouses of the subsequent marriage and without prejudice to the fact of reappearance being judicially determined in cases where such a fact is disputed.

Section 22. Registration of Affidavit of Acknowledgment or Affidavit of Admission of Paternity. - It shall be the duty of parents or parent who executed the affidavit of acknowledgment to send the original copy to the C/MCR where the birth of the child was registered for registration in the Register of Legal Instruments and proper annotation in the Register of Births.

Section 23: Registration of Muslim Filipinos and Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP). - Muslims Filipinos and CNSP, by reason of their socio-cultural, religious, and indigenous peculiarities shall be registered as follows:

- a) Muslim Filipinos- civil registration shall be governed by Presidential Decree 1083, Executive Order 157, and Administrative Order No.1, Series of 2005;
- b) CNSP- civil registration shall follow the procedures provided under OCRG Memorandum Circular 2004-01 and other promulgations by the OCRG in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other concerned agencies.

Section 24. Barangay Civil Registration System (BCRS). - All elected and/or appointed barangay officials and employees, shall assist the LCR in civil registration within their area of jurisdiction through the BCRS. Continuing training and capacity building shall be conducted by the PSA, LGUs, PACR, and other accredited government or private institutions, for the upgrading of the knowledge and skills of all partners in civil registration in the Barangay.

Section 25. Civil Registry Documents are Public Documents. - The registry books making up the civil register, the office files in hard copies and its corresponding digital files of the LCROs, certifications or certified copies from these files and all other documents relating thereto shall be considered public documents and shall be prima facie evidence of the truth of the facts therein contained. These public documents shall be open to the public, except those documents which are to be kept strictly confidential as provided for by law, during office hours and shall be kept in a secured place which shall be furnish to the civil registrar at the expense or of the funds of the local government concerned.

The civil registrar shall not, under any circumstances, permit any document entrusted to his care to be removed from his office, except by lawful order of a court, in which case the proper receipt shall be taken.

The civil registrar may issue certified copies of any document filed, upon payment of proper fees fixed by law or the local ordinance.

Section 26. Expenses of the Office of the Civil Registrar. – All expenses in connection with the establishment and operations of the civil registrar's office shall be paid out of local funds and for this purpose, the Sanggunian of municipalities or cities concerned shall make the necessary appropriations available in the local annual budget.

Any provision of the law to the contrary notwithstanding, IPs shall be exempted from the payment of all fees in connection with the recording of their birth, marriage, and death at the Local Civil Registry (LCR) Office and shall exemption shall extend to any fine or fee for late registration. They are likewise exempted from the payment of notarial fees and documentary stamp tax in cases where the recording of the birth, marriage, or death requires the execution of affidavits or sworn statements and similar documents.

Section 27. Free Registration of Vital Civil Registry Events. – The registration of births, deaths, marriages and foundlings are hereby declared as a National Policy, therefore, no fees shall be collected in the registration of these events, whether or not these are registered on time or delayed with respect to their reglementary periods. All supporting documents as prerequisite to birth registration shall also be free.

The first copies of civil registration certificates shall be free. For issuance of succeeding copies of civil registry documents, a standard fee prescribed by the CRG shall be collected.

For registration of Court orders, legal instruments and registrable administrative orders, a standard fee shall be collected. The local government unit may collect reasonable service fees and charges by virtue of an Ordinance for the purpose.

Section 28. Penal Provisions - Any person whose duty is to report any fact concerning the civil status of persons and who knowingly fails to perform such duty, and any person convicted of having violated the provisions of this Act shall be punished in accordance with law.

Any person who shall knowingly make false statements in the forms furnished and shall present the same for entry in the civil registers shall be penalized with an imprisonment of not less than six (6) months nor more than six (6) years or a fine of not less than Ten Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00) or both upon the discretion of the Court.

The attending physician, nurse, midwife, hospital administrator, or any person having been charged to cause the registration of live births attended by them but who knowingly fails or withholds the delivery of copies of the certificate/s of live birth to the city or municipal civil registrar for registration, shall be penalized by imprisonment of not more than six (6) months, or by a fine of not more than Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00), or both, upon the discretion of the Court.

Any priest or minister solemnizing marriage without being authorized by the Civil Registrar General or who, upon solemnizing marriage, refuses to exhibit his authority to solemnize marriage when called upon to do so by the parties or parents, grandparents, guardians or persons having charge of the parties; or any bishop or officer, priest, or minister of any church, religion or sect, the regulations and practices whereof require bans or publication previous to the solemnization of marriage, who authorized the immediate solemnization of marriage that is subsequently declared illegal, or any officer, priest or minister solemnizing marriage in violation of the provision of this Act shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not to exceed three (3) years, or by a fine not less than Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00) nor more than Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php 20,000.00) or the revocation of the authority to solemnize marriage, or all three, upon the discretion of the Court.

Any officer, priest, or minister who fails to deliver copies of the certificate of marriage to the city or municipal civil registrar within the period fixed by law shall be punished by imprisonment of not more than six (6) months, or by a fine of not more than Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the Court.

Section 29. Digital/Electronic Reporting of Births, Deaths and Marriages. – There shall be a compulsory reporting of all occurrences of Births, Deaths and Marriages from all Barangays of the Philippines. As Barangay Registration Agents, all Barangay Secretaries or their authorized representatives are hereby mandated to report these events using appropriate and duly-inspected secure electronic devices to the LCRO and other government agencies mandated by law to monitor the status of registration of vital civil registry events and shall assist the subsequent registration thereof. Continuing skills training relevant to Digital/Electronic Reporting of Births, Death and Marriages of Barangay Registration Agents shall be provided by the PSA, LGU, PACR and other accredited government and private institutions and organizations. This training shall equip Barangay Registration Agents with the knowledge and skills needed to properly implement digital/electronic civil registration.

Section 30. Development of National Civil Registry Database (NCRD) Software – The National Government thru the National Computer Center in close coordination with the PSA, the PACR, and the DILG shall develop official software responsive to the NCRD implementation. Participation and assistance of international and local private organizations having parallel objectives on the full development of digital civil registration may be sought in the development of this

software. Among other features, this software shall include the highest degree of data security to ensure the integrity of its database.

Section 31. Digitization of all Civil Registry Files. – All registered documents in the LCRO shall be digitized. In addition to the usual reports and forwarding of the printed hard copy files, digitized files shall also be submitted to the PSA as back up files of the National Civil Registry Database (NCRD), for digital archiving purposes.

Section 32. Digital Linkages and Interconnection of All Participating LCROs. – All capable LCROs shall be interconnected to facilitate retrieval, on line certifications, and for local government revenue generation using LGU-linked NCRD digital files. Participating LCROs are hereby authorized to issue certifications from NCRD for and in behalf of other LCROs subject to pertinent laws, rules or regulations on the confidentiality of birth records.

Section 33. Validity and Acceptability of NCRD NSECPA. – All documents issued using NSECPA from NCRD being public documents shall be prima facie of the facts therein contained. NSECPA shall be presumed valid for all intents and purposes relative to the identity, status, rights, statistical values and other relevant data pertaining to its document owners, end users and concerned government agencies. These documents shall be valid without need of authentication from any agency of government.

Section 34. Income Sharing Among Participating LGUs – The net income in the issuance of NSECPA certifications using the NCRD shall be equitably shared by the Issuing LCRO and the LAA LCRO for each document released. The software used for the NCRD processing should include among others, a feature of automatic electronic debit and credit of income sharing among LGUs.

Section 35. Depository Bank in NCRD Processes – The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) shall be the depository bank for NCRD monetary processing.

Section 36. Appropriations. There shall be an initial appropriation of One Hundred Fifty Million Pesos (Php 150,000,000.00) in the General Appropriations Act, which will be included in the Department of Interior and Local Governments' budget for the initial development of software and the establishment of the NCRD. All local government units shall likewise provide substantial appropriations in their respective annual budgets for the digitization their LCRO files.

Section 37. Mandatory Review. - This Act shall undergo a mandatory review on its provisions every ten (10) years to make the law more responsive to the needs of times. The review shall be made by Congress, which shall conduct public hearings and record relevant testimonies of functionaries in the civil registration system, which shall be the basis of any amendment or modification of this Act.

Section 38. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The PSA, in close coordination and consultation with the DILG and PACR shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

Section 39. Separability Clause. - Any part or provision of this Act which shall be held to be invalid or unconstitutional, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 40. Repealing Clause. - All laws, rules, regulations, orders, memoranda or circulars inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 41. Retroactivity. - This Act shall have retroactive effect insofar, as it does not prejudice or impair vested or acquired rights.

Section 42. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,