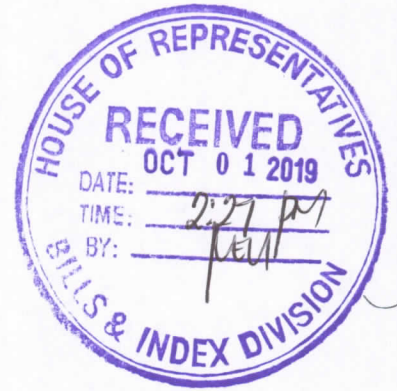


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4941



Introduced by Honorable Lucy Marie Torres-Gomez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Within our lifetime, we have witnessed the Province of Leyte becoming the site of the worst disasters ever to afflict our country.

On November 8, 2013, the strongest tropical cyclone to have made landfall in history rampaged through the province. Super Typhoon "Yolanda" ("Haiyan") battered the province resulting in the loss of thousands of lives and enormous destruction to properties.

Just twenty-two (22) years earlier, on November 5, 1991, the worst flashflood to have swept the country, triggered by Typhoon "Oreng" ("Thelma"), roared down the hills of Ormoc City and inundated the Ormoc River. Within an hour or so, 8,000 people perished and properties worth millions of pesos were destroyed.


Parenthetically, we could also mention in this connection the sinking of M/V Doña Paz on December 20, 1987, said to be the worst peacetime maritime disaster in the world (surpassing in terms of casualties the infamous Titanic disaster). Although the actual sinking of the ship happened off Dumali Point in Mindoro, M/V Doña Paz was en route from Tacloban City to Manila. Similarly, Doña Paz's sister ship, the M/V Doña Marilyn, sank the following year (October 24, 1988) while sailing from Manila to Tacloban leaving 389 dead.

The frequency and intensity of disasters, both natural and man-made, devastating the Province of Leyte prompted the filing of this bill. In terms of disaster preparedness and mitigation, there is a compelling need to address the incalculable damage wrought by calamities to the province. Every time a calamity strikes, the education of our youth becomes "collateral damage", so to speak, since schools almost always serve as

evacuation centers. The lack of disaster and emergency centers (which ought to be disaster-resilient themselves) compromise not only the welfare of the typhoon victims but also the continued schooling of our children.

As a "center", the proposed Life Centers under this measure shall not only provide refuge or temporary shelter to the calamity victims but shall represent an integrated response to the basic needs of the displaced citizenry towards restoration of full normalcy in their lives. Once established, these life centers shall be our "cities of refuge" in times of disasters, our "isles of compassion" for those who have lost not only their belongings but, more tragically, their loved ones.

In view of all the foregoing considerations, the early approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



LUCY TORRES-GOMEZ
Representative
Fourth District of Leyte

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

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HOUSE BILL NO. 4941

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A LIFE CENTER THAT WILL SERVE AS A
DISASTER AND EMERGENCY CENTER IN EACH OF THE CITY
OF ORMOC AND THE MUNICIPALITIES OF PALOMPON,
ALBUERA, MERIDA, KANANGA AND MATAG-OB IN THE
PROVINCE OF LEYTE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. There shall be established a Life Center that will serve as a disaster and emergency center in each of the City of Ormoc and the municipalities of Palompon, Albueria, Merida, Kananga and Matag-ob in the Province of Leyte.

SEC. 2. The construction of such Life Centers shall be undertaken by the Office of Civil Defense of the Department of National Defense. Once established, the local government unit concerned shall undertake the operation and maintenance of the Life Centers.

SEC. 3. The Life Centers shall serve as evacuation centers during calamities or emergencies, providing temporary shelter and other basic necessities to persons displaced by calamities, whether natural or man-

made. Whenever possible, they shall also provide trauma, other medical and rehabilitation services to victims of calamities.

SEC. 4. The amount necessary for the establishment, maintenance and operation of the Life Centers shall be appropriated from the national budget and shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act as part of the budget of the Department of National Defense.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication either in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,