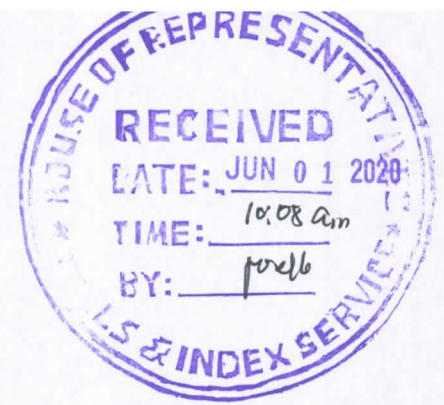


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6893



Introduced By Representative **ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On 11 May 2020, Senator Pia S. Cayetano filed Senate Bill No. 1518 ("S.B. 1518") or the "Safe Pathways Act" of 2020. The bill aims to create a network of pop-up bicycle lanes and emergency pathways that would connect people to essential destinations during the pandemic, all while ensuring that physical distancing is maintained.

Indeed, since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Philippines has taken unprecedented "social distancing" measures to prevent physical interaction in the hope of slowing down the spread of the virus. We have closed schools, malls, restaurants and other recreation centers. We have prohibited public gatherings and strongly advised companies to implement work-from-home arrangements. We have also restricted travel and shut down public transportation in Luzon and other areas seriously affected by the virus.

This author shares the advocacy of the good Senator Cayetano and supports the passage of S.B. 1518 by filing its counterpart measure in the House of Representatives. As correctly recognized in the said bill, it is very difficult to harmonize the concepts of social distancing and mass transit. It requires more stringent physical distancing measures and sweeping adjustments that may require a lot of resources which, however, may not be utilized to full capacity. For instance, in other countries where forms of mass transit are still operational, authorities have taken measures both to limit non-essential travel and redirect some of the remaining demand to non-motorized or personal transport modes.¹ In the United Kingdom, its government warned that social distancing would allow only one in ten (10) passengers on parts of public transport once the network resumes full service.²

As noted in S.B. 1518, personal and non-motorized transport, such as walking and cycling, can help bridge the gap between the need to transport the public while still observing social distance. Aside from facilitating mobility, these transport modes can also help maintain satisfactory levels of health and promote the well-being of our citizens. For instance, studies show that walking or bicycling is associated with reduced cardiovascular

¹ Protecting public transport from the coronavirus... and from financial collapse *available at* <https://blogs.worldbank.org/transport/protecting-public-transport-coronavirus-and-financial-collapse> (last accessed 14 May 2020).

² Coronavirus: Social distancing cuts public transport passenger capacity by 90% *available at* <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-52602227/coronavirus-social-distancing-cuts-public-transport-passenger-capacity-by-90> (last accessed 14 May 2020).

risk and prevention of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.³ In addition, switching to walking and cycling can help reduce air pollution and curb climate change. Lastly, it may solve the heavy traffic congestion in Metro Manila caused by high volume of vehicles plying the streets. In sum, the benefits to the country of the shift to non-motorized or personal transport modes cannot be underestimated.

In other countries, for instance, Philadelphia, USA closed a large 4.4-mile road segment to motor vehicles for pedestrians and cyclists to help address the public transport problem in the city during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, Mexico City proposed plans for 80 miles of temporary bike infrastructure to alleviate the risks of public transportation use and facilitate mobility in the city. Similarly, Berlin implemented a 1-mile temporary bike lane along a major road and has plans to expand the pop-up infrastructure, along with 133 other German cities. Oakland, Minneapolis, Denver, Louisville, Vancouver and Calgary have also implemented similar measures. Furthermore, New York City committed to adding close to 1 mile of temporary protected bike lanes to segments of Manhattan and Brooklyn, and testing road closures to cars.

In the Philippines, however, we do not have enough safe infrastructures for cyclists and pedestrians to operate safely. Hence, there is a crucial need for legislation that will redefine our policies on transport and urban development, specifically those that are designed to encourage walking and cycling for daily travel.⁴

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



HON. ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES
Representative
3rd District, Quezon City

³ See Associations between active travel to work and overweight, hypertension, and diabetes in India: a cross-sectional study available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23776412> (last accessed 14 May 2020).

⁴ Walking and Cycling to Health: A Comparative Analysis of City, State, and International Data available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2937005/> (last accessed 14 May 2020).

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HOUSE BILL NO. 6893

Introduced By Representative **ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF POP-UP BICYCLE LANES AND EMERGENCY
PATHWAYS FOR USE DURING THE DURATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “Safe Pathways Act”.
2
3

4 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The Constitution mandates the State to
5 protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in
6 accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature, and to protect and promote the right to
7 health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.
8

9 In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Action Plan Against COVID-19 provides
10 that the State shall mitigate the consequences and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to
11 the social, economic, and personal security of the Filipino people.
12

13 The State recognizes that the current transportation system does not address the need for
14 physical distancing.
15

16 The State likewise acknowledges the need for infrastructure and a change in mindset to
17 encourage and accommodate alternative modes of transportation such as walking,
18 bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles, and to provide safe and convenient pathways
19 for pedestrians and non-motorized travel. It also recognizes the urgency of this need
20 during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure physical distancing and given the limited forms
21 of transportation available to frontliners and essential workers for so long as there is
22 reduced mobility.
23

24 Prioritizing walking, biking and the use of non-motorized vehicles will result in reduced
25 carbon emissions, less use of energy and resources, and provide multiple health benefits
26 and increase quality of life.
27

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4 These are also in line with the State's commitment to the Sustainable Development
5 Goals (SDGs), in particular: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being); SDG 7 (Affordable and
6 Clean Energy); SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); SDG 11 (Sustainable
7 Cities and Communities); SDG 13 (Climate Action); and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the
8 Goals).
9

10 For purposes of this Act, "Non-Motorized Vehicles" includes all forms of travel that
11 do not rely on an engine or motor for movement. This includes, but is not limited to,
12 walking, bicycles, and small-wheeled non-motorized transport (skates, skateboards, push
13 scooters and hand carts).
14
15

16 **SECTION 3. *Safe Pathways Network.*** – Immediately upon the effectivity of this Act,
17 the Department of Transportation (DOTr) with the Department of Public Works and
18 Highways (DPWH), and in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs), shall identify
19 and create a network of pop-up bicycle lanes that may be used during the duration of the
20 COVID-19 pandemic. The pop-up bicycle lanes are strictly for bicycles and other non-
21 motorized vehicles only and shall connect users to essential destinations such as medical
22 facilities, public and private facilities frequented by people, school, when they do open,
23 and other similar places that may be identified. The lanes may be marked with removable
24 tapes and mobile signs, which can easily be placed and removed as necessary. Other
25 physical barriers may also be used.
26

27 The pop-up bicycle lanes must have the necessary space to accommodate the
28 expected increase of users and the need for physical distancing at least one (1) meter
29 apart.
30

31 To complement the network of pop-up bicycle lanes, LGUs shall create a
32 designated network of people-oriented emergency pathways along local roads that will
33 provide pedestrians and bicycle and non-motorized vehicle users safe, convenient access
34 to frequented destinations by restricting motorized vehicle passage in these pathways
35 during peak hours. The emergency pathways shall be clearly marked with signage
36 containing restrictions.
37

38 The DOTr and DPWH shall identify priority areas for implementation.
39
40

41 **SECTION 4. *Non-Motorized Vehicle Parking Spaces.*** – All public places,
42 government offices, schools, places of work and major commercial establishments,
43 including malls, banks, hospitals, and the like, shall provide adequate parking spaces for
44 bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles as far as practicable.
45
46

47 **SECTION 5. *Role of the Public and Private Sectors.*** – Both the public and private
48 sectors shall promote walking and using bicycles and other non-motorized vehicles as an
49 alternative means of travel. They shall develop the necessary infrastructure, facilities and
50 programs for its implementation, including showers and changing areas and shall continue

1 following physical distancing measures during travel.
2
3

4 **SECTION 6. *Permanent Adoption of Safe Pathways Network.*** – The DOTr and
5 DPWH, in coordination with the appropriate agencies, shall prepare to permanently adopt
6 the established bicycle lanes and emergency pathways, as may be appropriate, once
7 COVID-19 is no longer a threat as declared by the proper authorities. Pursuant to this,
8 non-motorized parking spaces and other infrastructure shall also be made permanent as
9 may be appropriate and practicable.
10

11
12 **SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within thirty (30) days from
13 the effectivity of this Act, the DOTr shall promulgate and issue the necessary guidelines
14 for the effective implementation of this Act. The implementing rules and regulations issued
15 pursuant to this Section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in two (2)
16 national newspapers of general circulation.
17

18
19 **SECTION 8. *Appropriations.*** – The funds necessary for the initial implementation
20 of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the DOTr, DPWH, and LGUs as
21 needed. Thereafter, funding shall be included in the budget of the DOTr and DPWH under
22 the annual General Appropriations Act.
23

24
25 **SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared
26 unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be
27 affected thereby.
28

29
30 **SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.*** – All other laws, decrees, orders, rules and
31 regulations, other issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act
32 are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
33

34
35 **SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
36 its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
37

38 Approved,