

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 837

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES BIENVENIDO
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LUZ A. QUIMBO, GABRIEL H. BORDADO, JR., ARLENE D.
BROSAS, ARGEL JOSEPH T. CABATBAT, FRANCE L. CASTRO,
EUFEMIA “KA FEMIA” C. CULLAMAT, SERGIO C. DAGOOC,
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FERDINAND R. GAITE, GODOFREDO N. GUYA, IRENE GAY
F. SAULOG AND SHAREE ANN T. TAN

RESOLUTION
ON THE GRADUAL AND CAUTIOUS LIFTING OF THE
ENHANCED COMMUNITY QUARANTINE (ECQ)

WHEREAS, the Department of Health (DOH) reported the first case of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the country on 30 January 2020 and confirmed the first local transmission of the disease on 7 March 2020;¹

WHEREAS, on 8 March 2020, President Rodrigo R. Duterte issued Proclamation No. 922, s. 2020 declaring a State of Public Health Emergency throughout the Philippines due to the outbreak of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea issued a Memorandum dated 16 March 2020 to all heads of government agencies directing them to adopt, coordinate, and

¹ World Health Organization. (2020) Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the Philippines. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/philippines/emergencies/covid-19-in-the-philippines>

implement the guidelines set in the same Memorandum on the imposition of an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and Stringent Social Distancing Measures over the entire Luzon effective 17 March 2020 to 13 April 2020. It also suspended all classes and mass public transport; restricted land, air, and sea travel; prohibited mass gatherings; enforced strict home quarantine in all households; implemented work from home arrangement in most offices in the Executive branch; and permitted only private establishments providing basic necessities to operate;

WHEREAS, by early April 2020, the majority of provinces in Visayas and Mindanao had likewise been placed under ECQ by their respective local governments, and on 7 April 2020, due to the continuing rise in confirmed COVID-19 cases, the ECQ was extended over the entire Luzon until 30 April 2020;

WHEREAS, on 24 April 2020, the Interagency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) announced its recommendation to extend the ECQ until 15 May 2020 for areas it classified as high risk, and to impose a General Community Quarantine (GCQ) until 15 May 2020 on all other areas in the country, deemed either low-risk or moderate-risk;

WHEREAS, on 29 April 2020, the IATF issued Resolution No. 30 which recommended the Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines, providing that under GCQ, the movement of all persons is limited to accessing essential goods and services, and for work in the industries permitted to operate thereunder, and essential work gatherings and religious activities are permitted, subject to compliance with strict health measures. The IATF determined four categories for sectors under GCQ, where businesses may resume operations to varying degrees from 50 to 100 percent, except those engaged in gaming and amusement, fitness, tourism and other leisure or child-related activities, which shall remain closed;

WHEREAS, on 30 April 2020, the President issued Executive Order (EO) No. 112 which (i) extended the ECQ until 15 May 2020 for the National Capital Region, Region III (except Aurora Province), Region IV-A, Benguet Province, Pangasinan Province, Iloilo Province, Cebu Province, Bacolod City, and Davao City, (ii) imposed a General Community Quarantine (GCQ) until 15 May 2020 on all other areas in the country, and (iii) adopted the Omnibus Guidelines of the IATF on the implementation of the same;

WHEREAS, in the interest of public health and safety, there is a need for a gradual, cautious, and informed approach to modifying quarantine measures, where the resumption of economic activity is done in phases based on an area's risk level, in order to allow rules and protocols to adapt as needed;

WHEREAS, the country must follow the guidance of the World Health Organization to "test, test, test"—all suspected and probable cases must be tested for free to ensure accurate and complete data on cases. Free regular testing must also be made available for frontline healthcare workers;

WHEREAS, given the high number of confirmed COVID-19 cases that are asymptomatic, regular residence-based and work-based mass testing and contact tracing must also be implemented in order to accurately profile areas and limit disease transmission;

WHEREAS, the government must ramp up the country's limited testing capacity through the massive procurement and production of testing kits, and by designating sub-national laboratories for testing and engaging the private sector in the construction of automated testing facilities, as may be necessary;

WHEREAS, according to data from the Department of Health's COVID-19 data drop posted on 4 May 2020, 1,019 out of the 9,485 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country do not have an identified city of residence;

WHEREAS, the government must ensure the completeness, integrity, and timeliness of reported COVID-19 data, down to the barangay level, in order to effectively implement contact tracing and targeted quarantining, which will be the key to cutting chains of disease transmission and sustaining COVID-free spaces once quarantine measures are lifted;

WHEREAS, to avoid any further surge in COVID-19 cases, a mandatory disease surveillance protocol must be adopted and strictly enforced for all workplaces, among others, before quarantine measures can be reasonably modified and other economic activity is allowed to resume. This includes standards for personal hygiene practices, social distancing, contact tracing and quarantining, mass testing, monitoring and reporting case information, and worker housing and transportation for businesses;

WHEREAS, the government must also strengthen the capacity of the public health system to anticipate the need of the people and increase the resilience of the economy as it begins restarting activity. All COVID-19 patients must be assured free treatment in public hospitals and subsidized treatment in private hospitals;

WHEREAS, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation or PhilHealth issued Advisory No. 2020-027 to extend the deadline of all premiums due from February to April 2020 until 31 May 2020 for all direct contributors, where unpaid premiums beyond 31 May 2020 shall be charged with interest;

WHEREAS, the weekly reports from President Duterte and the databases of the implementing agencies of the various social amelioration programs (SAPs) indicate that seven weeks into the ECQ, the Departments of Social Welfare and Development, Labor and Employment, and Agriculture have not extended aid to around 12.5 million or 64% of their target 19 million beneficiaries in the various SAPs;

WHEREAS, the government must also adjust its SAPs in order to give continued relief, including financial aid and food subsidies, while local economies are still in the process of re-opening;

WHEREAS, members of the House of Representatives have received reports that loan windows of various lending institutions have remained closed, even if such are able to operate during the ECQ and GCQ;

WHEREAS, loan windows of all public and private institutions, including micro lending corporations, are needed to ensure access to credit, particularly for small businesses, and help keep businesses afloat;

WHEREAS, government and educational institutions must also ensure that any arrangements for classes shall consider the welfare of all students, such that they are enabled to focus on coping with the COVID-19 crisis and not unreasonably punished or disadvantaged in their classes for lack of access to online platforms and materials. This includes a “no fail” or “universal pass” policy for public and private educational institutions;

WHEREAS, consideration must also be given to energy plants, utility payments for the importation of fuel and coal, consumption of energy, and electrical equipment in transmission, generation, and distribution, in order to arrest any increase in utility bills;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the House of Representatives hereby enjoins the IATF to address the aforementioned concerns by establishing the following standards and protocols and promulgating the necessary issuances:

1. **WORK-RELATED STRATEGIES PER RISK CLASSIFICATION.** For each identified geographic risk level, determine the associated degree of economic activity that may resume, which workplaces may reopen, and set out a plan for how these businesses can gradually resume work;
2. **TIMELINE FOR THE GRADUAL LIFTING OF QUARANTINE MEASURES.** Adopt a gradual, cautious, and informed approach to lifting quarantine measures, where the resumption of economic activity in various sectors is done in phases, in order to allow for learning and adjusting of protocols as areas move from one phase to the next. A timeline of these phases must incorporate geographic risk levels and their corresponding work-related strategies;
3. **MANDATORY DISEASE SURVEILLANCE PROTOCOL.** To inform each LGU as they move from one phase to another, and to avoid any further surge in COVID-19 cases, a mandatory disease surveillance protocol for COVID-19 must be adopted and strictly enforced for all workplaces. This includes standards on the following:
 - a. **HEALTH STANDARDS FOR COVID-FREE WORKPLACES** including social distancing, personal hygiene practices, and COVID-free worker housing and transportation;
 - b. **MASS TESTING** that is both residence-based and work-based, and covers a representative portion of the population;
 - c. **CONTACT TRACING AND TARGETED QUARANTINING** which considers both scope and timeliness of implementation;
 - d. **MONITORING AND REPORTING OF COVID-RELATED DATA**
4. **COVID-19 DATA INTEGRITY AND COMPLETION.** Set out guidelines to ensure the completeness, integrity, and timeliness of reported COVID-19 information, including data on confirmed cases, tests conducted, testing capacity, and health system capacity, down to the barangay level;
5. **HEALTH EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR THE PUBLIC.** Immediately implement effective and people-friendly public health education measures in order to regularly disseminate relevant and up-to-date information about the COVID-19 virus, how to prevent infection and its spread, national and local statistics,

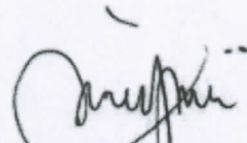
13. **ENSURE STUDENT WELFARE.** Direct higher educational institutions (HEIs) to end the current academic term and adopt a universal pass policy for disrupted classes, provide all HEIs with an education emergency relief fund, and determine sufficient access standards for the conduct of flexible class arrangements moving forward;

14. **RELIEF FOR THE ENERGY SECTOR.** Provide economic relief measures that will extend financial assistance primarily for paying utilities, specifically electricity, water, and communications, as well as provide industrial policy measures that will extend subsidies and tax exemption for fuel and coal, in order to arrest any increase in utility bills as the country reopens its economy.

Adopted,



BIENVENIDO "BENNY" M. ABANTE, JR.



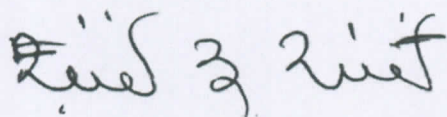
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JOSE CHRISTOPHER Y. BELMONTE



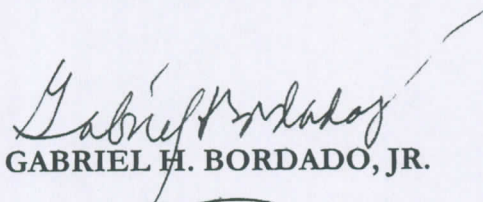
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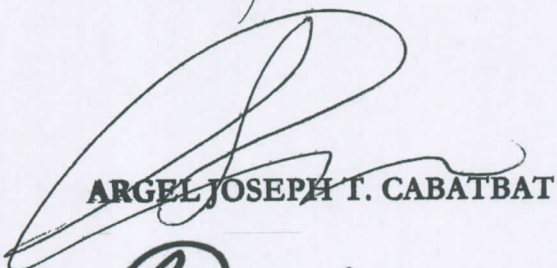
STELLA LUZ A. QUIMBO



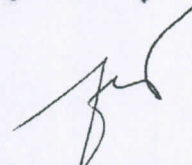
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