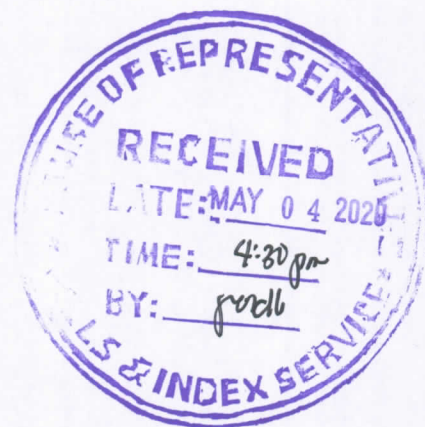




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH (18th) CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6676

Introduced by REP. JOSE CHRISTOPHER Y. BELMONTE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Amid the rising cases of COVID-19 in the country, fear and panic has gripped us beyond the public health and economic challenges. Communities were quick to dismiss suspected and infected patients of COVID-19, our frontline responders, service workers and health personnel exposed to possible infection of the virus. The rising insecurity in the country has proven to test our everyday acts of Bayanihan, compassion and solidarity to our fellow Filipinos in these dire times.

With this, the law should grant the full, inviolable protection against prejudice and discrimination to those who have already suffered and recovered from the disease, to those who carry the brunt of providing medical care, logistical and service support and to those to enable us to access food at the time of the quarantine period. No one deserves to be excluded, harassed, denied their rights and access to services such as housing, food and transportation. This bill asserts Section 11, Article II of the 1987 Constitution which provides that it is the policy of the State to value the dignity of every person and guarantee full respect of their human rights.

In our pursuit to grant an environment that recognizes dignity for all, the heroism in the work of our health workers, responders and service workers in the frontline, we strongly recommend the passage of a law that would safeguard us against stigma due to the COVID-19. We seek to pass a law that would instead remedy discrimination with compassion, in our continued Bayanihan.

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

Jose Belmonte



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EIGHTEENTH (18th) CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 6676

Introduced by REP. JOSE CHRISTOPHER Y. BELMONTE

AN ACT
PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PERSONS WHO ARE CONFIRMED,
SUSPECT, AND PROBABLE CASES OF COVID-19 VIRUS, REPATRIATED OFWS,
HEALTH WORKERS, RESPONDERS, AND SERVICE WORKERS

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

1 SECTION 1. **Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*COVID-19-Related Anti-Discrimination*
2 *Act.*”

3
4 SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It shall be the policy of the State to:

- 5 a. Maintain peace and order, protect life, liberty and property, and promote the general
6 welfare of the people for the enjoyment of blessings of democracy;
7 b. Promote a just social order through policies that provide adequate social services; and
8 c. Give the highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right
9 of all people to human dignity and reduce social, economic and political inequalities.

10
11 SEC. 3. **Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:

- 12 a. *Discrimination* refers to any act of unjust distinction, exclusion or restriction against
13 persons who are confirmed, suspect, and probable cases of COVID-19 virus, or who
14 are COVID-19 survivors, their families and members of their households, essential and

1 frontline workers, health workers, responders, service workers and repatriated overseas
2 Filipino workers whether land or sea-based, which has the effect of impairing or
3 nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, exercise on an equal footing, of the human rights
4 and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any field
5 of public life of a person, or which has or tends to have the effect of endangering the
6 said person's life, safety, and security;

7 b. *Health Workers* refer to those who deliver health-related service or care. This includes,
8 but is not limited to, doctors, physicians, nurses, hospital and clinic aides, barangay
9 health workers, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, ambulance drivers and
10 staff, laboratory technicians, and those providing related or support services in
11 hospitals, clinics, quarantine centers, and other health facilities;

12
13 c. *Confirmed cases* refer to persons who tested positive for COVID-19.;

14
15 d. *COVID Survivors* refers to persons who have recovered from the COVID-19;

16
17 e. *Essential and frontline workers* refers to are engaged in, or employed by, essential
18 services, as defined in resolutions, rules, orders, laws.

19
20 f. *Probable cases* refers to persons with mild, severe, or critical symptoms whose test
21 results are inconclusive;

22
23 g. *Repatriated Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)* refers to returning OFWs, dead or
24 alive, from a job site overseas, the reasons for which range from completion of
25 employment, labor conflicts, medical causes, psychosocial problems, wars, restrictive
26 immigration policies, and others;

27
28 h. *Responders* refer to officers and members of the police, armed forces, city and barangay
29 employees including members of the Department of Public Order and Safety, Disaster
30 Risk Reduction and Management Office, Barangay Health Emergency Response Team,
31 Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit, and other government employees
32 deployed directly or indirectly in the COVID-19 response, or who perform functions
33 that may cause potential exposure to COVID-19;

1
2 i. *Service Workers* refer to persons that work in public or private establishments providing
3 essential services, including but not limited to food, water, financial services, utilities,
4 medicine, security, maintenance and sanitation, as well as any person providing
5 services under circumstances that increase risk of exposure to COVID-19, including
6 administrative, security, maintenance and support staff of health and quarantine
7 facilities;

8
9 j. *Suspect cases* refer to individuals who show symptoms of influenza-like illness such as
10 fever and dry cough, those with travel history to areas with confirmed local
11 transmission of COVID-19, and people with exposure to a confirmed case.
12

13 SEC. 4. ***Discriminatory Practices.*** It shall be unlawful for any person, natural or juridical, to
14 engage in discrimination, as defined in this Act, which shall include:
15

16 a. **Stigmatization.** No person shall publicly disclose, with the intent of exclusion, harm
17 and discrimination, offline or online, that a person has a confirmed, suspect and
18 probable cases of COVID-19 or has recovered to COVID-19, whether or not the same
19 has been confirmed or validated from the list given by authorized health officials,
20 agency.
21

22 b. **Harassment or Assault.** No person may verbally, physically, or psychologically
23 harass, threaten or assault persons who have confirmed, suspect and probable cases of
24 COVID-19, COVID survivor, or any person suspected, repatriated OFWs, responders
25 or service workers or any of their households or close contacts.
26

27 c. **Failure to Give Assistance.** No public officer shall refuse, fail, or neglect to give
28 assistance to persons who have confirmed, suspect and probable cases of COVID-19 or
29 any person suspected of exposure to and recovered from COVID-19.
30

31 d. **Unreasonable Refusal to Honor Valid and Existing Contracts.** No person may
32 unreasonably refuse to honor valid and existing contracts on the basis of COVID-19.
33

1 SEC. 5. **Penalties.** A person who commits any discriminatory practice described in
2 Section 4 shall, upon conviction, be penalized by a fine of not less than fifty thousand pesos
3 (P50,000) but not more than five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000) or imprisonment of not
4 less than six (6) months but not more than five (5) years or both, at the discretion of the court.
5

6 SEC. 7. **Separability Clause.** – If any provision or section of this Act is declared
7 unconstitutional, the other provisions and sections not affected thereby shall remain in full
8 force and effect.
9

10 SEC. 8. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders and their
11 implementing rules inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed,
12 amended, or modified accordingly.
13

14 SEC. 9. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect immediately after its publication in at
15 least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.
16

17 *Approved,*