

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

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 4942**



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**Introduced by Representative Lucy Torres-Gomez**

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**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.


We could also mention in this regard 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 legendary 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 Center 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, this life center shall be our "city of refuge" in times of disasters, our "isle 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

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**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING A LIFE CENTER THAT WILL SERVE AS A**  
**DISASTER AND EMERGENCY CENTER IN THE CITY OF**  
**ORMOC 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 the City of Ormoc in the Province of Leyte.

SEC. 2. The construction of such Life Center shall be undertaken by the Office of Civil Defense of the Department of National Defense. Once established, the City Government of Ormoc shall undertake the operation and maintenance of the Life Center.

SEC. 3. The Life Center shall serve as evacuation center during calamities or emergencies, providing temporary shelter and other basic necessities to persons displaced by calamities, whether natural or man-made. It shall also be equipped with a working kitchen and a medical unit



which shall provide trauma, other medical and rehabilitation services to victims of calamities.

The Life Center shall be constructed or patterned after that of a multi-purpose auditorium. It shall be capable of housing a number of office spaces under its roof which the City Government may lease out to certain entities to generate funds for the operations and the financial upkeep or maintenance of the center.

SEC. 4. The amount necessary for the establishment, maintenance and operation of the Life Center 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,