

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*First Regular Session* )



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**HOUSE BILL No. 6488**

Introduced by Representative **JANETTE LORETO-GARIN, MD, MBA-H**

**AN ACT  
CODIFYING THE ALTERNATIVE CHILD CARE LAWS,  
REORGANIZING THE INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION BOARD (ICAB) INTO THE  
NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR CHILD CARE (NACC), AND PROVIDING FUNDS  
THEREFOR**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Philippine government has demonstrated a strong commitment in improving the situation of our children. Despite economic progress, however, some of them, especially those without parental care, are the most vulnerable ones to exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

As such, Congress has to act and ensure that every child gets nurtured with love, care, security, and, understanding, towards the full realization of his/her development.

This proposed measure aims to codify the current Philippine laws on alternative child care so as to improve, expedite, and simplify the process of adoption, foster care, and other modes of alternative child care. With the creation of a "one-stop-shop" under this bill, those who seek to adopt and/or foster care will be easily facilitated to the best interest of every child available for adoption and or foster care.

This serves as a counterpart measure to Senate Bill No. 61. More importantly, this is also a gift to celebrate the special kind of love that transcends relation by consanguinity.

As legislators, our constituents expect us to put paramount priority in the enactment of policies furthering the best interest of our child. In view thereof, I enjoin my colleagues to shepherd the swift approval of this legislation.

  
**JANETTE LORETO-GARIN, MD, MBA-H**

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

**BOOK I**

**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**ARTICLE I**

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Alternative Child Care  
Code of the Philippines*”.

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policies.* – The State shall defend the right of children to  
survival and development including assistance to proper care, health, nutrition, early  
learning and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation,  
or other conditions prejudicial to their well-being. It shall provide every child who is  
neglected, abused, surrendered, dependent, abandoned, under sociocultural  
difficulties, with an alternative family that will provide love and care, as well as  
opportunities for growth and development.

The best interest of the child shall be the paramount consideration in the  
enactment of alternative care, custody, and adoption policies. It shall be in accordance  
with the tenets set forth in all the rights of the child enumerated under Article 3 of  
*Presidential Decree No. 603*, otherwise known as the “*Child And Youth Welfare Code*”,  
*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*; *United Nations*

1 *Guidelines on Alternative Care of Children; United Nations Declaration on Social and*  
2 *Legal Principles Relating to the Protection and Welfare of Children with Special*  
3 *Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption, Nationally and Internationally; and the*  
4 *Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-*  
5 *country Adoption.*

6 Toward this end, the State shall ensure that a child without parental care or at  
7 risk of losing it are provided with alternative care options such as foster care, kinship  
8 care, kafalah, guardianship, or residential care, including family-like care. As such,  
9 the State shall establish alternative care standards to ensure the quality and conditions  
10 that are conducive to the child's development.

11 The State shall establish a system of cooperation with the other States, through  
12 their respective central or competent authorities and accredited bodies to prevent the  
13 sale, trafficking, and abduction of children, and to protect Filipino children abandoned  
14 overseas who are made vulnerable by their irregular status.

15 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

16 (a) *Abandoned Child* refers to one who has no proper parental care or  
17 guardianship or whose parent(s) has deserted him/her for a period of  
18 at least six (6) continuous months and has been judicially declared as  
19 such;

20 (b) *Abandoned Filipino Child in a Foreign Country* refers to a child who  
21 is found outside the Philippine territory, unregistered or  
22 undocumented, with known or unknown facts of birth and separated  
23 from or deserted by the biological Filipino parent committed to a  
24 foreign orphanage or charitable institution or in temporary informal  
25 care;

26 (c) *Adoption* refers to a process whereby a person assumes the  
27 parenting of another, usually a child, from that person's biological or  
28 legal parent or parents, and, in so doing, permanently transfers all  
29 rights and responsibilities, along with filiation, from the biological  
30 parent or parents. It shall cease to be part of alternative child care  
31 and becomes parental care as soon as the process is complete;

(d) *Alternative Child Care* refers to the provision of planned substitute parental care to a child who is orphaned, abandoned, neglected, or surrendered, by a child caring or child-placing agency. Alternative child care may be provided in the following ways:

(1) *Foster Care* refers to the provision of planned temporary substitute parental care to a child by a foster parent;

(2) *Guardianship* refers to the relationship between the guardian and the ward;

(3) *Kafalah* refers to the Islamic provision of alternative care without altering the child's original kinship status so as not to sever the link between the adopted child and his biological parents. The new family takes care of the child as an act of personal charity, or for compensation, depending on the circumstances of the case;

(4) *Kinship Care* refers to family-based care within the child's extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child; or

(5) *Residential Care* refers to care provided in any non-family base group setting, such as places of safety for emergency care, transit centers in emergency situations, and all other short and long-term residential care facilities, including orphanages and group homes; It includes family-like care which is alternative individualized care provided under conditions that resemble a 'family-like' environment where surrogate parents serve as caregivers for children with long-term alternative care needs;

(e) *Application* refers to the duly accomplished application form by prospective parents, home study report including its supporting documents;

(f) *Authorized and Accredited Agency* refers to the State welfare agency or a licensed adoption agency in the country of the adopting parents which provide comprehensive social services and which is duly recognized by the National Authority for Child Care (NACC);

- (g) *Biological Parents* refer to the child's mother and father by nature or the mother alone if the child is illegitimate;
- (h) *Child* refers to a person below eighteen (18) years of age, or one who is over eighteen (18) but is unable to fully take care of or protect oneself from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition;
- (i) *Child-caring Agency* is a duly licensed and accredited agency by the NACC that provides twenty four (24)-hour residential care services for abandoned, orphaned, neglected, or voluntarily-committed children;
- (j) *Child Case Study Report* refers to a written report prepared by a social worker containing all the necessary information about a child;
- (k) *Child Legally Available For Adoption* refers to a child who has been voluntarily or involuntarily committed to the NACC or to a duly licensed and accredited child-placing or child-caring agency, freed of the parental authority of his/her biological parent(s) or guardian or adopter(s) in case of rescission of adoption;
- (l) *Child-placing Agency* is a duly licensed and accredited agency by the NACC to provide comprehensive child welfare services including, but not limited to, receiving applications for adoption, evaluating the prospective adoptive parents, and preparing the adoption home study or to implement the foster care program;
- (m) *Child with Special Needs* refers to a child with developmental or physical disability;
- (n) *Certificate Declaring a Child Legally Available for Adoption* refers to the final written administrative order declaring a child to be dependent, abandoned, and neglected and committing such child to the care of NACC through a person or duly licensed child caring/placing agency or institution. The rights of the biological parents, guardian or other custodian to exercise authority over the child shall cease upon issuance of the certificate declaring a child legally available for adoption;

(o) *Deed of Voluntary Commitment* refers to the notarized instrument relinquishing parental authority and committing the child to the care and custody of the NACC executed by the child's biological parents or by the child's legal guardian in their absence, mental incapacity or death, to be signed in the presence of an authorized representative of the NACC, after counselling and other services have been made available to encourage the child's biological parents to keep the child;

(p) *Domestic Adoption* refers to the placing of a child within the same country as the child's birth;

(q) *Extended Family* refers to a relative of a child, both on the paternal and maternal side, within the fourth degree of consanguinity;

(r) *Family* refers to the parents or brothers and sisters, whether of the full or half-blood, of the child;

(s) *Foreign Adoption Agency* refers to the state welfare agency or the licensed and accredited agency in the country of the foreign adoptive parents that provides comprehensive social services and is duly recognized by the NACC after validation with the concerned Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) foreign service post;

(t) *Foreign National* refers to any person, not a Filipino citizen, who enters and remains in the Philippines and in possession of a valid passport or travel documents and visa;

(u) *Foster Child* refers to a child placed under foster care;

(v) *Foster Family* refers to a family or person/s, alternative child caring homes and residences and qualified alternative child custodian or foster parent, duly licensed by the NACC, who provide foster care to a child placed for planned, goal-directed services which will help realize the permanent life plan of the child. A foster family may either be one of the following:

(1) *Regular Family* refers to a foster family, which receives material provisions from the agency in order to help meet the basic needs of the child; or

1 (2) *Volunteer Family* refers to a foster family which does not receive any  
2 material provision or incentive from the agency.

3 (w) *Foster Parent* refers to a person, duly licensed by the Department  
4 of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), to provide foster care;

5 (x) *Foster Placement Authority (FPA)* refers to the document issued by  
6 the NACC authorizing the placement of a particular child with the foster  
7 parent;

8 (y) *Foundling* refers to a deserted or abandoned infant or a child found,  
9 with unknown parents, guardian, or relatives, or a child committed in  
10 a child caring agency or similar institution with unknown facts of birth  
11 and parentage and registered in the Civil Registrar as a "foundling";

12 (z) *Guardian* refers to a person with whom the law has entrusted the  
13 custody and control of the person or estate or both of an infant, insane  
14 or other person incapable of managing his own affairs;

15 (aa) *Home Study Report* refers to a study conducted by a licensed social  
16 worker relative to the motivation and capacity of the prospective  
17 adoptive parents to provide a home that meets the needs of a child or  
18 of the prospective foster parents to provide foster care that meets the  
19 needs of a child available for foster care;

20 (bb) *Illegal Adoption* refers to an adoption that is effected in any  
21 manner contrary to the provisions of this Code, these rules, established  
22 state policies, executive agreements, other laws and judicial decrees  
23 pertaining to adoption;

24 (cc) *Inter-country Adoption* refers to the socio-legal process of adopting  
25 a child by a foreign national or a Filipino citizen. *Inter-country adoption*  
26 refers to the socio-legal process of adopting a child by a foreign  
27 national or a Filipino citizen habitually a resident outside Philippine  
28 territory which complies with the principles stated in the Hague  
29 Convention of 1993;

30 (dd) *Matching* refers to the judicious pairing of a child with a foster  
31 parent and family members based on the capacity and commitment of

the foster parent to meet the individual needs of the particular child and the capacity of the child to benefit from the placement;

(ee) *Parent* refers to the biological or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a child;

(ff) *Placement* refers to the physical entrustment of the child with the foster parent;

(gg) *Post-Adoption Services* refers to psycho-social services and support services provided by professionally trained social workers after the issuance of the Certificate of Adoption;

(hh) *Relatives* refer to the relatives of a child, other than family members, within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity;

(ii) *Residence* refers to a person's actual and legal stay within the territorial jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines for two (2) continuous years immediately prior to the filing of application for adoption decree is entered; *Provided, That* temporary absences for professional, business or emergency reasons not exceeding sixty (60) days to one (1) year shall not be considered as breaking the continuity requirement; *Provided further,* That the NACC may extend this period in meritorious cases;

(jj) *Social Worker* refers to a practitioner who by accepted academic training and social work professional experience possesses the skill to achieve the objectives as defined and set by the social work profession, through the use of the basic methods and techniques of social work (case work, group work, and community organization) which are designed to enable individuals, groups and communities to meet their needs and to solve the problems of adjustment to a hanging pattern of society and, through coordinated action, to improve economic and social conditions, and is connected with an organized social work agency which is supported partially or wholly from government or community solicited funds.



(kk) *Supervised Trial Custody* refers to a period of time within which a social worker oversees the adjustment and emotional readiness of both adopter(s) and adoptee in stabilizing their filial relationship. ; and  
(ll) *Voluntarily Committed Child* refers to the one whose parent(s) or legal guardian knowingly and willingly relinquished parental authority to the NACC, or any duly accredited child-placement or child-caring agency.

Sec. 4. *Guiding Principles of Alternative Child Care.* – Alternative Child Care (ACC) shall be guided by the following:

1. The family being the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth, well-being, and protection of children, efforts should primarily be directed to enable the child to remain in or return to the care of his/her parents, or when appropriate, extended family members;

2. The State should ensure that families have access to forms of support in the caregiving role. Every child and young person should live in a supportive, protective, and caring environment that promotes his/her full potential. Children with inadequate or no parental care are at special risk of being denied such a nurturing environment;

3. Where the child's own family is unable, even with appropriate support, to provide adequate care for the child, or abandons, or relinquishes the child, the State is responsible for protecting the rights of the child and ensuring appropriate alternative care, with or through competent local authorities and duly authorized civil society organizations;

4. It is the role of the State, through its competent authorities, to ensure the supervision of the safety, well-being, and development of any child placed in alternative care and the regular review of the appropriateness of the care arrangement provided;

5. All decisions, initiatives and approaches falling within the scope of the present guidelines should be made on a case-by-case basis, with a view, notably, to ensuring the child's safety and security, and must be grounded in the best interests

1 and rights of the child concerned, in conformity with the principle of non-  
2 discrimination and taking due account of the gender perspective;

3 6. The Principle of Subsidiary requires that all efforts shall be exerted to ensure  
4 that local solutions should be first found before a child is placed for inter-country  
5 adoption;

6 7. Adoptive parents, as well as foster parents, must be protected from  
7 attempts to disturb their parental authority and custody over their adopted or  
8 fostered child;

9 8. All decisions concerning alternative care should take full account of the  
10 desirability of maintaining, as much as possible, closeness to the child's habitual place  
11 of residence, in order to facilitate contact and potential reintegration with the family  
12 and to minimize disruption of educational, cultural, and social life;

13 9. Decisions regarding children in alternative care, should have due regard for  
14 the importance of ensuring children a family-based care, group foster care, and of  
15 meeting their basic need for safe and long-term relationship to their caregivers, with  
16 permanency generally being a key goal;

17 10. Children must be treated with dignity and respect at all times and must  
18 benefit from effective protection from abuse, neglect, and all forms of exploitation,  
19 whether on the part of care providers, peers, or third parties, in whatever care setting  
20 they may find themselves;

21 11. Siblings, with existing bonds, should in principle not be separated from  
22 placements in alternative care unless there is a clear risk of abuse or other  
23 justification in the best interest of the child. In any case, every effort should be made  
24 to enable siblings to grow together, maintain contact with each other, unless this is  
25 against their wishes or interests;

26 12. All entities and individuals engaged in the provision of alternative child care  
27 which received due authorization to do so from competent authority are subject to  
28 regular monitoring and review. Authorities should develop appropriate criteria for  
29 assessing the professional and ethical fitness of care providers and for their  
30 accreditation, monitoring, and supervision;

13. Provisions of alternative child care should never be undertaken with a prime purpose of furthering the political, religious, or economic goals of the providers; and

14. Such other principles in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## ARTICLE II

**NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR CHILD CARE**

Sec. 5. *National Authority for Child Care (NACC)* – To create a one stop shop on alternative child care, the Inter Country Adoption Board (ICAB) is hereby reorganized to become the National Authority for Child Care (NACC), attached to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). All functions of the ICAB, the DSWD, and those of other government agencies relating to alternative child care are hereby transferred to the NACC. The Department of Budget and Management, in coordination with the ICAB and the DSWD, shall formulate a cohesive organizational structure with corresponding plantilla positions responsive to fulfill the functions and divisions of the NACC as stipulated under Sections 6 and 7 of this Act.

Sec. 6. *Functions of the NACC.* – The functions of the NACC shall include the following:

(a) Formulate and develop policies on adoption, foster care, guardianship leading to adoption, and other alternative child care policies such as but not limited to programs and services that will protect the Filipino child from abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and adoption practice that is harmful, detrimental and prejudicial to the best interests of the child;

(b) Implement adoption, foster care, guardianship leading to adoption policies, programs and services;

(c) Set standards and guidelines on adoption including pre and post legal adoption services. Accredited and authorize foreign private adoption agencies which have demonstrated professionalism and have consistently pursued non-profit objectives to engage in the placement of Filipino children in their own country;

(d) Monitor and assess compliance of all agencies/stakeholders both local and foreign involved in adoption;

1 (e) Assess the progress and identify gaps in the implementation of the law and  
2 come up with policy recommendations;

3 (f) Conduct national information dissemination and advocacy campaign on  
4 alternative child care. *Provided, that such effort will maximize both traditional and*  
5 *social media as platforms on the same;*

6 (g) Keep records of all adoption cases, foster care cases, and cases of  
7 guardianship leading to adoption, and provide periodic information and reports on the  
8 performance of the office;

9 (h) Conduct researches on alternative child care policies or in related fields to  
10 further improve and strengthen the office programs and services and for policy  
11 formulation and development;

12 (i) Provide technical assistance and conduct capability building activities to all  
13 concerned agencies and stakeholders; and

14 (j) Accreditation of child placing and liaison agencies involved in the process of  
15 adoption and foster care.

16 **Sec. 7. Composition of the NACC.** – The NACC shall be composed of a Council  
17 and a Secretariat.

18 There shall be a NACC Council to address child welfare policies which shall  
19 constantly adjust to ongoing studies on alternative child-care. It shall be composed of  
20 permanent and alternative members from the concerned national government  
21 agencies, different child-care and placement agencies, adoptive agencies, as well as  
22 non-governmental organizations engaged in child-care and placement activities.

23 The Secretariat shall be headed by an Executive Director, assisted by a Deputy  
24 Director, which shall have divisions and units. There shall also be Regional Alternative  
25 Child Care Officer/s for each region of the country.

26 The DBM in coordination with ICAB and DSWD shall create the plantilla  
27 positions necessary for the performance of NACC's functions.

**BOOK II**  
**ADOPTION**  
**ARTICLE I**

**PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTION**

**A. PROCEDURE FOR DOMESTIC ADOPTION**

Sec. 8. *Pre-Adoption Program.* – The NACC shall develop a pre-adoption program which shall include, among others, the services of licensed social workers to the following:

(a) Biological Parent(s) – Counselling shall be provided to the parent(s) before and after the birth of the child. No binding commitment to an adoption plan shall be permitted before the birth of the child. A period of three (3) months shall be allowed for the biological parent(s) to reconsider any decision to relinquish a child for adoption before the decision becomes irrevocable. Counselling and other appropriate social service interventions and services shall also be offered to the biological parent(s) after the child has been relinquished for adoption.

Steps shall be taken by the NACC to ensure that no hurried decisions are made and all alternatives for the child's future and the implications of each alternative have been provided.

(b) Prospective Adoptive Parent(s) – Counselling sessions, adoption fora and seminars, among others, shall be provided to prospective adoptive parent(s) to resolve possible adoption issues and to prepare them for effective parenting; and

(c) Prospective Adoptee – Counselling sessions shall be provided to ensure that the child understands the nature and effects of adoption and is able to express views on adoption in accordance with the child's age level of maturity.

Sec. 9. *Location of Unknown Parent(s).* - It shall be the duty of the NACC or the child-placing or child-caring agency which has custody of the child to exert all efforts to locate the unknown biological parent(s). If such efforts fail, the child shall be registered as a foundling and subsequently be declared abandoned and ready for adoption.

Sec. 10. *Who May Be Adopted.* – The following may be adopted:

(a) Any child who has been administratively declared available for adoption;

- 1 (b) The legitimate child of one spouse by the other spouse;  
2 (c) An illegitimate child by a qualified adopter to improve status of legitimacy;  
3 (d) A person of legal age if, prior to the adoption, said person has been  
4 consistently considered and treated by the adopters as their own child since minority;  
5 (e) A child whose adoption has been previously rescinded;  
6 (f) A child whose biological or adoptive parent(s) has died: *Provided*, That no  
7 proceedings shall be initiated within six (6) months from the time of death of said  
8 parent(s); or  
9 (g) A child not otherwise disqualified by law.

10 Sec. 11. *Who May Adopt.* – The following may adopt:

11 (a) Any Filipino citizen of legal age, in possession of full civil capacity and legal  
12 rights, of good moral character, has not been convicted of any crime involving moral  
13 turpitude which may affect the adopted child's healthy social interactions, appropriate  
14 character development and modelling, is emotionally and psychologically capable of  
15 caring for children, is at least sixteen (16) years older than the adoptee, and is in a  
16 position to support and care for adopted children in keeping with the means of the  
17 family. The requirement of sixteen (16) year difference between the age of the  
18 adopter and the adoptee maybe waived when the adopter is the biological parent of  
19 the adoptee, or is the spouse of the adoptee's parent;

20 (b) Any alien possessing the same qualifications as above stated for Filipino  
21 nationals: *Provided*, That the alien's country has diplomatic relations with the Republic  
22 of the Philippines, that the alien has been living in the Philippines for at least three  
23 (3) continuous years prior to the filing of the application for adoption and maintains  
24 such residence until the adoption decree is entered, that the alien has been certified  
25 by his/her diplomatic or consular office or any appropriate government agency that  
26 the alien has the legal capacity to adopt in his/her own country, and that the alien's  
27 government allows the adoptee to enter his/her country as the alien's adopted  
28 son/daughter: *Provided, Further*, That the requirements on residency and certification  
29 of the alien's qualification to adopt in his/her country may be waived for the following:

- 30 i) A former Filipino citizen who seeks to adopt a relative within the fourth  
31 (4<sup>th</sup>) degree of consanguinity or affinity; or

1           ii)       One who seeks to adopt the legitimate son/daughter of his/her Filipino  
2 spouse; or

3           iii)       One who is married to a Filipino citizen and seeks to adopt jointly with  
4 his/her spouse a relative within the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) degree of consanguinity or affinity of  
5 the Filipino spouse.

6           (c) The guardian with respect to the ward after the termination of the  
7 guardianship and clearance of financial accountabilities; or

8           (d) Filipinos such as officers and staff of various Philippine government  
9 agencies working abroad and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW).

10          Husband and wife shall jointly adopt, except in the following cases:

11               (1) If one spouse seeks to adopt the legitimate child of the other;

12               (2) If one spouse seeks to adopt own illegitimate child: *Provided*, That the  
13 other spouse has signified consent thereto;

14               (3) If the spouses are legally separated from each other; or

15          In case husband and wife jointly adopt or one spouse adopts the illegitimate  
16 child of the other, joint parental authority shall be exercised by the spouses.

17          Sec. 12. *Whose Consent is Necessary to the Adoption.* – After being properly  
18 counselled and informed of the right to give or withhold approval of the adoption, the  
19 written consents of the following to the adoption are hereby required:

20               (a) The adoptee, if ten (10) years of age or over;

21               (b) The biological parent(s) of the child, if known, or the legal guardian, or the  
22 proper government instrumentally which has legal custody of the child;

23               (c) The legitimate and adopted children, ten (10) years of age or over, of the  
24 adopter(s) and adoptee(s) if any;

25               (d) The illegitimate children, ten (10) years of age or over of the adopter if  
26 living with said adopter or over whom the adopter exercises parental authority and  
27 the adopter's spouse, if any; and

28               (e) The spouse, if any, of the person adopting or to be adopted.

29          Sec. 13. *Where to File Application.* – A person eligible to adopt under Article I,  
30 Section 16 of this Act who desires to adopt a child in the Philippines and has attended

1 adoption fora and seminars, shall file their application for adoption with the NACC or  
2 with any licensed accredited child placing agency.

3       Sec. 14. *Case Study.* – No petition for adoption shall be forwarded to the NACC  
4 unless a licensed social worker of the NACC, the social service office of the local  
5 government unit, or any child-placing or child-caring agency has made a case study  
6 of the adoptee, the biological parent(s), as well as the adopter(s), and has submitted  
7 the report and recommendations on the matter to the NACC for the issuance of the  
8 adoption certificate.

9       At the time of preparation of the adoptee's case study, the concerned social  
10 worker shall confirm with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) the real identity and  
11 registered name of the adoptee. If the birth of the adoptee was not registered with  
12 the PSA, it shall be the responsibility of the concerned social worker to ensure that  
13 the adoptee is registered.

14       The case study on the adoptee shall establish that the said child adoptee is  
15 legally available for adoption and that the documents to support this fact are valid  
16 and authentic. Further, the case study of the adopter(s) shall ascertain his/her  
17 genuine intentions and that the adoption is in the best interest of the child.

18       The case studies and other relevant documents and records pertaining to the  
19 adoptee and the adoption shall be preserved by the NACC.

20       Sec. 15. *Fees, Charges and Assessments.* – Fees, charges, and costs may be  
21 imposed, subject to reasonable rates as determined by the NACC, to cover expenses  
22 in providing adoption services; *Provided*, That paramount consideration shall be given  
23 to the financial capability of the adopters to encourage adoption even for lower- and  
24 middle-income families.

25       Sec. 16. *Family Selection/Matching.* – The matching of the child to approved  
26 adoptive parent(s) shall be carried out during the regular matching conference by a  
27 Matching Committee in the regional level where the social workers of the child and  
28 family are present; *Provided*, That records of children and approved adoptive parents  
29 not matched within ninety (90) days from the regular matching conference in the  
30 regional level shall be forwarded to the NACC Central office for inter-country  
31 matching; *Provided, further*, That the children with special needs shall be immediately



forwarded to the NACC Central Office within twenty (20) days if not matched in the first meeting, except under special circumstances. All matching proposals shall be approved by the NACC to be final.

Sec. 17. *Supervised Trial Custody.* – No petition for adoption shall be granted unless the adopter(s) has undergone a supervised trial custody period for at least six (6) months within which the parties are expected to adjust psychologically and emotionally to each other and establish a bonding relationship. During said period, temporary parental authority shall be vested in the adopter(s).

The NACC may *motu proprio* or upon motion of any party reduce the trial period to at least four (4) months if it finds the same to be in the best interest of the adoptee, stating the reasons for the reduction of the period. However, for alien adopter(s), the alien must complete the six- (6) month trial custody except for those enumerated in Section 11 (b) (i) (ii) (iii).

The prospective adopters shall assume all the responsibilities, rights, and duties to which biological parents are entitled from the date the adoptee is placed with the prospective adopters.

Sec. 18. *Certificate of Adoption.* – In all proceedings for adoption, the NACC shall decide on the basis of all the documents presented to it, including, but not limited to, a proof that the biological parent(s) have been properly counselled to prevent them from making hurried decisions caused by stress or anxiety to give up the child and to sustain that all measures to strengthen the family have been exhausted and that any prolonged stay of the child at home will be inimical to the welfare and interest of the child. There shall be no adversarial proceedings in adoption and all cases shall be decided within thirty (30) days from submission of all the complete documents required by the NACC.

If, after the submission of the required documents for adoption and no opposition has been interposed to the petition, the NACC is convinced that the petitioners are qualified to adopt, and that the adoption would redound to the best interest of the adoptee, a Certificate of Adoption shall be entered which shall be effective as of the date the original petition was filed. This provision shall also apply in case the adopter(s) dies before the issuance of the certificate of adoption to protect

the interest of the adoptee. The certificate shall state the name by which the child is to be known. The certificate of adoption shall be issued within thirty (30) days upon the fulfillment of all the requirements set by the NACC.

Sec. 19. *The Birth Certificate.* – An amended certificate of birth shall be issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), as required by the Rules of Court, attesting to the fact that the adoptee is the child of the adopters by being registered with adopters' surname. The original certificate of birth shall be stamped "cancelled" with the annotation of the issuance of the amended birth certificate in its place and shall be sealed in the civil registry records. The new birth certificate to be issued to the adoptee shall not bear any notation that it is an amended issue or that the child is an orphan, abandoned or foundling.

## **B. PROCEDURE FOR INTER-COUNTRY ADOPTION**

Sec. 20. *Who May Be Adopted.* – All children legally free for domestic adoption may be the subject of inter-country adoption.

Sec. 21. *Documents of Prospective Adoptive Child.* – In order that such child may be considered for placement, the following documents must be submitted to the NACC:

- (a) Child study report;
- (b) Birth certificate/foundling certificate issued by the PSA;
- (c) Certified true copy of the certification that the child is administratively available for adoption;
- (d) Medical evaluation/history including that of the child's biological parent(s), if known, and updated medical abstract;
- (e) Deed of voluntary commitment or decree of abandonment or certified true copy of the death certificate of the child's birthparent(s), if applicable;
- (f) Psychological evaluation, as may be necessary; and
- (g) Most recent whole-body size picture of the child, if applicable; *Provided,* That any physical impairment of the child should be visible in the picture.

Sec. 22. *Who May Adopt.* – Foreign nationals or Filipino citizens permanently residing abroad may file application for inter-country adoption of a Filipino child if they:

1 (a) Come from a country:  
2 (i) With whom the Philippine has diplomatic relations;  
3 (ii) Whose government have clear guidelines on inter-country adoption and  
4 maintains a foreign adoption agency;  
5 (iii) Whose laws allow such adoption; and  
6 (iv) Whose laws allow adopted children to acquire the citizenship of their  
7 adoptive parents.

8 (b) At least twenty-seven (27) years of age and at least sixteen (16) years older  
9 than the child to be adopted at the time of application, unless the adopter is the  
10 parent by nature of the child to be adopted or the spouse of such parent; *Provided,*  
11 That if the adopter is married, his/her spouse must jointly file for the adoption;

12 (c) Have the capacity to act and assume all rights and responsibilities of  
13 parental authority under national laws, and has undergone the appropriate counselling  
14 from an accredited counsellor in their countries;

15 (d) Have not been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude;

16 (e) Are eligible to adopt under their national laws;

17 (f) Are in a position to provide the proper care and support and to give the  
18 necessary moral values and example to all his children, including the child to be  
19 adopted;

20 (g) Agree to uphold the basic rights of the child as embodied under Philippine  
21 laws, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to abide by the rules and  
22 regulations issued to implement the provisions of this Act; and

23 (h) Possess all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications provided  
24 herein and in other applicable Philippine laws.

25 **Sec. 23. *Where to File Application.*** – The application for inter-country adoption  
26 shall be filed with the NACC, Philippine embassy, governmental agency or authorized  
27 and accredited agency of the receiving country where the applicants are habitual  
28 residents. Said application shall be in accordance with the requirements as set forth  
29 in the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) to be promulgated by the NACC.

30 The application shall be supported by the following documents written and  
31 officially translated in English:

- 1 (a) Birth certificate of the applicant(s);
- 2 (b) Marriage contract, if married, and divorce decree, if applicable;
- 3 (c) Written consent of their biological or adoptive children above ten (10)
- 4 years of age, in the form of a sworn statement;
- 5 (d) Physical, medical, and psychological evaluation by a duly licensed physician
- 6 or psychologist;
- 7 (e) Income tax returns or any document showing the financial capability of the
- 8 applicant(s);
- 9 (f) Police clearance of the applicant(s);
- 10 (g) Character from the local church/minister, the applicant's employer and
- 11 member of the immediate community who have known the applicant(s) for at least
- 12 five (5) years;
- 13 (h) Recent post-card size pictures of the applicant(s) and his/her immediate
- 14 family;
- 15 (i) Other documents that the NACC may further require.

16 Sec. 24. *Pre-Adoptive Placement Costs.* – The applicants shall bear the

17 following costs incidental to the placement of the child:

- 18 (a) The cost bringing the child from the Philippines to the residence of the
- 19 applicants abroad, including all travel expenses within the Philippines and abroad; and
- 20 (b) The cost of the child's passport, visa, medical examination and
- 21 psychological evaluation if required, and other related expenses.

22 Sec. 25. *Fees, Charges and Assessment.* – The NACC may charge reasonable

23 fees to cover expenses in providing adoption services. The applicant(s) shall be

24 apprised of the fees from the beginning of their application.

25 Fees, charges, and assessments collected by the NACC in the exercise of its

26 functions shall be used solely to process applications for inter-country adoption and

27 to support the activities of the NACC.

28 Sec. 26. *Family Selection/Matching.* – No child shall be matched to a foreign

29 adoptive family unless it is satisfactorily shown that the child cannot be adopted

30 locally. The clearance, as issued by the NACC, with a copy of the minutes of the

31 meetings, shall form part of the records of the child to be adopted.

1 When the Placement Authority has been transmitted and duly received by the  
2 authorized and accredited agency of the prospective adopter and all the travel  
3 documents of the child are ready, the adoptive parents or anyone of them, shall  
4 personally fetch the child in the Philippines.

5 *Sec. 27. Supervision of Trial Custody Assessments.* – The government agency  
6 or the authorized and accredited agency shall submit to the NACC for the trial custody  
7 and the care of the child and shall be responsible for the trial custody and shall also  
8 provide family counselling and other related cases. The trial custody shall be for a  
9 period of six (6) to eight (8) months from the time of placement. Only after the lapse  
10 of the period of trial custody shall a Certificate of Adoption be issued in the said  
11 country, a copy of which shall be sent to the NACC to form part of the records of the  
12 child.

13 During the trial custody, the adopting parent(s) shall submit to the government  
14 agency or the authorized and accredited agency, which shall in turn transmit a copy  
15 to the NACC, a progress report of the child's adjustment. The progress report shall be  
16 taken into consideration in deciding whether or not to issue the Certificate of Adoption.

17 The NACC, the government agency, or its authorized and accredited agency  
18 and the Philippine Embassy or Consular Office in the country of the adoptive parents  
19 where the application for inter-country adoption was filed, shall monitor Filipino  
20 children sent abroad for trial custody. The DFA shall set up a system for the  
21 repatriation of a Filipino child whose adoption has not yet been approved.

22 *Sec. 28. Certificate of Adoption.* – If there is no opposition interposed to the  
23 petition after the submission of the required documents for adoption by the NACC and  
24 after the period of trial custody, the NACC is convinced that the petitioners are  
25 qualified to adopt and that the adoption would redound to the best interest of the  
26 adoptee, a Certificate of Adoption shall be entered which shall be effective as of the  
27 date the original petition was filed. This provision shall also apply in case the petitioner  
28 dies before the issuance of the Certificate of Adoption to protect the interest of the  
29 adoptee. After due coordination with the PSA, the NACC shall state in the certificate  
30 the name by which the child is to be known. The Certificate of Adoption shall be issued  
31 within thirty (30) days upon the fulfillment of all the requirements set by the NACC.

1           Sec. 29. *Post-Adoption Services.* – There shall be Post Adoption Services in  
2 the form of psycho-social and support services to the child if, by the social worker  
3 of the NACC after the adoption has been legally completed.

4           Sec. 30. *Agreements on Inter-Country Adoption.* – The Philippines may enter  
5 into bilateral treaties or executive agreements on the matter of Inter-Country Adoption  
6 Procedure. The NACC, in coordination with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the  
7 DFA, upon representation of the NACC, shall cause the preparation of executive  
8 agreements with countries of the foreign adoption agencies to ensure the legitimate  
9 concurrence of said countries in upholding the safeguards provided by this Act.  
10 Thereafter, the NACC shall ensure that international bodies involved in inter-country  
11 adoption, such as the permanent *Bureau of the Hague Convention on Inter-Country*  
12 *Adoption*, are informed of the contact details of the authorities in the Philippines,  
13 including the DFA and Philippine Missions abroad, which have roles in the process of  
14 inter-country adoption.

#### 15           **C. PROCEDURE FOR RECTIFICATION OF SIMULATED BIRTHS**

16           Sec. 31. *Rectification of Simulated Births.* – A person who has, prior to the  
17 effectivity of Republic Act No. 11222 or the Simulated Birth Rectification Act ("R.A.  
18 No. 11222"), simulated the birth of a child, and those who cooperated in the execution  
19 of such simulation, shall not be criminally, civilly, or administratively liable for such  
20 act, *Provided*, That the simulation of the birth was made for the best interest of the  
21 child and that child has been consistently considered and treated as the person's own  
22 child. *Provided, further*, That the application for correction of the birth registration  
23 and petition for adoption shall be filed within ten (10) years from the effectivity of  
24 R.A. No. 11222 and completed thereafter. *Provided, finally*, That such person complies  
25 with the procedure as specified in Article I, Book II of this Act and other requirements  
26 as determined by the NACC. All benefits provided for under this Act and R.A. No.  
27 11222 shall also apply to adult adoptees.

28           Sec. 32. *Inadmissible Evidence.* – All petitions, documents, records, and papers  
29 relating to adoption and rectification of simulated births under R.A. No. 11222 and  
30 this Act cannot be used as evidence against those who simulated the birth of a child

1 or who cooperated in the execution of such simulation in any criminal, civil, or  
2 administrative proceeding.

3       Sec. 33. *Administrative Adoption and Rectification.* – A person who has  
4 simulated the birth of a child under the conditions provided for under Section 31 and  
5 who has the qualifications as provided for under Section 11 of this Act may avail of  
6 the administrative proceedings for the adoption of the child by filing a petition for  
7 adoption with the NACC.

8       The petition for adoption with an application for rectification of simulated birth  
9 record shall be in the form of an affidavit and shall be subscribed and sworn to by the  
10 petitioner(s) before any person authorized by law to administer affirmation and oaths.  
11 It shall state the facts necessary to establish the merits of the petition, and  
12 circumstances surrounding the simulation of the birth of the child. The petition shall  
13 be supported by:

- 14               (a) A copy of the simulated birth or foundling certificate of the child;
- 15               (b) Affidavit of admission if the simulation of birth was done by a  
16 third person;
- 17               (c) Certification issued and signed by the punong barangay attesting  
18 that the petitioner(s) is a resident of the barangay, and that the child has been living  
19 with the petitioner(s) for at least three (3) years before the effectivity of R.A. No.  
20 11222;
- 21               (d) Affidavits of at least two (2) disinterested persons, who reside in  
22 the same barangay where the child resides, attesting that the child has been living  
23 with the petitioner or at least three (3) years prior to the effectivity of R.A. No. 11222;
- 24               (e) Certificate Declaring the Child Legally Available for Adoption  
25 (CDCLAA) issued by the DSWD; Provided, That a CDCLAA shall no longer be required  
26 if the adoptee is already an adult or a relative of the adopter within the fourth degree  
27 of consanguinity or affinity.; and
- 28               (f) Photographs of the child and the petitioner(s) taken within the  
29 last three (3) months prior to the filing of the petition.

30       Sec. 34. *Certificate of Adoption.* –If the NACC determines that the adoption  
31 shall redound to the best interest of the child, a Certificate of Adoption shall be issued

1 which shall take effect on the date the petition was filed with the NACC, even if the  
2 petitioner dies before the issuance.

3 The Certificate of Adoption shall state the name by which the adoptee shall be  
4 known and shall likewise direct the:

5 (a) Cancellation of the simulated birth record of the child;

6 (b) Issuance of the rectified birth record bearing the names of the  
7 biological parents of the child or the issuance of the foundling certificate; and

8 (c) Issuance of the new birth certificate in accordance with Section  
9 19 of this Act.

10 Sec. 35. *Information Dissemination.* – The local social welfare office and the  
11 barangays within its coverage shall conduct a massive campaign against simulation of  
12 birth, sale and trafficking of children. A survey and list of simulated births in every  
13 barangay shall be submitted to the local NACC for assessment and filing of legal;  
14 adoption under the provisions of this Act.

## 15 **ARTICLE II**

### 16 **EFFECTS OF ADOPTION**

17 Sec. 36. *Parental Authority.* – Upon issuance of the Certificate of Adoption,  
18 adoption shall cease as alternative care and becomes parental care. Adoptive parents  
19 shall now have full parental authority over the child. Except in cases where the  
20 biological parent is the spouse of the adopter, all legal ties between the biological  
21 parent(s) and the adoptee shall be severed and the same shall then be vested on the  
22 adopter(s).

23 Sec. 37. *Legitimacy.* – The adoptee shall be considered the legitimate child of  
24 the adopter(s) for all intents and purposes and as such is entitled to all the rights and  
25 obligations provided by the law to legitimate children born to them without  
26 discrimination of any kind. To this end, the adoptee is entitled to love, guidance, and  
27 support in keeping with what the family can afford.

28 Sec. 38. *Succession.* – In legal and intestate succession, the adopter(s) and  
29 the adoptee shall have reciprocal rights of succession without distinction from  
30 legitimate filiations. However, if the adoptee and his/her biological parent(s) had left  
31 a will, the law on testamentary succession shall govern. In cases of inter-country



1 adoption, the national law of the adoptive parents shall apply, as far as it is beneficial  
2 to the adopted child.

3       Sec. 39. *Benefits.* – The adoptive parent(s) shall, with respect to the adopted  
4 child, enjoy all the benefits to which the biological parent(s) are entitled. Maternity  
5 and paternity benefits and other benefits given to the biological parent(s) upon the  
6 birth of a child shall be enjoyed if the adoptee is below seven (7) years of age upon  
7 the issuance of the Pre-Adoptive Placement Authority issued by the NACC.

8       In cases of inter-country adoption, the pertinent laws as to benefits given to  
9 adoptive parents by their respective States shall govern.

### 10                               **ARTICLE III**

### 11                               **RESCISSION OF ADOPTION**

12       Sec. 40. *Grounds for Rescission of Adoption.* – Upon petition of the adoptee,  
13 and with the assistance of the NACC, if adoptee is a child, the adoption may be  
14 rescinded on any of the following grounds committed by the adopter(s):

15           (a) Repeated physical and verbal maltreatment by the adopter(s);

16           (b) Attempt on the life of the adoptee;

17           (c) Sexual assault or violence;

18           (d) Abandonment and failure to comply with parental obligations; or

19           (e) Other acts that are detrimental to the psychological and emotional  
20 development of the adoptee.

21       Adoption being in the best interest of the child shall not be subject to rescission  
22 by adopters. However, the adopters may disinherit the adoptee for causes as provided  
23 for in Article 919 of the Civil Code, in cases of domestic adoption. In cases of inter-  
24 country adoption, the national law of the adopter shall govern. The petition shall be  
25 filed with the NACC.

26       Sec. 41. *Effects of Rescission.* – If the petition for rescission of adoption is  
27 granted, the parental authority of the adoptee's biological parent(s), if known, or the  
28 legal custody of the NACC shall be restored if the adoptee is still a child. The reciprocal  
29 right and obligations of the adopter(s) and the adoptee to each other shall be  
30 extinguished.

1 The NACC shall order the Civil Registrar General to cancel the amended birth  
2 certificate and restore the original birth certificate of the adoptee.

3 Succession rights shall revert to its status prior to adoption, but only as of the  
4 date of the approval of the petition for rescission of adoption. Vested rights acquired  
5 prior to rescission shall be respected.

6 All the foregoing effects of rescissions of adoption shall be without prejudice to  
7 the penalties imposable under the Revised Penal Code if the criminal acts are properly  
8 proven.

#### 9 **ARTICLE IV**

#### 10 **NATURE OF ADOPTION PROCEEDINGS**

11 Sec. 42. *Confidential Proceedings & Records.* – All proceedings in adoption  
12 cases shall be confidential and shall not be open to the public. All records, books, and  
13 papers relating to the adoption cases in the files of the court, the NACC, or any other  
14 agency or institution participating in the adoption proceedings shall be kept strictly  
15 confidential.

16 Sec. 43. *Disclosure; Exceptions.* – If the NACC finds the disclosure of the  
17 information to a third person is necessary for purposes connected with or arising out  
18 of the adoption and will be for the best interest of the adoptee, the NACC may merit  
19 the necessary information to be released, restricting the purposes for which it may be  
20 used.

21 Sec. 44. *Consent.* – No copy thereof as well as any information relating hereto  
22 shall be released without written authority from the NACC or the written request of  
23 any of the following:

24 (a) The adopted child, with appropriate guidance and counselling, or a duly  
25 authorized representative, spouse, parent or parents, direct descendants, or guardian  
26 or legal institution legally in charge of the adopted person, if minor;

27 (b) The court or proper public official whenever necessary in an administrative,  
28 judicial, or other official proceeding to determine the identity of the parent or parents  
29 or of the circumstances surrounding the birth of the adopted child; or

30 (c) The nearest kin, in case of death of the adopted child.

1 The NACC shall ensure that information held by them concerning the origin of  
2 the adopted child, in particular the identity of his/her biological parents, is preserved.

3 **BOOK III**

4 **FOSTER CARE**

5 **ARTICLE I**

6 **FOSTER CARE AS PROGRAM OF NACC**

7 Sec. 45. *Foster Care as Mandatory and Permanent Program of NACC.* – The  
8 NACC shall systematize and enhance foster caring in the country. It shall ensure that  
9 foster families promote and motivate the foster children to relate with their biological  
10 or adoptive family, as the case may be, and shall provide the wholesome atmosphere  
11 to encourage bonding. The rights of biological children of foster families shall be  
12 protected and in no case shall they be disadvantaged as a result of the placement of  
13 a foster child. NACC shall endeavor to maintain and improve foster care services as  
14 its mandatory and permanent program.

15 Sec. 46. *Foster Care Committees.* – The Regional Foster Care Committees  
16 maybe convened by the NACC whenever there are difficulties in the foster placements.  
17 The Committee shall be composed of multi-disciplinary team of professionals  
18 responsible for resolving the difficulties in a foster placement.

19 Sec. 47. *Advocacy Campaign.* – National government agencies (NGAs), non-  
20 government organizations (NGOs), peoples organizations (POs), faith based  
21 organizations, and civil society shall reach out to communities to recruit applicants for  
22 foster care.

23 Sec. 48. *Recruitment and Development of Foster Parents.* –NGAs, NGOs, local  
24 government units (LGUs), and POs shall develop foster parents who shall provide  
25 foster care to children.

26 Sec. 49. *Issuance of License.* – The NACC shall issue a foster license to parents  
27 who were approved as foster parents based on the home study report submitted by  
28 the agency to determine the motivations, capacities and potentials for development  
29 of applicants. The license is valid for three (3) years unless otherwise revoked by the  
30 NACC.

1 **ARTICLE II**

2 **PROCEDURES FOR FOSTER CARE**

3 Sec. 50. *Who May Be Placed Under Foster Care.* – A child in any of the  
4 following conditions may be placed in a foster family:

5 (a) Abandoned, surrendered, neglected, dependent, or orphaned;

6 (b) Victim of sexual, physical, or any other form of abuse or exploitation;

7 (c) With special needs;

8 (d) Whose family members are temporarily or permanently unable or unwilling  
9 to provide the child with adequate care;

10 (e) Awaiting adoptive placement and who would have to be prepared for  
11 family life;

12 (f) Needs long-term care and close family ties but who cannot be placed for  
13 domestic adoption;

14 (g) Whose adoption has been disrupted;

15 (h) Under socially difficult circumstances such as, but not limited to, a street  
16 child, a child in armed conflict, or a victim of child labor or trafficking;

17 (i) Committed a minor offense but is released on recognizance, or who is in  
18 custody, supervision, or whose case is dismissed;

19 (j) In need of special protection as assessed by a social worker, an agency, or  
20 the NACC; or

21 (k) Matched for adoption.

22 Provided, That in the case of (b), (c), (f), (h), (i), and (j), the child must have  
23 no family willing and capable of caring and providing for him.

24 Sec. 51. *Who May Be a Foster Parent* – The kin or relatives of the foster child,  
25 if willing and available, as well as persons who have already filed a petition for  
26 adoption of the child to be fostered become the priority prospective foster family. All  
27 applicants, including the kin or relatives of the foster child, must meet all the following  
28 qualifications:

29 (a) Of legal age;

30 (b) At least sixteen (16) years older than the child unless the foster parent is  
31 a relative;

1 (c) Have a genuine interest, capacity, and commitment in parenting and is  
2 able to provide a familial atmosphere for the child;

3 (d) Able to provide a family atmosphere for the child;

4 (e) Have a healthy and harmonious relationship with each family member  
5 living with him or her;

6 (f) Be of good moral character;

7 (g) Be physically and mentally capable and emotionally mature;

8 (h) Have sufficient resources to be able to provide for the family's needs;

9 (i) Be willing to further hone or be trained on knowledge, attitudes and skills  
10 in caring for a child; and

11 (j) Not already have the maximum number of children under his foster care at  
12 the time of application or award, as may be provided in the implementing rules and  
13 regulations (IRR) of this Act.

14 *Provided*, That in determining who is the best suited foster parent, the relatives  
15 of the child shall be given priority, so long as they meet the above qualifications:

16 *Provided, further*, That an alien possessing the above qualifications and who has  
17 resided in the Philippines for at least twelve (12) continuous months and maintains  
18 such residence until the termination of placement by the NACC or expiration of the  
19 foster family license, may qualify as a foster parent.

### 20 **ARTICLE III**

#### 21 **PARENTAL AUTHORITY OF FOSTER PARENTS**

22 *Sec. 52. Parental Authority of a Foster Parent.* – Foster parents shall have the  
23 rights, duties and liabilities of persons exercising substitute parental authority, as may  
24 be provided under the Family Code over the children under their foster care.

25 *Sec. 53. Limitations on Parental Authority of Foster Parents.* – Foster parents  
26 shall only have the rights of a person with special parental authority to discipline the  
27 foster children as defined under Section 233 of the Family Code, insofar as it prohibits  
28 the infliction of corporal punishment upon the child.

1 **ARTICLE IV**

2 **PROCEDURE**

3 Sec. 54. *Recruitment and Development of Foster Parents.* – To recruit  
4 applications for foster care, the NACC shall reach out to various communities and  
5 LGUs and work preferably with the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC).

6 Sec. 55. *Submission of Home Study Report.* – The social worker shall make a  
7 detailed Home Study Report of an applicant's background and circumstances, carried  
8 out in a series of planned visits and interviews, in order to determine if the applicant  
9 meets the basic requirements for foster care and is suitable to become a foster parent.

10 Sec. 56. *Issuance of License.* – The NACC shall issue a Foster Family Care  
11 License based on the Home Study Report submitted by the agency to determine the  
12 motivations, capacities and potentials for development of applicants. The license is  
13 renewable every three (3) years unless earlier revoked by the NACC.

14 Sec. 57. *Matching.* – Matching shall be done by the NACC or child-placing  
15 agency only after the child case study and the home study have been conducted, save  
16 for exceptions to be determined by the NACC, taking into consideration the best  
17 interests of the child.

18 The child case study report shall establish the needs of the child for  
19 consideration in the selection of the foster parent. Likewise, the Home Study Report  
20 shall establish said foster parent's capacity and resources to provide a safe, secure  
21 and loving home to the child.

22 Sec. 58. *Placement.* – The physical transfer of a child to a licensed foster parent  
23 shall take effect only after the issuance of a Foster Placement Certificate except in  
24 emergency situations to be determined by the NACC, taking into consideration the  
25 best interest of the child.

26 Sec. 59. *Supervision of Foster Placement.* – Supervised foster placement begins  
27 as soon as the foster family receives the child into their care. During the foster  
28 placement, the social worker shall conduct regular home visits to monitor the child's  
29 adjustment in the foster home and the current capability of the foster family and shall  
30 report to the NACC.

1 The foster parents shall enjoy all the benefits to which biological parents are  
2 entitled from the date the child is placed with them. As such, the parents may bring  
3 along the child to travels out of the country; *Provided*, That the child has been with  
4 them for a year; *Provided, further*, That the parents are residing in the Philippines;  
5 and *Provided, finally*, That there is no reason to believe that the child will be at risk if  
6 they travel with their parents nor is there reason to believe that the parents will not  
7 be returning to the Philippines.

8 Sec. 60. *Foster Care Committee.* – The Foster Care Committee of the NACC  
9 shall have the following functions:

10 (a) Review and deliberate issues affecting the placement of a particular child;

11 (b) Make recommendations to resolve any dispute between and among the  
12 child-placing agency, the parents, the foster parents, and the child;

13 (c) Monitor the implementation, review, and recommend changes in policies  
14 concerning foster care and other matters related to the child's welfare;

15 (d) Submit to the Chairperson of the NACC and to Congress an annual report  
16 of the policies, programs and activities relative to the implementation of this Act; and

17 (e) Perform such other functions and duties as may be prescribed by the  
18 NACC.

19 Sec. 61. *Reporting.* – In case of injury or death of the child, or if the child runs  
20 away or gets lost, such case shall be reported immediately to the nearest office of the  
21 NACC.

22 Sec. 62. *Termination of Placement.* – Termination of placement shall be done  
23 by the NACC, upon recommendation of the child-placing agency, on the following  
24 grounds:

25 (a) Return of the child to biological parents;

26 (b) Placement for adoption of the child;

27 (c) Death of the child;

28 (d) Death of both foster parents;

29 (e) Expiration of the FPA; and

(f) In all cases where placement becomes prejudicial to the welfare of the child, such as, but not limited to, abandonment, maltreatment, sexual assault, violence or other forms of abuse.

*Provided, That in the case of (f), the foster child, with the assistance of a registered social worker, shall have the option to apply for termination of placement.*

## **ARTICLE V**

### **LONG-TERM FOSTER PLACEMENT**

Sec. 63. *Long-Term Foster Placement Authority.* – If a child has been under the care of a foster parent for a period of at least seven (7) years, the said foster parent may apply for Long-Term Foster Placement Authority (LTFPA), subject to the following conditions:

(a) The child's return to his biological parents or placement in an adoptive family is not imminent;

(b) The foster parent continues to possess the qualifications required under the Child Welfare Act and a valid foster family care license for the entire duration of the foster care;

(c) The child, if ten (10) years of age or over, duly assisted by a social worker, gives written consent for long-term stay with the foster parent; and

(d) Aside from the regular monitoring visits, the NACC shall reassess and reevaluate the foster home situation every three (3) years, to determine whether it is in the best interest of the child to continue living in the foster home on a long-term basis.

LTFPA grants the foster parent custody over the foster child without the requirement of the eventuality of adoption of the latter by the former. During this period, the foster child shall enjoy the rights of a child under Article 3 of the Child and Youth Welfare Code, and under other laws: *Provided, That there shall be no mandatory rights of succession in favor of the foster child.*

Sec. 64. *Long-Term Foster Care Commitment.* – Taking into consideration the stability and best interest of the foster child, a foster parent, who unilaterally terminates the LTFPA before the foster child reaches the age of majority or finishes tertiary education, shall make provisions for the education and basic needs of the foster child, in accordance with the standards in which the child has been raised or



1 has become accustomed to, within the said period: Provided, That the foster parent  
2 has the means to support the foster child in keeping with the financial capacity of the  
3 family.

## 4 **ARTICLE VI**

### 5 **ADOPTION OF A FOSTER CHILD**

6 **Sec. 65. *Conditions.*** – A foster parent may adopt his foster child subject to the  
7 following conditions:

8 (a) The foster parent must have all the qualifications as provided for this  
9 Act;

10 (b) The trial custody, as required in adoption, may be waived: *Provided,*  
11 That a harmonious relationship exists between the child and his foster parent and  
12 family members; and

13 (c) The procedures for adoption, for purposes of this Act, shall be  
14 governed by this Act.

## 15 **ARTICLE VII**

### 16 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS**

17 **Sec. 66. *Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).*** – LGUs shall promote the  
18 foster care system in their respective territorial jurisdictions.

19 **Sec. 67. *Seminars and Trainings.*** – The NACC, in coordination with the DSWD,  
20 is hereby mandated to develop and provide programs to ensure the awareness and  
21 responsiveness of local government officials in the promotion and development of the  
22 foster care system in every city, municipality or barangay.

## 23 **ARTICLE VIII**

### 24 **FOSTER CARE SUPPORT SERVICES,** 25 **ASSISTANCE, AND INCENTIVES**

26 **Sec. 68. *Health Insurance.*** – A foster child shall automatically be a PhilHealth  
27 beneficiary of the foster parent and as such, entitled to health insurance benefits. If  
28 the foster parent is not a PhilHealth member, he must seek enrollment with PhilHealth.  
29 LGUs and agencies shall provide assistance to the foster parents to ensure enrollment.

30 **Sec. 69. *Special Discounts.*** – To the extent possible, the government may grant  
31 special discounts to foster parents on the purchase of basic commodities for the

1 exclusive use of the foster child subject to the guidelines to be issued for the purpose  
2 by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Agriculture  
3 (DA).

4       Sec. 70. *Foster Child Subsidy.* – A foster child, through the child-placing agency,  
5 shall be entitled to a monthly subsidy from the government, NACC, or LGU, subject to  
6 existing government standards and auditing rules and regulations to include incidental  
7 expenses. The subsidy is primarily aimed at supporting the expenses of the child to  
8 lessen the financial burden on the foster parent: *Provided,* That support may be  
9 waived if the foster parent is capable of supporting the foster child.

10       Sec. 71. *Foster Family Incentives.* – A foster family, through the child-placing  
11 agency, shall be entitled to a monthly incentive from the government NACC and/or  
12 LGUs, subject to existing government standards and auditing rules and regulations.

13       Sec. 72. *Support Care Services.* – The NACC and the social service unit of the  
14 LGU or agency shall provide support care services to include, counselling, and other  
15 psycho-social services, visits, training on child care and development, respite care,  
16 skills training, and livelihood assistance.

17       Sec. 73. *Support to Biological Parents.* – Counselling shall be provided to  
18 parents to help them understand foster care and prepare them for eventual  
19 reunification with the child. Training on child-caring and child-protection skills shall be  
20 provided to biological parents to improve their knowledge, attitude and skills in  
21 parenting.

22       Sec. 74. *Incentives to Agencies.* – Agencies shall be entitled to the following  
23 tax incentives:

24       (a) Exemption from Income Tax. – Agencies shall be exempt from income tax  
25 on the income derived by it as such organization pursuant to Section 30 of the NIRC  
26 of 1997, as implemented by Revenue Regulation (RR) No. 13-98; and

27       (b) Qualification as a Donee Institution. – Agencies can also apply for  
28 qualification as a donee institution.

29       Sec. 75. *Incentives to Donors.* – Donors of an agency shall be entitled to the  
30 following:

1 (a) Allowable Deductions. – Donors shall be granted allowable deductions from  
2 its gross income to the extent of the amount donated to agencies in accordance with  
3 Section 34(H) of the NIRC of 1997; and

4 (b) Exemption from Donor's Tax. – Donors shall be exempted from donor's tax  
5 under Section 101 of the NIRC of 1997: *Provided*, That not more than thirty percent  
6 (30%) of the amount of donations shall be spent for administrative expenses.

## 7 **BOOK IV**

### 8 **OTHER FORMS OF ALTERNATIVE CHILD CARE**

#### 9 **ARTICLE I**

#### 10 **GUARDIANSHIP, KHAFALLAH, KINSHIP CARE, [FAMILY-LIKE CARE]**

#### 11 **RESIDENTIAL CARE**

12 *Sec. 76. Conditions in Other Forms of Alternative Care Settings.* –The following  
13 are the required conditions in other forms of alternative care which includes  
14 guardianship, kafalah, kinship care, or residential care;

15 1. *Awareness of children's rights and obligations.* Both children and care givers  
16 should know and understand their rights and obligations;

17 2. *Complaint mechanism* support. Children should be able to, without fear of  
18 retribution, express concerns about their situation or treatment by confiding in a  
19 person they can trust, and by having access to an effective complaints mechanism;

20 3. *Private provision of alternative care.* A set of criteria developed by the NACC,  
21 is used to assess the ability of all individuals and facilities to care for children, and to  
22 use these criteria to authorize and then monitor their activities;

23 4. *Child development and child protection.* Provisions for child development  
24 range from access to education and vocational training, to insist that children can  
25 maintain contact with family and other familiar persons, the optimal development of  
26 children with including children with special needs, and the importance that carers  
27 should place on creating nurturing relationships with the children they are looking  
28 after;

29 5. *Stigmatization.* Stigmatization of children in alternative care settings should  
30 be addressed and prevented at all times; and

1           6. *Discipline, punishment and restraints.* Severe restrictions should be placed  
2 on the use of force and restraints. All treatment that may compromise a child's physical  
3 or mental health are prohibited. Adequate guidance on discipline and punishment shall  
4 be followed.

5           Sec. 77. *Who May Be Placed Under Other Forms of Alternative Child Care.* –  
6 A child with the conditions stipulated in Section 51 of this Act who are not placed for  
7 adoption or with a foster family shall be eligible for placement in other forms of  
8 alternative care such as guardianship, kafalah, kinship care or residential care. NACC  
9 shall exhaust all means of placing such child in a family setting before allowing the  
10 child to be placed in family-like or residential care.

11          Sec. 78. *Support Services for other forms of Alternative Child Care.* – All other  
12 forms of alternative child care shall have the same support services accorded to foster  
13 care as enumerated in Sections 68 to 75 of this Act.

## 14                                   **ARTICLE II**

### 15                           **GUARDIANSHIP LEADING TO ADOPTION**

16          Sec. 79. *Guardianship as Alternative Child Care.* – While nothing in this Act  
17 amends the judicial nature of guardianship proceedings, the provisions on this Act will  
18 only apply after termination of guardianship as when the guardian(s) endeavors and  
19 expressed their intention to the adoption of the wards.

20          All relevant provisions on adoption, whether domestic or inter-country  
21 adoption, as the case may be, shall govern in cases of guardian(s) intending to adopt  
22 their wards.

23          Sec. 80. *Petition for the Adoption of the Ward.* – After the termination of  
24 guardianship, guardians may opt to adopt their wards by filing a petition for adoption  
25 pursuant to Book II of this Act. All the qualifications prescribed in Book II of this Act  
26 shall be met with, as well as all the requirements for adoption must be complied with.

27          The NACC may *motu proprio* or upon motion of any party reduce the trial period  
28 if it finds the same to be in the best interest of the adoptee, stating the reasons for  
29 the reduction of the period.

1 **ARTICLE III**

2 **RESIDENTIAL CHILD CARE**

3 **PROCEDURES AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE**

4 Sec. 81. *Parental Authority of Residential Caring Agency (RCA)*. – RCAs shall  
5 be *in loco parentis*, exercising the rights, duties and liabilities of persons exercising  
6 substitute parental authority over the children under their foster care, as may be  
7 provided for by Executive Order No. 209, *series* of 1987, otherwise known as the  
8 "*Family Code of the Philippines*", *Provided*, That RCAs shall only have the rights of a  
9 person with special parental authority to discipline the children under their care and  
10 protection as defined under Section 233 of the Family Code, insofar as it prohibits  
11 the infliction of corporal punishment upon the child.

12 Sec. 82. *Components of Residential Care*. – The following are essential  
13 components to a residential care as defined in Section 3(d)(5):

14 (a) Caregivers who devote time to the children enabling a trusting and reliable  
15 relationship for them to experience lifelong love and security as they serve as stable  
16 figures who manage the family house and create a loving family environment;

17 (b) A family home with bedrooms, kitchen, living room, toilet, and shower room  
18 which will serve as home to children and allows biological siblings to stay together;

19 (c) Support system for children and their families through development  
20 planning in various aspects of their individual development, with a special focus  
21 beginning with early childhood development and ending with quality aftercare support,  
22 so they are guided on their journey to self-reliance and to becoming contributing  
23 members of the society; and

24 (d) Professional and technical support for children and parents from a  
25 multidisciplinary team composed of project managers or directors, social workers,  
26 educators, psychologists and medical professionals.

27 Sec. 83. *Privileges*. – To allow it to fully realize its mandate, an accredited RCA  
28 shall:

29 (a) Enter into agreements with public authorities, and accept provisions for the  
30 cost of any service or activity which may be entrusted to it, within the scope of its  
31 object and functions, pursuant to such agreements;

(b) Own and hold real and personal properties and accept bequests, donations, and contributions; and

(c) Finally, the agency shall be exempt from the payment of real property taxes on all real properties owned by it.

## **BOOK V**

### **CARE FOR ABANDONED FILIPINO CHILDREN OVERSEAS**

Sec. 84. *Programs and Services to Protect Abandoned Children in Foreign Countries.* – The NACC, in coordination with the DFA, shall establish the procedures and implement programs and services to protect and promote the rights of an abandoned Filipino child in a foreign country that will ensure or provide for the following:

(a) Prompt reporting, registration, and initial assessment of the abandoned child;

(b) Emergency care and accommodation;

(c) Appointment of a guardian or foster parents;

(d) Access to basic services on health and education;

(e) Prevention and protection from all forms of violence and exploitation;

(f) Prevention and protection from involvement in situations of armed conflict;

(g) Prevention of deprivation of liberty;

(h) Family reunification;

(i) Return to country;

(j) Local integration or inter-country adoption; and

(k) Durable family-based solutions.

## **BOOK VI**

### **VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES**

#### **ARTICLE I**

#### **VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES RELATING TO ADOPTION**

Sec. 85. *Violations and Penalties.* –

(a) Any person who shall knowingly participate in the conduct or carrying out of an illegal adoption, in violation of the provisions of this Act, shall be punished with a penalty of imprisonment ranging from six (6) years and one (1) day to twelve (12)

1 years and/or a fine not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50, 000.00), but not more  
2 than Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200, 000.00) at the discretion of the court. It  
3 shall be imposed on any person who shall commit any of the following acts:

4 (1) Obtaining consent for an adoption through coercion, undue influence,  
5 fraud, improper material inducement, or other similar acts;

6 (2) Non-compliance with the procedures and safeguards provided by law  
7 for the adoption; or

8 (3) Subjecting or imposing the child to be adopted to danger, abuse, or  
9 exploitation;

10 (b) Any person who shall cause the fictitious registration of the birth of the  
11 child under the names of persons who are not the child's biological parents shall be  
12 guilty of simulation of birth, and shall be punished by prison mayor in its medium  
13 period and a fine not exceeding Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) unless covered by  
14 Section 31 of this Act;

15 (c) Any physician or nurse or hospital personnel who shall cooperate in the  
16 execution of the above mentioned crime shall suffer the penalties herein prescribed  
17 and also the penalty of permanent disqualification from the practice of their  
18 professions unless covered by Section 31 of this Act;

19 (d) Any person who shall violate established regulations relating to  
20 confidentiality and integrity of records, documents, and communications of adoption  
21 applications, cases and processes shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment ranging  
22 from one (1) year and one (1) day to two (2) years, and/or a fine of not less than  
23 Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) but not more than Ten Thousand Pesos  
24 (P10,000.00) at the discretion of the court;

25 (e) A penalty lower by two (2) degrees than that prescribed for the  
26 consummated offense under this Article shall be imposed upon the principals of the  
27 attempt to commit any of the acts herein enumerated:

28 (1) Act punishable under this Article, when committed by a syndicate or  
29 where it involves two (2) or more children shall be considered as an offense  
30 constituting child trafficking and shall merit the penalty of *reclusion perpetua*;

(2) Act punishable under this Article are deemed committed by a syndicate if carried out by a group of three (3) or more persons conspiring or confederating with one another in carrying out any of the unlawful acts defined under this Article;

(3) Penalties herein provided, shall be in addition to any other penalties which may be imposed for the same acts punishable under other laws, ordinances, executive orders, and proclamations; and

(4) An offender who is an alien, shall be deported immediately after service of sentence and perpetually denied entry to the country.

Sec. 86. *Public Officers as Offender.* – Any government official or employee who shall be found guilty of violating any provisions of this Act, or who shall conspire with private individual shall, in addition to the above prescribed penalties, be penalized in accordance with existing civil service laws, rules and regulations. *Provided,* That upon the filing of a case either administrative or criminal, said government official or employee concerned shall automatically suffer suspension until the resolution of the case.

## ARTICLE II

### **VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES IN RELATION TO FOSTER CARE**

Sec. 87. *Penalties.* –

(a) Any foster parent, found to be committing any act of neglect, abuse, cruelty, or exploitation and other similar acts prejudicial to the child's development, shall be penalized in accordance with Republic Act No. 7610, otherwise known as "An Act Providing For Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination, Providing For Its Violation, and For Other Purposes", and other applicable laws.

(b) A child-placing agency which violates Sections 57, 58, 59 or any other provision of this Act and its IRR shall suffer the following penalties:

(1) For the first violation, a fine of not less than Twenty-Five Thousand Pesos (PhP 25,000.00) but not exceeding Fifty Thousand Pesos (PhP 50,000.00); and

(2) For any subsequent violation, a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (PhP 50,000.00) but not exceeding One Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 100,000.00), and revocation of license to operate.



1 (c) Any person, natural or juridical, other than the foster parent or any agency,  
2 violating any provision of this Act and its IRR shall be penalized with imprisonment of  
3 one (1) month to six (6) years, depending on the gravity of the offense or a fine of  
4 not less than Ten Thousand Pesos (Php 10,000.00) but not more than One Hundred  
5 Thousand Pesos (PhP 100,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court.

6 (d) If the offender is a public official, the court may impose the additional  
7 penalty of disqualification from office in addition to the penalties provided in the  
8 preceding paragraph.

### 9 **ARTICLE III**

#### 10 **VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES IN RELATION TO OTHER FORMS OF** 11 **ALTERNATIVE CARE**

12 Sec. 88. *Penal Clause.* – Any person, whether natural or juridical, violating  
13 Book IV of this Act shall, upon conviction, be liable to a fine of not less than Fifty  
14 Thousand Pesos (P50, 000.00) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one (1)  
15 year, or both, at the discretion of the court for each and every violation. In case the  
16 violation is committed by a corporation or an association, the penalty shall devolve  
17 upon the president, director, or any other officer responsible for such violation.

### 18 **BOOK VII**

#### 19 **FINAL PROVISIONS**

20 Sec. 89. *Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).* – The host LGU, pursuant to  
21 Section 108 of Republic Act No. 7160 otherwise known as the "*Local Government*  
22 *Code of 1991*", shall accredit alternative care agencies that are duly recognized by  
23 the NACC in their locality.

24 The LGU, through its Local Social Welfare and Development Office, shall  
25 include the provisions of this Act in its development plans and strategies, and upon  
26 approval thereof by the governor or mayor, as the case may be, implement the same  
27 particularly those which have to do with social welfare programs and projects which  
28 the governor or mayor is empowered to implement and which the *Sanggunian* is  
29 empowered to provide for under Republic Act 7160.

1 A standard accreditation process for all LGUs shall be adopted by the NACC,  
2 in coordination with the DSWD and the Department of the Interior and Local  
3 Government (DILG).

4 Sec. 90. *Seminars and Trainings.* – The NACC and the DSWD, in coordination  
5 with the DILG, is mandated to develop and provide programs to ensure the  
6 awareness and responsiveness of local government officials in the promotion and  
7 development of the alternative care system in every city, municipality and barangay.

8 Sec. 91. *Protection From Suit.* – Government employees in their lawful  
9 performance of their duties shall be protected from suit.

10 Sec. 92. *Unlawful Solicitation.* – It shall be unlawful for any person to solicit,  
11 collect, or receive money, materials or property of any kind by falsely representing  
12 himself to be a member, agent or representative of any alternative care agency.

13 Sec. 93. *Appropriations.* – Such sum as may be necessary for the  
14 implementation of the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General  
15 Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

16 Sec. 94. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DSWD, as lead agency,  
17 the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Health (DOH), the Bureau of  
18 Internal Revenue (BIR), the Council on Welfare of Children (CWC), the DILG and other  
19 concerned government agencies, in consultation with agencies are hereby mandated  
20 to prepare and draft the IRR to operationalize the provisions of this Act within six (6)  
21 months from its approval.

22 Sec. 95. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared  
23 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in  
24 full force and effect.

25 Sec. 96. *Suppletory Clause.* – The provisions of Executive Order No. 209, series  
26 of 1987, otherwise known as the Family Code of the Philippines and other applicable  
27 laws, shall have suppletory application to this Act.

28 Sec. 97. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 9523, entitled “An Act Requiring  
29 the Certification of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to  
30 declare a “Child Legally Available for Adoption” as a Prerequisite for Adoption  
31 Proceedings, Amending for this Purpose Certain Provisions of Republic Act No. 8552,

1 otherwise known as The Domestic Adoption Act of 1998, Republic Act No. 8043,  
2 otherwise known as The Inter-Country Adoption Act of 1995, Presidential Decree No.  
3 603, otherwise known as The Child and Youth Welfare Code, and for other Purposes",  
4 and Republic Act No. 1122, otherwise known as the "Simulated Birth Rectification  
5 Act", are hereby repealed. Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,  
6 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to, or in  
7 consistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended  
8 accordingly.

9       Sec. 98. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
10 publication in the official gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved*