

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2764**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduced by Representative EDGAR R. ERICE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In year 1765, the San Roque Parish was only a small chapel located in *Sitio de Espinas* (now Libis) in the district of Kalookan, Province of Tondo. It was built by Fray Manuel Vaquero, an assistant priest from the Parish of Tondo, with the help of the people living in the area. When the construction of the chapel was finished, Fray Vaquero donated the images of San Roque and Nuestra Señora de la Nieva from Talaver, España. Over the years, the number of worshippers in San Roque chapel had grown significantly which prompted the then Archbishop of Manila, Antonio de Zulaivar, to separate it from the auspices of Tondo Parish and named Fray Manuel San Miguel as its first Parochial Priest.

In 1819, the San Roque Parish was transferred to a new site called the *Paltok* or literally the uppermost part of Caloocan (the same site where the San Roque Parish now stands). Fray San Francisco Xavier, Fray San Miguel's successor, began building a new parish but it was only finished in 1847 under the leadership of Fray Cipriano Gerola.

Through the years, when the Filipino people could no longer endure the tyranny of the Spaniards who ruled the Philippines with an iron fist, the spirit of rebellion spread throughout the country and the San Roque Parish was a living witness to the bravery and heroism of the many *Katipuneros* in *Balintawak* who rose and cried for freedom.

In 1899, the San Roque Parish was used by General Antonio Luna as one of his staging camps in fighting the American soldiers during the Filipino-American war. The Parish was partially destroyed when the American soldiers overran the forces of Gen. Luna while the entire Parish's ground was utilized as a temporary hospital for the injured members of the invading force. Subsequently, when the American forces led by the General Arthur McArthur occupied Caloocan, the San Roque Parish was converted into a regiment camp with Colonel Frederick Funston of the 20th Kansas Regiment as its commander.

After the war, the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus led by Father Victor Raymundo started the reconstruction and renovation of the San Roque Parish which was continued by the succeeding priests until 1965. This piecemeal repair,

however, proved to be insufficient to prevent the deterioration and inevitable collapse of the Parish had it not been for the efforts of the constituents of the City of Caloocan and, the strong determination and conviction of the Parochial Priest – Monsignor Boanerges Lechuga to rebuild the same.

In view of the foregoing, it is only fitting that the San Roque Parish be acknowledged as a national landmark and shrine for history, freedom and independence. The passage of this bill, therefore, is earnestly sought.

EDGAR R. ERICE
Representative
2nd District, Caloocan City

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AN ACT

DECLARING SAN ROQUE PARISH IN CALOOCAN CITY AS A NATIONAL LANDMARK AND SHRINE FOR HISTORY, FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE, CALLING FOR ITS PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Statement of Policy.* – It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to preserve historical sites, monuments and other relics that represent the Filipino heritage and culture and should therefore be under the protection of the State.

SEC. 2. *Declaration as National Landmark and Shrine.* – Consistent with the constitutional mandate to preserve, promote and popularize the nation's historical heritage, the San Roque Parish of Caloocan City, an edifice constructed in 1765 A.D. which witnessed our nation's struggle to attain its precious freedom, is hereby declared a national landmark and shrine for history, freedom and independence to underscore the immense contribution of the Christian faith to the enrichment and vibrancy of our modern civilization.

SEC. 3. *Power of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.* - For this purpose, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) shall exercise supervision over the preservation of the aforesaid site and shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to effectuate the preceding sections of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Appropriations.* – The Chairman of the NHCP shall immediately include in the Commission's program the operationalization of the San Roque Parish as a national landmark and shrine for history, freedom and independence, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. *Fund-raising Program.* – In order to afford the people an opportunity to participate in financing the preservation, reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of the shrine, the NHCP is hereby authorized to organize and undertake a national fund campaign for the purpose of raising funds from private sources.

SEC. 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,