

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 1587

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
RECEIVED	
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Introduced by: HON. ARNULFO "NOLI" P. FUENTEBELLA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide free legal assistance to any officer or enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), who is facing before the prosecutor's office, court, administrative or any competent body, on any charge arising from an incident or incidents related to the performance of their official duty.

Under the proposed measure, the Secretary of Justice, the Chief of Staff of the AFP, the Chairperson of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) or the Chief of the PNP shall authorize any lawyer or lawyers of their respective agencies to provide free legal assistance to any officer or enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police (PNP) for the purpose.

In our country, most people may construe the law as favoring the rich over the poor. The common man, like those officers and lowly enlisted personnel of the AFP and PNP cannot afford to engage the services of a lawyer due to the prohibitive cost of legal services even to defend himself of charges related to the performance of his official duties.

Where is justice therefore in this case?

It is worthy to share the words of former Vice President Salvador P. Laurel:

"Without justice, no one can feel secure. Without security, there can be no faith. Without faith, there can be no peace. And without peace, this nation may perish."

The foregoing reasons warrant the approval of this important piece of legislation.

ARNULFO "NOLI" P. FUENTEBELLA
Representative
Fourth District, Camarines Sur

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO ANY OFFICER OR ENLISTED PERSONNEL OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) ON ANY CHARGE BEFORE THE PROSECUTOR’S OFFICE, COURT, ADMINISTRATIVE OR ANY COMPETENT BODY ARISING FROM AN INCIDENT OR INCIDENTS RELATED TO THE PERFORMANCE OF OFFICIAL DUTY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Any officer or enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), who is facing before the prosecutor’s office, court, administrative or any competent body, any charge arising from an incident or incidents related to the performance of official duty shall be entitled to free legal assistance from the government.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of Justice, the Chief of Staff of the AFP, the Chairperson of the National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM) or the Chief of the PNP shall authorize any lawyer or lawyers of their respective agencies to provide free legal assistance to any officer or enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police (PNP) for the purpose under the immediately preceding section.

SEC. 3. Any amount necessary to implement this Act shall be charged against the appropriation of the DOJ, AFP, NAPOLCOM and PNP of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SEC. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DOJ, in coordination with the AFP, NAPOLCOM and the PNP, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 5. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved