

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2963

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Introduced by Representative GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE FOR INTERNATIONAL
VISITOR ASSISTANCE

EXPLANATORY NOTE


Executive Order No. 292 or the Administrative Code of 1987, Title 13, Chapter 1, Section 1, Expressly states that "*The State shall promote, encourage and develop tourism as a major national activity in which private sector investment, effort and initiative are fostered and supported, and through which socio-economic development may be accelerated, foreign exchange earned, international visitors offered the opportunity to travel to the Philippines and appreciate its natural beauty, history and culture, and Filipinos themselves enabled to see more of their country and imbued with greater pride in and commitment to the nation.*"

The tourism industry has been branded as an "engine of economic growth" given its capacity to boost and jumpstart any economy especially countries like the Philippines. It is a consistent source of foreign exchange earnings and employment opportunities and also promotes international goodwill. At the same time, it highlights and makes known to the international community of the rich and colorful socio-cultural life of Filipinos.

That is why there is a need for government to adopt and implement an integrated approach in tourism development to be able to realize its full potential as an important economic tool necessary for national development.

This bill is a humble attempt in this regard by establishing an intergovernmental task force for international visitor assistance to make the Philippines a premiere travel and tourism destination in the world.

In view of the foregoing, the expeditious passage of this bill into law is earnestly requested.


GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
2nd District, Pampanga

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Visit Philippines Act of 2016."

SECTION 2. *International Visitor Assistance Task Force.* -

A) ESTABLISHMENT - Not later than nine (9) months after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Tourism shall establish an Intergovernmental Task Force for International Visitor Assistance (hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force."

B) DUTIES - The Task Force shall examine -

1) signage at facilities in the Philippines, including airports, seaports, land border crossings, highways, and bus, train, and other public transit locations, and shall identify existing inadequacies and suggest solutions for such inadequacies, such as the adoption of uniform standards on signage for use throughout the Philippines in order to facilitate international visitor's travel in the Philippines;

2) the availability of multilingual travel and tourism information and means of disseminating at no or minimal cost to the government of such information; and

3) facilitating the establishment of a toll-free, private sector operated, telephone number, staffed by multilingual operators, to provide assistance to international tourists coping with an emergency.

C) MEMBERSHIP - The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

1) The Secretary of Tourism;

2) The Secretary of Interior and Local Government;

3) The Secretary of Transportation and Communications;

4) Such other representatives of other government agencies and private sector entities as may be determined to be appropriate to the mission of the Task Force by the Chairman.

D) CHAIRMAN - The Secretary of Tourism shall be the Chairman of the Task Force. The Task Force shall meet at least twice each year. Each member of the Task Force shall furnish necessary assistance to the Task Force.

E) REPORT - Not later than eighteen (18) months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chairman of the Task Force shall submit to the President and to Congress a report on the results of the review, including proposed amendments to existing laws or regulations as may be appropriate to implement such recommendations.

SECTION 3. *Funding.* -

A) AUTHORIZATION - Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for the purpose of funding promotional activities by the Department of Tourism to help brand, position, and promote the Philippines as the premiere travel and destination of the world.

B) RESTRICTIONS ONE USE OF FUNDS - None of the funds appropriated under subsection (1) may be used for purposes other than marketing, research, or any other activity designed to promote the Philippines as the premiere travel and tourism destination in the world.

SECTION 4. *Report to Congress.* - The Secretary shall submit to relevant Committees of Congress an annual detailed report setting forth -

A) the manner in which appropriated funds were expended;

B) changes in the Philippines market share of international tourism in general and as measured against specific countries and regions;

C) an analysis of the impact of international tourism in the Philippine economy, including, as specifically as practicable, an analysis of the impact of expenditures made pursuant to this Section;

D) an analysis of the impact of international tourism on the Philippine trade balance and, as specifically as practicable, an analysis of the impact on the trade balance of expenditures made pursuant to this section, and;

E) an analysis of other relevant economic impacts as a result of expenditures made pursuant to this section.

SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting

SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 7. *Effectively Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,