COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 332


Re: House Bill No. 6864

Recommending its approval, in substitution of House Bill No. 6623.

Sponsors: Reps. Cayetano (A.P.), Romualdez (F.), Villafuerte, Jr., and Duterte,

Mr. Speaker:

The Defeat COVID-19 Ad Hoc Committee to which was referred House Bill No. 6623, introduced by Reps. Cayetano (A.P.), Villafuerte, Jr., Duterte, Legarda, Romualdez (F.M.), Yap (E.), Cayetano (M.L.), Defensor (M), Sy-Alvarado, entitled:

"AN ACT
ESTABLISHING POLICIES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE NEW NORMAL FOR THE WORKPLACE AND PUBLIC SPACES AND INSTITUTING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF"

has considered the same and recommends the approval of House Bill No. 6864, entitled:

"AN ACT
ESTABLISHING POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH SAFEGUARDS FOR THE BETTER NORMAL IN THE WORKPLACE, PUBLIC PLACES AND COMMUNITIES TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC"

in substitution of House Bill No. 6623, with Reps. Cayetano (A.P.), Villafuerte, Jr., Duterte, Legarda, Romualdez (F.M.), Yap (E.), Cayetano (M.L.), Defensor (M), Sy-
Alvarado, Daza, Lacson, Arroyo, Sarmiento, Hofer, Violago, Eriguel, Ong (R.), Vergara, Vargas-Alfonso, Rodriguez, Herrera-Dy, Labadlabad, Deloso-Montalla, Abueg-Zaldivar, Pimentel, Nava, Sagarbarria, Ebcas, Mariano-Hernandez, Dujali, Babasa, Jr., Faríñas (R.Ch.), Unabia, Cabredo, Ong, Jr. (L.), Peña, Jr., Guya, De Jesus, Dagooc, Villanueva (E.), Rivera, Yu, Yap (V.), and Silverio as authors thereof.

Respectfully submitted,

FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
Co-Chairperson
Defeat COVID-19 Ad-Hoc Committee

ERIC GO YAP
Chairperson
Committee on Appropriations

THE HONORABLE SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY
Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6864

Introduced by Reps. Cayetano (A.P.), Villafuerte, Jr., Duterte, Legarda, Romualdez (F.M.), Yap (E.), Cayetano (M.L.), Defensor (M), Sy-Alvarado, Daza, Lacson, Arroyo, Sarmiento, Hofer, Violago, Erigel, Ong (R.), Vergara, Vargas-Alfonso, Rodriguez, Herrera-Dy, Labadlabad, Deloso-Montalla, Abueg-Zaldívar, Pimentel, Nava, Sagarbarria, Ebcas, Mariano-Hernandez, Dujali, Babasa, Jr., Faríñas (R.Ch.), Unabia, Cabredo, Ong, Jr. (L.), Peña, Jr., Guya, De Jesus, Dagooc, Villanueva (E.), Rivera, Yu, Yap (V.), Silverio, Gonzales, Jr. (A.), Acosta-Alba and Abano

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND PUBLIC HEALTH SAFEGUARDS FOR THE BETTER NORMAL IN THE WORKPLACE, PUBLIC PLACES AND COMMUNITIES TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY FROM THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE-19 (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

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

1 SECTION I. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Better Normal for the Workplace, Communities and Public Spaces Act of 2020".

2 SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

3 The State shall also protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.

4 Towards this end, the State shall:
a) Adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to public health policies and regulations during a pandemic, thus, ensuring the overall well-being of individuals, communities and natural ecosystems;

b) Institute appropriate public health, safety, and security measures to stem the transmission of the Corona virus disease-19 (COVID-19) or similar diseases that may result in any kind of pandemic;

c) Regulate, institute, and establish standards and protocols that would simultaneously protect the vulnerable from COVID-19 and prevent its transmission;

d) Pursue the restoration of livelihood opportunities and sources of income for all, especially the poor, in the vent of widespread disease outbreak and the resulting slowdown of economic activity, and building adaptive capacity and resilience for future shocks;

e) Pursue universal broadband access for all to ensure a better normal in recognition of the crucial role of a strong information and communications technology (ICT) system to close the digital divide and that the need for modern and innovative ICT cuts across all sectors of society;

f) Ensure that pandemic recovery will lead to a greener, resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future, hence, recovery needs should be addressed with long-term sustainability goals; and

g) Give importance to other aspects of well-being of the people based on the Gross National Happiness indicators, namely, equitable and sustainable socio-economic development, the preservation and promotion of cultural values, the conservation of the natural environment, and the establishment of good governance.
SEC. 3. **Objectives.** - This Act shall have the following objectives:

a) Define and allocate roles, responsibilities, and obligations across key sectors of the society that shall be heavily involved in the implementation of specific and applicable measures, namely, the National Government and its instrumentalities, local government, private sector, and individual Filipino citizens;

b) Identify standards and protocols in the management of physical spaces, both publicly-owned and -managed, or privately-owned but are designated communal spaces, and prescribe the allowed and prohibited activities therein as well as behaviors expected and required of the citizens while utilizing such physical spaces;

c) Facilitate the development of the necessary systems and infrastructure and the enhancement of existing ones so as to ensure that the ICT needs of the better normal are accessible to all, making it possible for people and organizations to practice appropriate behavior and decisions as well as for relevant government agencies to implement relevant, effective, and timely information dissemination;

d) Establish systems of accountability for failure to comply with the obligations and expectations prescribed under this Act;

e) Provide inclusive operational parameters, guidelines, and recommendations for a better way of life until such time that the threat of COVID-19 virus and other similar diseases that caused the occurrence of a pandemic is effectively contained;

f) Mitigate, if not contain, the transmission of the virus and undertake measures to prevent the overburdening of the public healthcare system;
g) Continue health promotion and behavior-enhancing measures in all levels of government and the private sector; and,

h) Accelerate transformational change to restore the balance between human, socio-economic and natural systems, and reduce vulnerability to future crises caused by climate change, natural hazards and man-made disasters.

SEC. 4. **Scope of the Act.** - This Act shall provide the strategies and measures that shall be implemented so that economic and social activities can proceed in a manner that ensures public health, safety, and security during an epidemic, and until such time that the same is declared eradicated by the authorized National Government agency or agencies of the government.

The organization, operation, and activities in workplaces, communities, and public spaces shall be governed by the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. **Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act:

a) **Better normal**, in the context of recovery from an epidemic or pandemic refers to transformative behaviors and interventions informed by science, that address the underlying vulnerabilities of people and communities that the epidemic or pandemic has highlighted and fosters a just and equitable transition to a climate-resilient, inclusive and sustainable future;

b) **Better Normal Permit** refers to the permit or clearance issued by the local government unit (LGU) for the conduct of activities that essentially require physical gathering of people during the time of an epidemic or pandemic;

c) **Better Normal Workforce and Workplace Management Plan**, herein referred to as the Management Plan, refers to the management plan of all public and private sector entities that conforms to the prescribed measures and protocols under this Act to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus
and other kinds of viruses that may be transmitted through contact in the workplace;

d) Government-managed public spaces refer to a government or public property used by the public under zoning or similar regulatory arrangements, and other spaces used as National Government offices, offices of LGUs, public zoos, public libraries, roads, streets, avenues, alleys, public markets, parks, plazas, covered courts, promenades, gymnasiums, arenas, amusement and recreation centers, among others, that are publicly managed or owned by the government;

e) Pandemic refers to an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population;

f) Privately-managed public spaces refer to spaces within the perimeter or premises of a privately-owned real estate or property used by the public under zoning or similar regulatory arrangements, which include, among others, shopping malls, hotels, open spaces and common areas in subdivisions and condominiums;

g) Privately organized gatherings refer to those planned or spontaneous human, political, social, cultural, economic, religious and sports gatherings such as concerts, events, celebrations, parties, team-buildings, seminars, conferences, trainings, conventions, religious mass and sacraments, retreats, funerals, electoral campaigns, inductions, ceremonies, film show makings, television shows, sports, and other related forms of recreations.

h) Profiling refers to the process of discovering core relations between data and databases that can be used to identify and represent a subject
individual or a group of individuals the application of a set of correlated data
to an individual to represent a subject, or to identify a group or category;
i) Public spaces refer to streets, alleys, public parks, museums, cultural and
heritage spaces, schools, buildings, malls, restaurants, transportation
terminals, public markets, areas used as evacuation centers, government
offices, public utility vehicles as well as private vehicles covered by
application-based transport network services, and other recreational or
leisure places such as cinema halls, theaters, cockpits, and spas; and,

j) Workplace refers to a place where work is carried out for a business or
undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be,
while carrying out a work-related task.

SEC. 6. Standards for Better Normal. – In order to stem the transmission of
COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, and protect the people from such diseases,
the following standards for the better normal shall be observed:

A. Universal and Mandatory Health and Safety Measures

1) Strict observance by the general public of basic personal hygiene and instilling
in the general populace by the government, in cooperation with the private
sector, on awareness of the risks of infection and possible reinfection of the
disease;

2) Mandatory wearing by the general public of face masks, earloop masks,
indigenous, reusable or do-it-yourself masks, face shields, handkerchiefs, or
such other protective material or equipment that effectively lessen the
transmission of the COVID-19 virus whenever they are in workplace, public
places, and communities: Provided, That the government shall endeavor to
implement the free distribution of masks to the general public to guarantee the
full cooperation of every citizen: *Provided* further, That the government shall
endeavor to integrate circular economy strategies in the procurement of
materials or the development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation;

3) Establishment and maintenance of the owners, managers, or administrators of
public spaces, work places and other places frequented by the public of hand
washing facilities or sanitizing stations thereat;

4) Observation by the public of physical distancing measured at least one (1)
meter between individuals whenever in public spaces and in the workplace;

5) The conduct of temperature reading of persons by the owners, managers, or
administrators of workplaces and in all enclosed, semi-enclosed, and open
areas where two or more people shall gather;

6) The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with other government
agencies and the private sector, shall conduct an information and educational
campaign utilizing traditional and online media to disseminate relevant medical
and health information, provide updates on local cases and initiatives of the
government: *Provided*, That all government agencies are directed to create a
communication plan for the better normal to articulate the policies and
interventions to be adopted by the agencies for the information and compliance
of their employees, including the placement of relevant on-site signages and
online information materials which will serve as reminders to observe physical
distancing, practice regular handwashing, and to frequently clean and sanitize
surroundings;

7) Local chief executives of LGUs which are considered as containment zones or
critical zones for the transmission of COVID-19 shall establish testing centers
and procure COVID-19 testing kits, personal protective equipment (PPEs), and
such other necessary equipment and supplies to be used for the conduct of
mass-testing of the population in their respective jurisdictions, including the
establishment of drive-through testing centers, and other contactless modes of
testing for the detection of the COVID-19 or other infectious diseases;

8) The DOH, with assistance from LGUs, Department of the Interior and Local
Government (DILG), and Department of National Defense (DND), shall
conduct tracing of individuals who have had contact with or have been exposed
to a person who has been confirmed positive for the COVID-19 or similar
infectious diseases. The DOH shall also conduct contact tracing for individuals
suspected of or probably afflicted with the disease to ensure prompt
containment of the disease;

9) The DOH shall establish and manage government-operated and -maintained
quarantine facilities for individuals who are suspected of being infected or have
tested positive for COVID-19 or other infectious diseases and who, pursuant
to the guidelines formulated by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) rtor the
Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases and/or as prescribed under
DOH regulations, should undergo mandatory quarantine, including those who
are not able to observe quarantine protocols in their respective places of
residences;

10) Local chief executives of LGUs shall continuously implement existing
measures, including quarantine measures, in dealing with residents or any
other individual in the locality manifesting COVID-19 symptoms, or who has
been classified as a suspect, probable, or a confirmed case of COVID-19
infection by authorized testing or medical facilities;
11) The National Government shall establish and implement infection prevention and control protocol, biosafety and waste management measures;

12) Local chief executives of LGUs shall continuously monitor the level of transmission among residents in their jurisdiction; Provided, That the standards provided in Republic Act (RA) No. 10173, also known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012”, as well as legal and ethical standards, and existing DOH guidelines are observed and complied with;

13) The National Government shall recognize the vulnerabilities of certain sectors of the population such as the elderly, pregnant, children and persons deprived of liberty, and shall provide safeguards and assistance to them, including access to mental and psychological health services; and

14) Government offices and the owners, managers, or administrators of workplaces and other places frequented by the public shall implement regular cleaning and disinfection of transport conveyances, terminals and similar facilities including elevators and escalators, particularly frequently touched surfaces thereat;

B. Management of Spaces

1) Public gatherings are prohibited subject to the exceptions as may be provided under the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act;

2) LGUs shall regulate public gatherings as well as the flow of people in government-managed public spaces, subject to the guidelines set in the IRR of this Act and, if necessary, issue a Better Normal Permit to provide the limitations on such public gathering in order to prevent disease transmission; Provided, That activities of agencies of the National Government or their provincial or regional offices involved in the delivery of services or distribution
of all forms of public assistance or the facilitation thereof shall in no way be
impeded nor be required a permit from any government authority: *Provided,
further*, That gatherings under this category shall observe the Universal and
Mandatory Safety Measures enumerated in paragraph (A) of this Section:
*Provided, furthermore*, That LGUs shall provide the national, regional, and
provincial agencies and their attached offices the necessary assistance to
carry out their activities requiring the presence or participation of a significant
number of the population: *Provided, finally*, That exceptions to these
prohibitions, intended for public purpose or interest, shall be provided by the
IRR of this Act;

3) Privately-organized gatherings in privately-managed spaces shall comply with
the guidelines set forth in the IRR of this Act, including the need to apply for a
Better Normal Permit from the concerned LGU, if necessary: *Provided*, That
such guidelines shall consider the nature of the gathering, number of expected
attendees, size of the venue, and other reasonable parameters that will ensure
compliance with physical distancing and other measures to prevent
transmission of the virus. The Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures
prescribed under this Act which are applicable to gatherings shall be complied
with at all times during a privately-organized gathering;

4) Land use planning and zoning shall be strictly observed in the implementation
of this Act;

5) To increase spaces in facilities that are allowed to reopen to accommodate
social distancing guidelines and to promote health-seeking behavior, no
designated smoking areas shall be allowed henceforth. RA No. 9211, also
known as the "Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003", is hereby amended for this purpose; and

6) Management of spaces shall likewise include the establishment of urban gardens, and green spaces not only for people to enjoy a clean and healthy environment, but also to enable them to grow their own sources of food and nutrition.

C. Management of Public Transportation

1) The appropriate government agencies shall monitor the implementation of the Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures in the management of public transportation terminals and facilities, including queuing or ticketing lines, ticketing offices, as well as the interiors of public utility vehicles, mass transportations, and private vehicles covered by app-based transportation network services, and by their respective drivers, conductors and passengers;

2) The operation of motorcycle taxis shall remain suspended to prevent the spread of the virus through shared helmets and close physical contact between passengers and drivers;

3) Passengers in all types of public transportation vehicles shall be required to sanitize their hands prior to boarding the vehicle, shall be seated a seat apart and wear face masks while inside the vehicle;

4) Contact-less payment mechanisms shall be promoted such as the use of money trays and automatic fare collection systems to minimize the risk of transmission of the virus;

5) Agencies and authorities tasked to manage transport hubs such as airports, ports, harbors, and the like shall coordinate with the concerned LGUs in the
implementation of the Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures herein
provided and shall consider the following special measures:

i. Establishment of public health corridors in airports and ports;

ii. Mandatory body temperature reading for all arriving and departing
passengers;

iii. Mandatory quarantine at home or in an authorized government facility
for all arriving passengers;

iv. Mandatory collection of data for the maintenance of a database of
information for contact-tracing purposes only;

v. Thorough sanitizing and disinfection of all arriving and departing
vessels;

vi. Mandatory regular testing of all employees, personnel, staff, and crew
attached to vessels and those who have assisted passengers; and,

vii. Mandatory conduct of rapid testing for arriving and departing
passengers.

6) National Government authorities in coordination with the stakeholders of the
transport sector shall establish dedicated lanes along roads, avenues,
highways, and other transport infrastructure networks to give priority to
healthcare, emergency, peace and order, and supply-chain vehicles
transporting individuals, goods, equipment, or those used in the pursuit of
services deemed essential and critical; and

7) LGUs and appropriate government development authorities having
jurisdiction over roadways or highways, in coordination with the Department
of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), shall create green lanes within three
(3) months from the effectivity of this Act for the use of motorcycles, scooters,
bicycles, and similar micromobile devices to reduce the public's dependence on mass or public transportation: Provided, That passengers and users of the green lanes shall observe prescribed speed limits set by the LGUs or the development authority.

D. Better Normal for Schools and Education Institutions

1) The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are authorized to determine the start of the academic year 2020 to 2021 for all public and private schools, state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), private colleges and universities, and other learning institutions;

2) All public and private education institutions including private and public universities and colleges shall formulate, develop and adopt a flexible learning approach which is designed to meet students' needs, capabilities of faculty members and conditions on the ground, without prejudice to the adoption of measures for online learning;

3) The DepEd shall develop, implement and promote a flexible learning program for K-12 students in all public and private schools, taking into consideration the capability of the school and its teachers in delivering such program, and the accessibility of learning materials, either physical or electronic, to the students. The flexible learning program shall be geared towards limiting physical contact among the school population and minimizing the impact on the potential for learning and instruction between students and teachers: Provided, That students shall not be penalized for their inability to access and participate in electronic or digital means of learning due to limitations in connectivity or unavailability of equipment: Provided, further, That, television (TV) and radio
programs done in partnership between DepEd, National Council for Children
Television, Early Childhood Community Development Center, higher
education institutions (HEIs) and pertinent cooperatives and organizations and
with the assistance of licensed TV and radio broadcast stations shall serve as
alternative platforms for learning;

4) The CHED shall monitor the implementation of flexible learning programs for
all HEIs, SUCs and LCUs. HEIs shall continue to exercise academic freedom
and levels of autonomy in the governance of their own academic affairs:
Provided, That students shall not be penalized for their inability to access or
participate in electronic or digital means of learning due to limitations in
connectivity or unavailability of equipment;

5) The National Government shall allocate funding for the research, training of
faculty, curriculum development, monitoring and evaluating, benchmarking,
and the development of systems for learning continuity during times of crisis
such as the occurrence of a pandemic. Such funding shall be made available
by the National Government, from the existing budgetary allocation for the K-
12 and other similar programs, and made available to higher education
institutions, including those organized as stock corporations, local research
institutes, academic organizations, LGUs, school boards, and individual
researchers through an application process to be prescribed by the DepEd and
the CHED: Provided, That for the benefit of learners who have hearing
impairment, the full participation of deaf linguistics organizations and deaf
cooperatives shall be required in the development of learning materials;

6) Subject to consultation with the DepEd, CHED, and the Technical Education
and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), all face-to-face classes and group
school activities, including sports, athletics, cultural, and academic meets, exhibitions, competitions as well as extra-curricular field or exposure trips and student exchanges shall remain suspended unless otherwise officially declared permissible by competent authorities without prejudice to the academic freedom and levels of autonomy enjoyed by HEIs in the management and conduct of their academic affairs;

7) Digital learning shall be promoted by the National Government in coordination with telecommunications companies and internet service providers; and,

8) Public and private education institutions including private colleges and universities and other accredited learning and training institutions shall prioritize the establishment of online platforms for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) programs.

E. Management of Cultural and Heritage Spaces

Digital platforms shall be used to consolidate resources and cultural forms in public spaces, to create an archive of oral histories, visual ethnographies, philosophical discourse, that shall be made available to the public for virtual appreciation. Online promotion of cultural programs, performances, exhibitions and enhancement of existing public arts and monuments shall be highly encouraged.

F. Better Normal for Private Commercial and Industrial Workplaces

1) The National Government, in coordination with the LGUs, shall maintain databases on all private commercial, industrial, and other businesses operating in their areas of jurisdiction. The database shall include information such as the number of employees, working hours, workspace conditions, office
floor areas, and other information necessary to ensure compliance with physical distancing and other protocols prescribed by this Act to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 virus;

2) All private commercial, industrial, and other forms of businesses shall be required to submit a Management Plan to the concerned LGU which shall determine the said business’s compliance with the necessary safeguards and the Universal Safety Measures provided under this Act: Provided, That the review of all Management Plans shall be conducted promptly upon submission to allow establishments to resume operations as soon as possible: Provided further, That the Management Plan shall integrate circular economy strategies in the procurement of materials or the development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation: Provided, furthermore, That LGUs are authorized to conduct periodic inspection of private commercial, industrial and other businesses operating within their territorial jurisdiction to ensure compliance of these businesses with the Universal and Mandatory Safety Measures and other standards and protocols prescribed under this Act and its IRR; and,

3) All private commercial, industrial and other businesses shall implement their Management Plan and shall incorporate alternative work arrangements such as work-from-home schemes in applicable industries to lessen by at least fifty percent (50%) the number of employees required to report to their workplaces physically. For the private sector, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall standardize the template for and the required contents of the said Management Plan. The LGUs shall be in charge of monitoring the implementation of this provision.

G. Better Normal Governance Measures
1) Various forms of electronic governance or e-governance mechanisms shall be established to facilitate continuous and efficient transactions between and among government agencies, and the private sector, as well as in the delivery of socio-economic services including the utilization of online payment system, appointment-based transactions, the Philippine national public key infrastructure, electronic business permits and licensing systems, electronic procurement system, electronic management systems for human resources, records, accounting, as well as other ICT-enabled systems and solutions for effective and efficient e-governance.

An internet based electronic payment facility and gateway, such as e-money and similar platforms, shall be utilized in collecting taxes, fees, tolls, imposts, and other revenues and in paying for goods, services, and other disbursements. Government offices and government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) that are already partially applying this kind of digitized payment mechanism must improve the current system used in order to accommodate the increase in the number of transactions. The government shall establish online payment systems and may partner with payment solutions providers.

2) Services that are needed to facilitate business registration-related transactions shall be made efficient by integrating all agencies involved in business registration such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Social Security System (SSS), Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth), LGUs, and other permit and license issuing agencies.
3) The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas shall accelerate the adoption by all payment service providers of the National Quick Response (QR) Code standard to hasten the interoperability of QR-driven payment services and eliminate the need for merchants and clients to maintain several accounts.

4) A government online procurement system that encompasses all procurement processes involving bidding, contract agreements, and payment for services or supplies, and which shall contain a tracking and customer service mechanism shall also be developed.

5) Where applicable, the relevant provisions of RA No. 11032, or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018, shall supplement the provisions of this Act.

H. Other Aspects of Better Normal

1) The government shall provide important information related to health emergencies to persons with disabilities (PWDs) and institutionalize assistive mechanisms for them such as requiring sign interpretation in TV news broadcasts and live streamed public information programs and content. In relation thereto, a system of standards for assistive mechanisms for PWDs shall be planned, financed, implemented, and monitored. For purposes of this Act, individuals who assist PWDs such as sign language interpreters shall be recognized as front liners providing essential services;

2) The government must likewise provide sufficient support for culture bearers and masters, and those engaged in craftsmaking such as weaving and carving.

3) Emergency cash subsidies shall be given to artists and cultural performers, such as those in the performing arts, cinema, literature, visual arts,
contemporary arts or expressions, audiovisual and multimedia, and scholars, critics, curators, and cultural workers.

4) The local chief executives of LGUs, in coordination with the private sector, shall implement, monitor and maintain a planned schedule for people traveling to and from their respective workplaces or residences located in the LGU and if possible or applicable, the charter of various means of transportation for the use of residents and workers to and from their respective destinations.

5) There shall be a continuous implementation of alternative work arrangements in the public and private sectors based on the nature of work of an employee, the workplace and its location or place, and its distance to and from the residences of employees.

6) The implementation of Republic Act No. 9003, also known as the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000”, in relation to the proper disposal and management of wastes resulting from activities related to the implementation of this Act shall be strictly monitored: Provided, That the National Government shall implement regulations on the manufacture and importation, use, recycling of all single-use plastics used in trade or commerce in business enterprises, as well as by retailers and consumers: Provided, further, That the government shall conduct a research and develop single-use plastic packaging alternatives and provide incentives to plastic industries that will shift to other manufacturing activities.

7) Adaptation measures such as the establishment of multi-hazard early warning systems that reach out the last mile, capacity building of national experts, construction of rainwater harvesters in government owned- and managed buildings and spaces, and the establishment of seedbanks and vegetable
gardens in available open spaces in local communities, rooftops of
government-owned and -managed buildings shall be implemented

8) The National Government, through relevant government agencies such as the
DICT, DTI, DILG, in accordance with their respective mandates, and with the
support of the private sector, shall plan for and undertake universal
digitalization as well as promote and implement programs and innovations to
accelerate public access and connectivity including the progressive roll-out of
the National Broadband Program and the Free Public Internet Access Program
down to the barangay level.

9) The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), National Disaster Risk Reduction and
Management Council (NDRRMC), DILG through the Persons with Disabilities
Affairs Offices (PDAOs), and DOH shall gather, compile, update, and publish
online, disaggregated demographic and mapping data on deaf and all other
persons with disabilities nationwide in the context of the pandemic.

10) In compliance with Section 10 of RA No. 11106, or the "Filipino Sign Language
Act", ensure the continued placement of TV insets in news and public affairs
programs through video remote interpreting on TV as well as online streaming
platforms, and promote as well deaf-produced/-signed pandemic and
quarantine related public information.

SEC. 7. **Role of LGUs.** - LGUs shall, in their respective territorial jurisdictions,
be primarily responsible for instituting localized policies and legislation in accordance
with the better normal measures prescribed under Section 6 hereof and other related
directives and issuances of the National Government. Local governments must ensure
that their policy-making process shall involve the participation of all stakeholders.
Consultations with the communities shall be pursued as a matter of course to ensure
that such policies respond properly to the needs of the people. In this regard, the LGUs shall have the following responsibilities:

a) Ensure the proper implementation of the provisions of this Act within their respective territorial jurisdiction;

b) Enact the necessary and appropriate ordinance for the local implementation of the provisions of this Act, including the promotion of low-contact payment mechanisms such as the use of electronic money (e-money) as a medium of exchange in collecting taxes, fees, tolls, imposts, and other revenues and in paying for goods, services, and other disbursements: Provided, That the LGU shall make the necessary arrangements with the relevant government agencies and government-recognized regulating entities to acquire e-money payment capability;

c) Require, by ordinance, merchants or business entities in their localities to obtain and maintain e-money payment system capability that is accessible by phone or other access devices, as a prerequisite for the issuance of a Better Normal Permit, or the approval of new or renewal of business permits;

d) Create a Better Normal Task Force to monitor the compliance of the private businesses and offices with the provisions of this Act;

e) Prior to the issuance of a Better Normal Permit for a physical gathering, orient the applicant thereof of the guidelines on the management of spaces as provided in Section 6 (B) of this Act, which shall be observed throughout the entire gathering;

f) In cooperation or with the assistance of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), initiate information campaigns on public transportation schemes in their localities in accordance with Section 6 (C) of this Act;
g) Establish the Inter-Local Government Unit Task Force as authorized by
and in accordance with the appropriate guidelines of the DILG;

h) In coordination with the DICT, foster, support and facilitate the effective
roll-out of free wi-fi access points and other infrastructure needed for the
National Broadband Program. The LGUs shall likewise foster, support, and
facilitate the construction of common towers and other passive
telecommunication infrastructure in strategic locations for the use of
telecommunications service providers to propagate connectivity and provide
quality telecommunications services to their constituents in accordance with
existing laws, and the policies and standards set by the DICT;

i) In coordination with DOH, provide immediate assistance to all reported
COVID-confirmed residents and patients;

j) In coordination with the DOH, establish and maintain a functional local
epidemiology and surveillance unit pursuant to RA No. 11332, also known as
the "Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public
Health Concern Act". In accordance with Section 6(A) of this Act, the LGU shall
specify the conduct of contact tracing systems for suspect, probable, and
confirmed COVID-19 cases, or other similar diseases, to avoid delay in contact
tracing and to ensure the prompt management and containment of the disease.
In all cases, the LGU shall ensure that disease surveillance and contact tracing
procedures are in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012;

k) In coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA), plan and
implement a resilient and local food supply system that: (1) involves a shorter,
more diversified food supply chain that is resilient to future shocks; (2) ensures
food access shall remain at, or swiftly returns to, pre-pandemic levels, and, (3)
mitigates the impact on vulnerable food systems actors, including small-holder producers, informal traders, and low-income and marginalized groups. The plan shall promote the establishment of community food gardens, local food production and shorter supply chains, the strengthening of urban-rural linkages, and the promotion of diversity in the food supply chain and channels of distribution.

1) Establish and manage the use of cultural spaces to serve as venues and facilities for keeping the creativity of the people alive, affording people to exercise their freedom of expression, enhancing psycho-spiritual health, and providing them opportunities for meaningful participation in community life, even while observing the universal mandatory standards and protocols during the time of a pandemic: Provided, That such cultural space must meet the minimum criteria of facilities or landscapes that are open to the public: Provided further, That cultural spaces are adaptable, do not compromise on quality, able to enhance a sense of community, and are inclusive, accessible and welcoming.

SEC. 8. Role of the Private Sector –

a) All private businesses, offices and establishments shall submit a Management Plan, to the concerned LGU where the entity conducts operations or holds office not later than fifteen (15) days upon resumption of their operations. Such Management Plan shall contain, among others, the following information:

1) Total number of employees in the specific workplace, office, or branch covered by the plan;
2) Overall strategy for the reporting of the workforce which may be on rotational, staggered, tele-commuting, remote or on work-from-home basis, including the relevant time specifications and periods as well as the number of workers who shall be allowed ingress and egress;

3) Total number of workers at any given time in the workplace or office on a daily basis;

4) Number of workers per area of space and the spacing mechanisms to be implemented in compliance with physical distancing protocols, if applicable;

5) Mechanisms for maintaining personal hygiene and cleanliness among the employees and in workstations or areas including the availability of handwashing or hand sanitizing implements;

6) Physical changes in space management introduced or to be introduced in the workplaces to protect employees and to implement physical distancing such as plastic barriers between customers and personnel or between and among customers or other individuals within the workplace;

7) Signages, reminders, and other information, in accessible formats, including Filipino sign language, and/or easy-to-understand text in the appropriate written language, installed or posted in key areas of the workplace to serve as constant reminders for workers to practice the mandatory health, safety and sanitation practices;

8) Mechanisms for maintaining physical distancing in communally shared areas in the workplace, such as cafeterias, restrooms, conference rooms, prayer rooms, breastfeeding stations, including safeguards
against sharing of tools, implements, utensils, equipment, and supplies;

9) Physical and PPEs provided or to be provided by businesses to their respective employees in order to inclusively implement the practices mandated in this Act;

10) Mechanisms for managing employees exhibiting symptoms or confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19 infection, including the company or business unit’s system for contact tracing;

11) The Workers’ Compensation Plan which provides how workers are required to work and will be compensated while on quarantine;

12) Mechanisms to implement a circular economy in the workplace such as the: i) reduction on the consumption of non-renewable resources; ii) development or design of products that minimize waste; iii) re-use of materials and expansion of the useful life of products; iv) prevention of harmful emissions to soil, air and water; and iv) the installation of segregation and recycling facilities;

13) Mechanisms for a healthier working environment such as but not limited to the use of natural and non-toxic materials, improved indoor air quality and ventilation, and the more efficient use of space; and

14) Measures to be implemented to implement a “zero to landfill” policy such as setting targets for reducing waste production; implementing sorting and recycling for all office waste; ensuring that recycled waste is composed or recycled; or observing sharing economy practices such as reusing and recycling;
b) All private businesses, offices and establishments shall require all
employees to subject themselves to a thermal or temperature scan prior to
being allowed entry. Employees whose recorded body temperature render
them suspect for symptoms of COVID-19 shall be asked to undergo the
necessary quarantine protocols and given the appropriate medical advice,
or subjected to the appropriate health care in coordination with authorized
medical facilities;

c) Private entities resuming their operations and requiring the physical
presence of their employee subject to their Management Plan shall provide
shuttle or transportation services under the conditions applicable to public
transportation operators;

d) There shall be an employee case management protocol to be observed on
the treatment of patients or of persons suspected to be afflicted with the
disease in accordance with prevailing DOH guidelines: Provided, That
patient-doctor confidentiality shall be suspended in order to aid contact
tracing and in the identification of possible COVID-19 patients.

e) Employers who opt to conduct testing may do so in a representative
sample: Provided, That the cost of testing is borne by the employer and
not charged to the Philhealth;

f) In the provision of assistance and financing schemes, the lack of capacity
of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the implementation
of their respective Management Plan shall be taken into consideration.
The implementation of mandatory public health standards and other
health-promoting practices committed by business owners in their respective
Management Plans shall be the joint responsibility of the owners or management of establishments and their respective LGUs.

Sec. 9. Specific Responsibilities of Particular National Government Offices, their respective Attached Agencies, and GOCCs. In addition to the duties and mandates of National Government agencies already prescribed in the other sections of this Act, the following agencies and offices are mandated to carry out the following responsibilities, to wit:

B. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

The PSA shall fast-track the implementation of the provisions of Republic Act No. 11055, or the Philippine Identification System Act, and Republic Act No. 11315, or the Community-Based Monitoring System Act, to facilitate the profiling, contact-tracing, and distribution of forms of assistance under the better normal period after the lifting of enhanced community quarantine measures.

The PSA shall coordinate with the DILG, Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and LGUs to cull information from the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) that may be utilized in fast-tracking efforts geared towards the full implementation of the Philippine Identification System Act.

The PSA may likewise cull information contained in the existing databases of the government on birth certificates, passports, voter’s registration, GSIS, SSS, PAGIBIG, Philhealth through data-sharing arrangements, subject to the rules and procedures that shall be established by the National Privacy Commission (NPC) for purposes of facilitating the implementation of the Philippine Identification System Act.

B. Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)

The DICT shall fast track the progressive and full implementation of the National Broadband Program (NBP) by immediately establishing and implementing a
nationwide and comprehensive information and communications technology (ICT) action plan that shall involve all stakeholders, including the major TELCOs, small TELCOs, internet service providers (ISPs), and developers of technology and digital applications, with the end in view of widening and improving connectivity not only for the fight against COVID-19 but also for the long-term development needs of the country. The NBP shall serve to enable the widespread accessibility to and utilization of the internet for essential and significant public and private transactions, including learning and instruction: Provided, That the NBP must be reliable and sufficiently able to support a high volume of video streaming, in compliance with Republic Act No. 11106.

Further, the DICT shall immediately formulate and implement an industry-wide policy for the TELCOS (both major and small), ISPs, and technology applications that aims to widen connectivity in all sectors of society, particularly the poor, the unconnected, the underserved households in poor urban communities, geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs), and the MSMEs: Provided, That in relation to the widening of connectivity to all sectors of society, the principle behind the NBP shall be adhered to. To achieve the goal of providing connectivity to all sectors of the economy, incentives shall be provided to new market that shall invest in unserved areas: Provided, further, That such incentives shall result in affordable prices for internet usage: Provided finally, That the following key policies shall be implemented:

a) Provision of incentives to TELCOs which serve the poor and underserved MSMEs nationwide via WiFi technology by implementing a fair and reasonable Spectrum User Fee (SUF) scheme for WiFi in accordance with existing rules and regulations governing the use of WiFi;
b) Implement its departmental policies and initiatives for the propagation of Common Tower and the sharing of Passive Telecommunication Infrastructure in the telecommunications industry;

c) Implementation of the provision for fiber optic transmission rental from the National Grid Corporation to new telecommunications industry players to accelerate development therein;

d) Implementation of the spectrum sharing arrangement among and between TELCOs, at intra-industry fee agreements regulated by NTC, to fully and optimally utilize the usage of licensed frequencies that are presently assigned to existing major TELCOs;

e) Full use of the Internet Bandwidth supply made available by the Luzon Bypass infrastructure to provide connectivity to all government offices and to the unserved and underserved areas of the country; and,

f) undertake contracts and other arrangements with private sector, including but not limited to the middle and last mile providers, the government-owned and controlled corporations or LGUs for the provision of internet bandwidth sourced separately from, or in conjunction with, the Luzon Bypass Infrastructure, should it become necessary, to provide connectivity to end-users through multi-year obligations;

g) Promulgate joint policies with the DILG that mandate a simplified and streamlined permitting process for telecommunication and broadband infrastructure;

h) Promulgate and implement policies for effective cross-sector infrastructure sharing, such as, but not limited to, coordinated or joint infrastructure development, dark fiber leasing, and joint venture;
i) Use of a fair pricing scheme to all stakeholders, giving priority to new incoming players, particularly those that serve the poor and underserved communities and GIDAs.

In pursuit of the above policy directives, the DICT shall undertake the following:

i. Implement programs that shall facilitate the setting-up of online, internet-based systems and platforms in offices of the public sector, including schools, universities and even barangay halls, across all levels;

ii. Assist public sector offices and agencies in the upgrading of their existing internet and other ICT infrastructure;

iii. Establish, in coordination with other government agencies, learning modules and relevant ICT solutions and systems to assist public sector employees, and MSMEs in the use of relevant technological and digital platforms that can assist in the various cycles of their business model; and,

iv. Direct the NTC to implement all relevant policy directives under this Act, including, but not limited to, those pertaining to the enhancement of connectivity, improvement of internet speed and quality of service, and development of the digital infrastructure of the country.

The DICT in coordination with the DOH shall also promote research towards the development and establishment of an online system or the creation of a digital/phone-based application (downloadable by the public) for case monitoring, mapping, and contact-tracing that shall be integrated with global positioning system (GPS) activated real-time technologies to monitor and track individuals, alert the user of location-based risks and provide the user with updated and constant reminders and information for their health and safety. Any technology created for case monitoring, mapping and
contact tracing shall be consistent with Republic Act No. 10173. The DICT shall leverage the existing systems used for case monitoring, mapping and contact tracing. All systems, initiated by the public or private sector, shall be interconnected to each other and shall be subject to the policies and standards issued by the DICT.

The DICT shall take the lead in the establishment of e-government systems and shall fast track its plans to build the necessary infrastructure to promote and facilitate digitization of the government and interoperability of government services and systems, especially those located in the provinces and rural areas. Under this Act, government offices and agencies shall develop, introduce, and implement solutions and systems to effectively facilitate government transactions through various online channels or contact-less mechanisms. This includes the uploading of pertinent government forms and their completion and/or submission thru websites or online portals in order to minimize the need for face-to-face transactions or physical travels or visits to government offices. Government agencies are hereby mandated to utilize creative adaptive technology that shall allow full access of PWDs to government services and are compliant with relevant existing laws, and practices. This includes the establishment of a system of standards for Filipino sign language interpreting.

C. Department of Trade and Industry

The DTI in coordination with the DICT is hereby mandated to establish a digital application for MSMEs to further enhance the conduct of e-commerce activities. The following measures shall be undertaken to assist MSMEs:

a) Regulatory bodies and other concerned government agencies and instrumentalities shall allow the immediate use of online platforms for application, processing, approval and release of loans;
b) The use of video/teleconferencing, emails, and other online platforms shall be allowed and shall be considered as compliance with government rules and regulations, and the requirements of meetings such as service of meeting notices, quorum and attendance requirements, and the registration of votes, on matters before the body conducting the meeting.

c) The DTI shall provide special support programs that will assist MSMEs and startups in achieving business recovery and resiliency including the following:

1. Capacity-building in digital skills;
2. Support for digitalizing operations;
3. Knowledge transfer and information-sharing with MSMEs; and,
4. Startup and MSMEs innovation aid.

The DTI in coordination with the DICT and the DOH shall also promote the shifting, prioritization, or increase in government support or funding for the manufacturing sector, including MSMEs engaged in the production of healthcare, hygiene, and safety related goods, and the establishment of real-time online information exchange between private hospitals and medical facilities in the supply, demand, and procurement of the same: Provided, That concerned government agencies shall promote and integrate circular economy strategies in the procurement of materials or the development of mechanisms for hygiene and sanitation in the implementation of this Act.

The provision of government support could come in the form of: (1) integrated and uninterrupted supply chain networks; (2) reliable online market platforms; (2) stable universal broadband; (3) digital IDs or digital signature infrastructure; and (4) secured mobile payment channels, among others.

D. Department of Health
The DOH shall institutionalize and regulate telemedicine and e-prescription activities, in accordance with relevant rules and regulations. It shall likewise explore technological innovations for certain health services that might be compromised in the new normal setting. It shall promote and support local research on COVID-19 testing and treatment, and the development, manufacture and distribution of a vaccine.

To improve on public sanitation, the DOH shall execute all plans geared at achieving zero open defecation and require all LGUs to report on their achievements of this goal.

E. Local Water Districts and Water Utilities

Considering that water is a basic need in containing the transmission of COVID-19 and similar diseases, the local water districts shall ensure the availability of sufficient water supply in their areas of coverage. In the case of private water utilities, such service providers shall review and recommend the appropriate extension of concession agreements necessary to ensure sufficient water supply in their service areas as well as to fast track sewerage systems as required under Republic Act No. 9275, or the Clean Water Act. Such service providers shall also be required to submit new master plans to reflect a speedier full sewerage, septage and/or wastewater treatment coverage of the metropolis.

F. Department of Public Works and Highways

The DPWH shall take full responsibility for the implementation of the National Sewerage and Septage Management Plan, and shall provide sufficient funds for it. -All highly urbanized cities shall, in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in identify remaining hotspots of fecal transmission and construct the necessary SEC. 10. Gender and Social Equity. - In the implementation of the provisions of this Act, and in its standards, implementing rules and regulations,
special care and consideration shall be given to integrating gender issues and
eliminating all forms of discrimination in the following:

a) Implementation of alternative work arrangements in the public and private
sectors ensuring that DSWD and LGUs attend to possible heightened cases of
gender-based and domestic violence during intermittent mandatory lock-downs or
quarantines;

b) Social protection measures to be instituted for low-income and informal
female and male workers and daily wage earners that ensure restoration of livelihoods
and such other ameliorative measures that shall compensate for temporary loss of
incomes;

c) Sufficient and equal support for both women and men with disabilities,
cognizant that women with disabilities are most disadvantaged and excluded from
access to vital pandemic-related information and assistive acts;

d) Sufficient and equal provision of protective personal equipment (PPE) to
male and female frontline health workers and employees in both health centers and
public and private firms and workplaces; and,

e) Public reproductive health care services and the capacity of maternal health
clinics and midwives to address needs of child-bearers in terms of isolation from
infected patients, lactation and relactation assistance, and sufficient staffing and
facilities for life-saving procedures.

The needs of women in the health care and medical frontline professions shall
be considered in the procurement of PPEs and such other assistive measures such
as access to clean restrooms, reasonable work shifts and equity in wages.
Any sector that may be affected adversely by measures under this Act that would lead to unemployment or industry collapse shall be assisted by the LGUs and interlocal units in alleviating their economic status.

be assisted by the LGUs and interlocal units to bridge their economic status.

SEC. 11. Prohibited Acts.- The following acts and omissions are prohibited under this Act:

a). Failure to wear a mask while in public spaces or in the workplace;

b) Failure to comply with the provisions on the management of spaces required in Section 6 (B) of this Act;

c) Failure to implement and monitor the proper implementation of Management of Public Transportation provided for under Section 6(C) of this Act;

d) Failure to comply with Section 6(D)(2) of this Act and other issuances, circulars, memorandum and directives of DepED and CHED in relation to the holding of classes during COVID-19 pandemic;

e) Failure to implement and monitor the proper implementation of Workplace-Specific Protocols and Measures mentioned in Section 8 of this Act;

f) Failure to submit the Management Plan within the period required in Section 9(a) of this Act;

g) Failure of the employer, supervisor/manager or any person in charge to abide by the Case Management Protocols as provided for in Section 9 of this Act.

SEC. 12. Penalties. - Any person, natural or juridical, who violates the provisions under Section 11 of this Act shall, upon conviction, suffer the following penalties:
a) A fine of One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) upon issuance of a citation ticket or one (1) day mandatory community service for violation of Section 11(a) of this Act;

b) Imprisonment of one (1) month and one day to two (2) months or a fine ranging from One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) to Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court for violation Section 11(b) to (g) of this Act.

In case the violation is committed by a partnership, corporation, association or any juridical person, the partner, president, director or manager who consents to or knowingly tolerates such violation shall be directly liable and responsible.

c) Suspension of the entity's permit to operate for any violation of Section 11(f):

Provided, That the entity shall be given a period of fifteen (15) days to submit the required Management Plan: Provided further, That failure to comply within the 15-day period shall be meted a fine of Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00);

d) Imprisonment of not less than two (2) months but not more than six (6) months, or a fine of not less than Five thousand pesos (P5,000.00) but not more than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00), or both imprisonment and fine, at the discretion of the court, in case the offender is a government official or employee.

SEC. 13. Appropriations.- The amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned government agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - The respective heads or the duly authorized representatives of the following agencies shall compose the Technical Working Group (TWG) which shall be established within fifteen (15) days from the publication of this Act to craft the IRR and shall promulgate the rules and regulations
necessary for the effective implementation of this Act within fifteen (15) days after the establishment of the TWG:

a) Department of Interior and Local Government;
b) Department of Finance;
c) Department of Trade and Industry;
d) National Economic Development Authority;
e) Department of Labor and Employment;
f) Department of Information and Communications Technology;
g) Department of Budget and Management;
h) Department of Transportation;
i) Department of Education;
j) Department of Health;
k) Civil Service Commission;
l) Commission on Higher Education; and,
m) the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases

SEC. 15. Congressional Oversight Committee. — A Joint Congressional Oversight Committee composed of four (4) members of each House to be appointed by the Senate President and the House Speaker, respectively, shall exercise an oversight function over the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 16. Sunset Clause. — This Act shall expire after a three-year period from the date of its effectivity, or sooner upon official declaration of the President of the Philippines issued upon recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging and Infectious Diseases that the prevailing the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, or similar infectious diseases, has already been
eradicated: Provided, That standards, protocols, and other measures prescribed by this Act which are not rendered useless or impractical by the eradication of COVID-19 may continue to be implemented.

SEC. 17. Separability Clause. — If, for any reason or reasons, any part or provision of this Act shall be declared as unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 18. Repealing Clause. — All provisions of existing laws, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 19. Effectivity Clause. — This Act shall take effect immediately upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) a newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,