

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Resolution No. 1584



Introduced by Rep. **CESAR V. SARMIENTO**

**RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING ALL CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF PASSENGERS
USING THE COUNTRY'S PORT SYSTEM OR RORO NETWORK**

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 5 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty and property and the promotion of the general welfare are essentials for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy;

WHEREAS, due to the inclement weather brought about by typhoons *Urduja* and *Vinta* last December 2017 and typhoon *Agaton* this month, maritime trips were either delayed or cancelled and thousands of passengers, who wish to spend or have already spent the holiday season in their hometowns, were stranded at various ports nationwide;

WHEREAS, many of these passengers, especially those who are poor or marginalized, were caught unprepared for such a scenario and, hence, were forced to endure being stranded and to shoulder additional expenses to pay for meals and other necessities for themselves and their families;

WHEREAS, although safety is the primordial concern behind government suspension of sea travel, having stranded passengers in our ports is a recurring situation in times of inclement weather and even in times when the ship is unable to travel due to the operator's fault - issues that can actually be addressed by proper planning and coordination among concerned agencies;

WHEREAS, while there is a DOTC-DTI Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 s. 2012, mandating the Air Passenger Bill of Rights and a measure pending in Congress to institutionalize the said policy, along with the pending bill mandating the Taxi Passenger Bill of Rights, there is no similar undertaking yet to protect our maritime passengers; and

WHEREAS, pending the enactment of a Maritime Passenger Bill of Rights, the existing mandates of the concerned government offices can already immediately address the gap for the welfare of the commuting public.

NOW, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives adopt this resolution, strongly urging all concerned government agencies - the **Department of Transportation along with the Maritime Industry Authority, Philippine Ports Authority, Cebu Ports Authority and Philippine**

Coast Guard, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Trade and Industry, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, the Department of Information and Communications Technology, and the National Telecommunications Commission, pursuant to their existing mandates, (1) to intensify their planning and coordination; (2) to work with and recognize the noble efforts and practices of the Philippine Red Cross and some ship owners or operators and RORO bus companies to improve the plight of the stranded passengers; and (3) to provide mechanisms that will protect the rights and promote the welfare of passengers using the country's port system or RORO network, including but not limited to:

- 1) Pre-positioning of relief goods at the ports;
- 2) Setting aside or allocation of available funds (e.g. revenues of the Philippine Ports Authority) to provide for facilities and services needed by the passengers stranded at the ports, such as but not limited to, meals, water, hygiene kits, temporary shelter, charging stations, load, internet connection, clean comfort rooms, health services, etc.;
- 3) Improving the system of disseminating information or travel advisories to passengers during inclement weather;
- 4) Intensifying efforts against companies surreptitiously allowing RORO buses to travel despite government advisories, resulting to passengers being stranded at the ports;
- 5) Protecting passengers from stalls charging high prices for food and other necessities and determining those services which should be provided for free;
- 6) Providing a system of redress and process of submitting complaints when trip is delayed or cancelled due to the ship operator's fault;
- 7) Determining the liability of ship operators and bus companies; and
- 8) Allowing the passengers to travel in an orderly manner immediately after the No Sail Policy is lifted.

Approved.



CESAR V. SARMIENTO