EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our firefighters are real-life heroes. They go above and beyond the call of duty to rescue distressed individuals from burning buildings and wreckages. They protect our properties and halt further damage thereto as may be caused by disastrous fires. In one way or another, our firefighters place their own lives at risk in order to protect the public at large.

According to the Bureau of Fire Protection ("BFP"),\(^1\) the primary agency responsible for fire prevention and firefighting, the country has recorded a total of 77,724 fire incidents, or an average of 15,545 fire incidents every year or 42 fire incidents a day from 2013 to 2017.\(^2\) During this period, the total estimated damage to property reached P23.273 billion or an average of P4.65 billion every year.\(^3\) Worse, 1,257 people were killed, or an average of 251 deaths every year, and the number of injured persons reached 4,239, or an average of 848 persons, suffering from fire-related injuries.\(^4\)

Because of the enormous and risky task of preventing and fighting fire, the BFP is understandably one of the most undermanned agencies of the government.\(^5\) Its current manpower is below the ideal ratio of one (1) firefighter per two thousand (2,000) population.\(^6\) In fact, the actual number of firefighters in the country is described as “short by more than 100 percent.”\(^7\) Not only is the BFP undermanned. It also lacks sufficient number of fire trucks and other Personal Protective Equipment (“PPE”) for its men and women.\(^8\)

Despite these, however, Filipino firefighters are still “among the bravest in battling blazes.”\(^9\) They are “known to charge toward burning structures while others scamper for safety." Unfortunately, our Filipino firefighters themselves are seriously injured, or, even killed, while performing their dangerous jobs.\(^10\)

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3. Id.
4. Id.
5. Id.
6. Id.
7. Id.
8. Id.
9. Id.
10. Id.
Today, with the current pandemic, firefighters are also in the frontline together with our healthcare workers. As one of the first responders, firefighters continue to put themselves at great peril in order to heed the call of their duty.

This legislation seeks to reallocate the salary grade levels of all firefighters of the BFP in recognition of the important role they play in Philippine society. While it is believed that monetary considerations are not what motivates them to perform their duties, it is hoped that by making their jobs more economically rewarding, these real-life heroes will be able to live better and more financially secured lives. It is also hoped that this salary reallocation will address the current manpower shortage of the BFP by attracting more competent individuals to join, and the existing ones to remain loyal to, the said agency.

In view of the foregoing, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

HON. ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES
Representative
3rd District, Quezon City
Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7246

Introduced By Representative ALLAN BENEDICT S. REYES

AN ACT TO UPGRADE THE SALARY SCALES OR LEVELS
OF FIRE OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION, 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. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Fire Officers Salary Upgrade Act of 2020."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – In order to achieve the mission of the Bureau of Fire Protection ("BFP") to "commit to prevent and suppress destructive fires, investigate its causes; enforce Fire Code and other related laws; respond to man-made and natural disasters and other emergencies,"11 its Fire Officers should be properly compensated and their working and living conditions continuously improved.

SECTION 3. Coverage. – This Act shall cover all Fire Officers of the BFP (Fire Officer I to Senior Fire Officer IV), regardless of employment status.

SECTION 4. Upgraded Salary Scales or Levels. – Upon the effectivity of this Act, the salary grade of all Fire Officers of the BFP shall be reallocated by two (2) scales or levels up.

SECTION 5. Hazard Pay. – The Hazard Pay of all Fire Officers of the BFP shall likewise be increased from Five Hundred Forty Pesos (P540.00) to One Thousand Eighty Pesos (P1,080) per month.

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SECTION 6. Appropriation. – The Government shall appropriate such amount as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act. Initial funds required for the implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the savings of the Executive Branch of the government and other possible sources that may be determined by the Office of the President. The subsequent funds needed shall be included in the General Appropriations Act for the year following the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the promulgation of this Act, the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of its provisions shall be formulated by the appropriate government office or agency in coordination with all the stakeholders and covered establishments and institutions.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, administrative orders, rules, regulations, decrees, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby revoked, repealed, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue in operation and remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication the Official Gazette or in the two (2) national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,