

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 752



Introduced by **HON. ROZZANO RUFINO B. BLAZON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to travel is one of the basic rights provided for under the Constitution. Technology and innovation through the years have made travelling much easier and faster. Although some people prefer to travel in the comfort of their own vehicles, the majority of the populace still take public transport as a mode of travel. In the country's large cities, buses, jeepneys and taxis still crowd the streets and are almost always fully loaded. The same can be observed with the MRT, LRT and the PNR train systems in Metro Manila, as well as in our airports and seaports.

The current problems plaguing the transport sector have put the commuters right in the middle of the fray, left with almost no choice but to swallow the bitter pill that has been dealt to them. It is in this light that something should be done to improve the quality of services provided to the riding public.

In the exigency and for the best interest of the public, this bill proposes the creation of the Office of Commuter Affairs at the Department of Transportation - Central Office and in key development areas specified in the Road Map of Philippine Transport.

It is envisioned that this office will be committed to ensure the safety, convenience, comfort and betterment of the over-all travel experience of commuters. Through inter-agency linkages and coordination, much-needed assistance could be readily given to commuters who require so. The office could also help in the easy identification and apprehension of erring and abusive drivers and operators through reports coming from the often-victimized riding public. These and much more could be done to maximize government resources through the proposed office that would ultimately redound to the benefit of our commuters.

With the premises being considered, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


ROZZANO RUFINO B. BLAZON
Representative
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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Introduced by **HON. ROZZANO RUFINO B. BIAZON**

AN ACT
CREATING THE OFFICE OF COMMUTER AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION, DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, AND
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 “Office of Commuter Affairs Act”.

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the rights of commuters and of the riding public in general. Such recognition goes with the government’s responsibility to provide the same with quality services, ensure their safety and offer valuable assistance specially during emergency situations. Toward this end, it is imperative to create a dedicated office in the Department of Transportation to oversee all the above-mentioned concerns.

Sec. 3. *Creation of the Office of Commuter Affairs.* – There is hereby created an office to be known as the Office of Commuter Affairs hereinafter referred to as Office, in the Department of Transportation (DOTr). The Office shall be headed by an Assistant Secretary of the DOTr who shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines. It shall maintain its principal office in Metro Manila and establish regional offices as may be necessary for the proper conduct of its operations.

Sec. 4. *Functions and Responsibilities of the Office.* – The Office of Commuter Affairs shall be tasked to perform the following functions and responsibilities:

- a. Coordinate with other DOTr agencies as well as law enforcement agencies dealing with road, rail, air and maritime transportation to ensure safe, efficient and comfortable travel of commuters;

- b. Operate help desks for the riding public;
- c. Assist the commuters whenever the safety and efficiency of travel is compromised;
- d. Undertake massive commuter education programs for the traveling public to know their rights and responsibilities;
- e. Ensure legal assistance for commuters, when the need arises;
- f. Reactivate the DOTr Action Center by the use of landline, web, social media, radio and television.

Sec. 5. Divisions Under the Office and Their Respective Functions. – the Office of Commuter Affairs shall have the following divisions:

- 1. *Commuter Welfare Division.* – The division that takes charge of ensuring safe, efficient and comfortable travel of passengers from arrival to departure at terminals, train stations, airports and seaports.
- 2. *Commuter Education Division.* – The division that is responsible for public, school and corporate trainings and publications on all modes of transportation.
- 3. *Commuter Communications Division.* – The division tasked to manage the DOTr-Central Office (DOTr-CO) Hotline and call center, website and social media for commuters' complaints, concerns and suggestions.

For this purpose, the existing DOTr Action Center shall be transferred from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Communications to the Office of Commuter Affairs.

- 4. *Legal Assistance Division.* – The division tasked to provide legal assistance to affected commuters and to the Office itself.

Sec. 6. Inter-agency Cooperation. – The Office of Commuter Affairs shall work hand-in-hand with existing DOTr offices, such as the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Communications, the Department's Legal Service as well as the Driver's Academy under the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) on areas of mutual concerns and common interests for the greater good and welfare of the riding public.

Sec. 7. Funding and Manpower Requirements. – Funding for the manpower and operational activities, programs as well as other needs of the Office of Commuter Affairs shall be sourced from the General Appropriations Act (GAA), subject to the applicable accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

Support assistance from the Administrative, Finance and Management Comptrollership Services of the DOTr-CO shall be made available for the operationalization of the said Office.

Sec. 8. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be subsequently declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not so declared and not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, issuances, orders, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Sec. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,