

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

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
**Second Regular Session**

House Bill No. 9271



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**Introduced by REP. JOEY SARTE SALCEDA**

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**AN ACT**  
**CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FISCAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE**  
**SEPARATION, RETIREMENT, AND PENSION BENEFITS OF THE MILITARY**  
**AND UNIFORMED SERVICES PERSONNEL, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,**  
**AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Securing the pension system for military and uniformed personnel (MUP) is an obligation of the State. Because of long-standing issues in the design of the system, however, the MUP pension is facing an imminent existential threat. The possibility that the state will be unable to meet the funding requirements of the MUP pension is real, and its signs are now evident.

Since 2018, pension funding out of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) has exceeded the maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) of the uniformed services. This means that we are now spending more to support retired personnel than we are spending to support the operations of active personnel.

The funding requirements of the MUP pension will only increase as we continue to modernize our national defense unless we make crucial changes to save the pension system.

To keep the pension system alive for current and future pensioners, we must address the system's most significant weaknesses.

First, the pension of the MUP is indexed to the salary of active personnel. Second, unlike other government employees, the MUP are entitled to a retirement pension starting at 20 years of service before reaching retirement age. Finally, unlike the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), the MUP pension is non-contributory in nature.

The urgency of the situation is shown clearly by the size of the problem. The estimated total funding requirement is around **P9.6 trillion** if the status quo is maintained, according to the updated actuarial study by the GSIS.

The size of the problem will continue to expand as we recruit more MUP. The MUP pension is already nine times that of the average pensioner of the Social Security System (SSS) and three times that of the average GSIS pensioner.


To address this staggering fiscal overhang, this bill proposes the following reforms:

(1) **Impose mandatory contributions** as follows:

	<b>Employee share (%)</b>	<b>National Government share (%)</b>
First three (3) years	5	16
Next three (3) years	7	14
Years thereafter	9	12 <i>(in parity with other GSIS members)</i>

- (2) **Pension indexation.** Discontinuation of automatic indexation but shall be reviewed periodically and can be adjusted to a maximum of 1.5%;
- (3) **Adjustments in pensionable age.** MUP pensionable age will be set at 56 years, regardless of years of service;
- (4) **Fund administrator of MUP pension.** A new entity will be established to be the administrator of the MUP Trust Fund while the GSIS will act as its fund manager;
- (5) **Other sources of funding.** Proceeds from the sale/lease of MUP assets, and other identified assets, will be sources of additional funding; and,
- (6) **Tax treatment of the MUP Trust Fund.** Its assets, revenues including all accruals thereto, and benefits paid, shall be exempt from all taxes, assessments, fees, charges, or duties of all kinds. The MUP Trust Fund will enjoy all other tax exemptions that apply to the GSIS as long as the GSIS remains as its fund manager.
- (7) **Insurance coverage.** The bill allows the MUP Trust Fund Committee to create insurance products that specifically cater to the unique risks that uniformed personnel take.

In view of the urgency of the matter, the approval of this bill is urgently sought.

  
**JOEY SARTE SALCEDA**

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

**TITLE I**  
**Declaration of Policy**

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Saving the MUP Pension Act of 2021*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State duly recognizes the vital role of military and uniformed personnel in providing internal and external security, promoting peace and order, ensuring public safety, and further strengthening local government capability, aimed towards the effective delivery of basic services to the citizenry.

The State also recognizes the extraordinary hazards, risks, perils, and dangers that military and uniformed personnel encounter in the performance of their duties.

Towards these ends, the State shall ensure that the retirement scheme of the military and uniformed personnel is secure and equitable by creating a sustainable fiscal framework that will fully support its funding requirements.

In recognition of the role of Military and Uniformed Personnel in nation-building and national security, and to protect them against the unique personal risks that they take in the line of duty, the state shall also ensure that there shall be an adequate, robust, and well-managed insurance system that covers their needs and that of their dependents.

**TITLE II**  
**Definition of Terms**

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

- (a) “Military and Uniformed Personnel (MUP)” shall refer to military and uniformed personnel coming from any of the following services: the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), and the Hydrography branch of the National Mapping and Resource Information Agency (NAMRIA);
- (b) “New Entrants” shall refer to MUP who enter the service after the effectivity of this Act; and
- (c) “Active Service” shall mean Active Service rendered by the MUP under the conditions in Section 3 of Presidential Decree No. 1638, as amended; *Provided*, finally, That Active Service rendered as a cadet, probationary officer, trainee or draftee may be credited for retirement purposes at the option of the MUP concerned, subject to applicable rules and regulations.

**TITLE III**  
**Applicability**

SEC. 4. *Applicability.* – This Act shall apply to all MUP; *Provided*, That, those classified as New Entrants in NAMRIA shall be covered by the Pension System of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

**TITLE IV**  
**Fiscal Sustainability**

SEC. 5. *Fiscal Risk Management.* – To ensure that fiscal risks related to the MUP pension and benefits system are managed and addressed, the Secretary of Finance shall exercise the following functions and powers in addition to the existing mandate of the office:

- (a) Formulate policies, consistent with law, to ensure the fiscal sustainability of the MUP unified pension system;
- (b) Assess possible risks to the fiscal sustainability of the MUP unified pension system and to decide appropriate policy interventions;
- (c) Identify, manage, and control risks that the pension system may pose to the national government’s fiscal position;
- (d) Inform Congress of such risks through the annual Fiscal Risk Statement and propose reforms to address such risks; and
- (e) Obtain information from any officer or office of the national or local governments, government agencies and its instrumentalities, as it may need in the performance of its functions.

**TITLE V**  
**Retirement**

SEC. 6. *Compulsory Retirement.* – The following active MUP shall be compulsorily retired:

- (a) Those who attain the age of sixty (60) or have accumulated at least twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service, whichever is later;
- (b) Those who suffer death in line of duty, who have accumulated at least twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service;
- (c) Those who incur total permanent physical disability in line of duty who have accumulated at least twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service;
- (d) Those who are killed in action, for purposes of survivorship benefits;
- (e) Those who are wounded in action and incur total permanent physical disability as a result thereof; or
- (f) Those subject to attrition, as provided in Section 8 of this Act; *Provided*, That the MUP has accumulated at least twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service.
- (g) Those separated by the appropriate Disciplinary Board under Section 15 of this Act; *Provided*, That the MUP has accumulated at least 20 years of satisfactory Active Service.

SEC. 7. *Voluntary Retirement.* – Upon reaching the age of fifty-six (56) years or the accumulation of at least twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service, any MUP may be retired from Active Service, subject to the approval of an appropriate authority, as provided in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act.

**TITLE VI**  
**Separation**

SEC. 8. *Compulsory Separation.* – The following MUP shall be compulsorily separated from the Active Service:

- (a) Those who attain the age of sixty (60) with less than twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service;
- (b) Those who suffer death in line of duty but with less than twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service;
- (c) Those who incur total permanent physical disability in line of duty but with less than twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service;
- (d) Those subject to attrition, as provided in Section 9 of this Act, with less than twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service; or

- (e) Those separated by the appropriate Disciplinary Board under Section 15 of this Act with less than twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service.

SEC. 9. *Attrition.* – The application of the attrition system under existing laws, rules, or regulations to the MUP unified pension system shall be prescribed in the Rules and Regulations to be used to implement this Act.

SEC. 10. *Voluntary Separation.* – Any MUP, who has not accumulated at least twenty (20) years of satisfactory Active Service, may resign from Active Service, subject to the approval of appropriate authority as provided in the Rules and Regulations to be prescribed to implement this Act.

## **TITLE VII**

### **Retirement and Separation Benefits**

SEC. 11. *Gratuity and Retirement Pay.* – Any MUP who is retired under Title V of this Act, is eligible to receive, and may choose from, any of the following benefits:

- (a) Gratuity Pay. – Equivalent to one (1) month of base and longevity pay of the permanent grade last held for every year of service payable in one (1) lump sum; or
- (b) Retirement Pay. – A monthly retirement pay equivalent to two and one-half percent (2.5%) for each year of Active Service rendered, but not exceeding ninety percent (90%) of the monthly base and longevity pay of the permanent grade last held; *Provided*, further, That upon retirement, the MUP shall be entitled to receive a lump sum equal to eighteen (18) months of the monthly retirement pay, and thereafter receive an annual retirement pay payable in equal monthly installments upon reaching fifty-six (56) years of age; *Provided*, finally, That if the MUP dies before the retirement pay begins to accrue, and is survived by beneficiaries as defined in this Act, the latter shall receive only the derivative benefits thereunder when they accrue.

*Provided*, That pension payments for those retired under Title V shall commence immediately after their retirement from the service, except for those retired due to Attrition under Section 6(f), Honorably Discharged under Section 6(g), and those who avail of Voluntary Retirement under Section 7, all of whom shall only be eligible to receive monthly retirement pay upon reaching the age of fifty-six (56); *Provided*, further, That the retirement pay of those that are Killed in Action under Section 6(d), and those that are Wounded in Action resulting in Total Permanent Disability shall be computed at the rate of ninety percent (90%) of their monthly base and longevity pay regardless of their years in Active Service; *Provided*, finally, That nothing in this Section shall be construed as authorizing adjustment of pay, or payment of any differential in retirement pay, to the MUP who are already retired prior to the approval of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Separation Pay.* – Except for those provided for in Section 14, when any MUP is separated from the service under Section 8 and Section 10 of Title VI of this Act, the MUP, or their survivors as defined in this Act, shall receive a separation pay equivalent to one-month base plus longevity pay of the permanent grade the MUP holds for every year of Active Service; *Provided*, That nothing in this Section shall be construed as authorizing adjustment of pay, or

payment of any differential in separation pay to the MUP who are already retired or separated from the service prior to the approval of this Act as a result of increases in salary granted to the MUP in Active Service.

SEC. 13. *Survivorship Benefits.* – The qualified survivors, as defined in this Act, of a deceased Military or Uniformed Services Personnel retired under Title V, and Section 8(b) and 8(c) of Title VI of this Act, shall be entitled to a monthly annuity equivalent to seventy-five percent (75%) of MUP’s monthly retirement pay which the MUP was receiving to be divided among them in equal shares and with the right of accretion. *Provided,* That the minimum monthly annuity to be received shall be equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the base and longevity pay of the permanent grade last held.

SEC. 14. *Benefits for Death and Total Permanent Disability in Line of Duty.* – Any MUP separated under Section 8(b) and 8(c) of Title VI of this Act shall be entitled to a monthly life annuity the amount of which shall be fifty percent (50%) of the base and longevity pay computed on the basis of the MUP’s actual rank held at time of death or disability.

SEC. 15. *Benefits for Battle Casualty.* – Any MUP who is killed in action (KIA) shall be entitled to a monthly life annuity the amount of which shall be ninety percent (90%) of the base and longevity pay computed on the basis of the MUP’s actual rank held at time of death or disability.

SEC. 16. *Separation by the Disciplinary Board.* – Any MUP referred to and found by the appropriate Disciplinary Board not fit for retention in the Active Service because of substandard performance, low potentiality, doubtful integrity or acts inconsistent with the best interest of the service shall be separated from the Active Service, subject to the approval of appropriate Disciplining Authority as provided in the Rules and Regulations to be issued to implement this Act; *Provided,* That the Disciplining Authority, based on the facts and circumstances of the case, shall determine whether the subject MUP shall be granted an Honorable Discharge and is entitled to receive benefits under Sections 11 or 12, as applicable, of Title VII of this Act; otherwise, all benefits under this act shall be forfeited.

SEC. 17. *Disability Pension.* – Any MUP retired for disability which is the proximate result of wounds or injuries received or sickness or disease incurred in line of duty or as a battle casualty shall receive, in addition to the other benefits under this Act, Disability Pension fixed as follows:

- (a) If and while the disability is rated 25 percent (25%), the monthly disability pension shall be P2,500.00;
- (b) If and while the disability is rated 50 percent (50%), the monthly pension shall be P5,000.00;
- (c) If and while the disability is rated 60 percent (60%), the monthly pension shall be P6,000.00;
- (d) If and while the disability is rated 70 percent (70%), the monthly pension shall be P7,000.00;

- (e) If and while the disability is rated 80 percent (80%), the monthly pension shall be P8,000.00;
- (f) If and while the disability is rated 90 percent (90%), the monthly pension shall be P9,000.00; or
- (g) If and while the disability is rated 100 percent (100%), the monthly pension shall be P10,000.00.

SEC. 18. *Manner of Increase of Pension Benefits.* – The automatic indexing of Gratuity and Retirement Pay, and Survivorship Benefits with the salary of active MUP holding the same rank as the last actual rank held of the retiree is hereby terminated for existing pensioners or retirees, those in the active service, and new entrants. Increases or adjustments in Gratuity and Retirement Pay, and Survivorship Benefits, up to one and a half percent (1.5%) of the pension benefit being received by the pensioner at the time, will be based on the recommendation of the actuary and approved by the Board of Trustees of the MUP Trust Fund.

The benefits provided under Sections 14, 15, and 17 may be modified and expanded at the direction of the MUP Trust Fund Committee created under Section 19 of this Act, upon the recommendation of the MUP Trust Fund Manager based on an actuarial study demonstrating the financial sustainability of such expansion.

## **TITLE VIII**

### **Management of Military and Uniformed Personnel Trust Fund**

SEC. 19. *Creation of the Military and Uniformed Personnel Trust Fund Committee.* – For the purpose of carrying out and effecting the declared policy, the MUP Trust Fund Committee is hereby created, referred to in this Act as the “Committee”. The Committee shall be organized within thirty (30) days from the approval of the Rules and Regulations to be issued to implement this Act. The Committee shall execute its powers and functions, in such a manner, as will, in its judgment, aid to the fullest possible extent in carrying out the aims and purposes of this Act.

The Committee shall:

- (a) Direct the manner by which assets of the MUP Trust Fund shall be managed;
- (b) Direct the fund administrator who shall, on the Committee’s behalf, manage the MUP Trust Fund in a manner it deems actuarially and financially optimal and sustainable;
- (c) Authorize such expenses as are necessary to administer the MUP Trust Fund and its benefits;
- (d) Direct the creation of an MUP insurance system to account for the unique and significant risks involved in MUP service;
- (e) Adjust the contribution scheme when deemed necessary to ensure the financial sustainability of the MUP Trust Fund;



- (f) Implement and execute functions related to the disposition of assets identified under this Act; and
- (g) Perform other functions inherent in its role as the governing board of the MUP Trust Fund.

SEC. 20. *Composition of the MUP Trust Fund Committee.* – The Committee shall be composed of the following:

- (a) The Secretary of the Department of Finance (DOF) as Chairperson;
- (b) The Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
- (c) The Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- (d) The Secretary of the Department of Justice (DOJ);
- (e) The Secretary of the Department of National Defense (DND);
- (f) The Executive Secretary of the Office of the President (OP); and
- (g) The President and General Manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

The Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) shall act as the Committee Secretariat and shall maintain records and accounts of all investments, receipts, disbursements, and other transactions relating to the management, administration, and utilization of the MUP Trust Fund: *Provided*, That these records and accounts shall be maintained in accordance with existing accounting and auditing laws, rules, and regulations, and shall be audited by the Commission on Audit (COA).

SEC. 21. *MUP Trust Fund.* – There is hereby created a Trust Fund to be known as the “Military Uniformed Personnel Trust Fund”, referred to in this Act as the “MUP Trust Fund”, which shall be capitalized, managed, invested, utilized, and accounted for in the manner provided in this Act.

SEC. 22. *Designation of the GSIS as MUP Trust Fund Manager.* – The GSIS is hereby designated as Fund Manager. As Fund Manager, the GSIS shall be responsible for implementing investment management and benefits administration strategy set by the Committee and managing the portfolio of the MUP Trust Fund.

In its performance of its functions, the GSIS shall have the following functions:

- (a) Monitor market and economic trends and track securities in order to make informed investment decisions;
- (b) Recommend its portfolio strategy to the Committee;

- (c) In managing the portfolio, track financial results of companies in the portfolio and its various metrics, such as, but not limited to, price-to-earnings ratios, inflation-adjusted return, sales, earnings, and dividends; and
- (d) Perform other acts necessary to fulfill its mandate under this Act.

SEC. 23. *Funding Sources.* – Aside from the initial proposed capitalization, the MUP Trust Fund shall be funded through the following:

- (a) *Mandatory Contributions.* – It shall be mandatory for MUP New Entrants and Active Members to contribute a percentage of their monthly compensation as their personal share to the MUP Trust Fund. The National Government shall allocate its share in the contribution sourced from the annual General Appropriations Act, allocated as follows:
  - i. For the first three years after the effectivity of this Act, MUP New Entrants and Active Members shall contribute five percent (5%) of their monthly compensation as personal share, while the National Government shall provide an equivalent of sixteen percent (16%) as its share;
  - ii. After such, for the next three years, MUP New Entrants and Active Members shall contribute seven percent (7%), while the National Government shall provide fourteen percent (14%); and
  - iii. For every year thereafter, MUP New Entrants and Active Members shall contribute nine percent (9%) and the National Government shall provide twelve percent (12%).
- (b) *Additional Sources of Funding.* – Additional funds for the maintenance of the MUP Trust Fund shall be sourced from the proceeds derived from the lease, joint development, auction of development rights, or disposition of:
  - i. The assets of the Military and Uniformed Services, and
  - ii. Other government properties identified for that purpose.

SEC. 24. *Disposition of MUP Assets.* – For the purpose of identifying additional sources of funding, the Committee shall require the MUP agencies to submit a full and exhaustive list of all its real assets within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, and in the manner prescribed by the Committee.

Thereafter, the Committee shall conduct a complete accounting and inventory of MUP Assets that can be used to support the MUP Trust Fund and submit a report to the Office of the President, the Congress, the Secretary of Finance, the COA, and the BTr.

The Committee shall coordinate with the Office of the President, Philippine Reclamation Agency (PRA), and other disposition entities to be identified by the Committee in the execution and delivery of this mandate.

The Committee may request a competent government agency or instrumentality to conduct a valuation of the assets in the inventory.

In general, options that allow the MUP Trust Fund to generate income from these assets without undertaking a sale of such assets shall be taken, except when the Committee determines that a sale is the most optimal financial option. In such cases, the Committee may opt to sell only portions of such assets, to the extent that will satisfy a predetermined financial requirement.

*SEC. 25. Termination of Other Contributions of the Same Nature.* – Upon effectivity of this Act, other contributions by the MUP in the same nature and purpose, for their retirement benefits and pension, shall immediately cease and be subject to the provisions of this Act.

*SEC. 26. Tax Treatment of the MUP Trust Fund.* – Notwithstanding any laws to the contrary, the MUP Trust Fund, its assets, revenues including all accruals thereto, and benefits paid, shall be exempt from all taxes, assessments, fees, charges or duties of all kinds. These exemptions shall continue unless expressly and specifically revoked.

All laws, ordinances, regulations, issuances, opinions or jurisprudence contrary to or in derogation of this provision are hereby deemed repealed, superseded and rendered ineffective and without legal force and effect.

Moreover, these exemptions shall not be affected by subsequent laws to the contrary unless this section is expressly, specifically, and categorically revoked or repealed by law and a provision is enacted to substitute or replace the exemption referred to herein as an essential factor to maintain or protect the solvency of the fund, notwithstanding the guaranty of the national government to secure such solvency or liability.

The MUP Trust Fund and/or the properties referred to herein as well as the benefits, sums or monies corresponding to the benefits under this Act shall be exempt from attachment, garnishment, execution, levy or other processes issued by the courts, quasi-judicial agencies or administrative bodies including Commission on Audit (COA) disallowances and from all financial obligations of the members, including pecuniary accountability arising from or caused or occasioned by the members' exercise or performance of official functions or duties, or incurred relative to or in connection with the members' position or work except when the monetary liability, contractual or otherwise, is in favor of the MUP Trust Fund.

All other applicable tax exemptions granted to the GSIS before or after the effectivity of this Act shall also apply to the MUP Trust Fund for as long as the GSIS remains its Fund Manager.

*SEC. 27. Retirement Grade.* – New Entrants and Active Members of the MUP covered under this Act shall be retired in the actual grade they hold, irrespective of their years in Active Service and regardless of the circumstances of their separation or retirement.

## **TITLE IX**

### **General Provisions**

*SEC. 28. Retirement List.* – Any MUP retired under Title V of this Act shall be carried in the retired list of the applicable Military and Uniformed Service. The name of a retiree who

loses Filipino citizenship shall be removed from the Retired List and said retiree shall forfeit the right to receive retirement benefits upon such loss.

*SEC. 29. Recall to Active Service.* –

- (a) AFP Personnel carried in the retired list shall be subject to the Articles of War and may be recalled at any time by the President to Active Service in the permanent grade last held upon retirement. The refusal of the MUP to perform such duty shall be a ground for court-martial under Article 97 of the Articles of War and subsequent termination of payments of benefits as determined by the court martial.
- (b) When recalled to Active Service, a retiree shall receive the pay and allowances of the permanent grade last held and shall continue to be carried in the retired list and shall be eligible for promotion in the retired list as long as the MUP remains in active status.

*SEC. 30. Non-encumbrance of Benefits.* – The benefits authorized under this Act, except as provided herein, shall not be subject to attachment, garnishment, levy, execution or any tax whatsoever; neither shall they be assigned, ceded, or conveyed to any third person; *Provided*, That if a retired or separated MUP who is entitled to any benefit under this Act has unsettled money or property accountabilities incurred while in the Active Service, not more than fifty percent (50%) of the pension gratuity or other payment due or to the MUP or their survivors under this Act may be withheld and be applied to settle such accountabilities.

*SEC. 31. Accrual of Benefits; effect of Court Martial action.* – The benefits authorized under this Act shall accrue to AFP Personnel separated by court martial action except when non-entitlement of such benefits is expressly adjudged by the military court and approved by the approving authority.

*SEC. 32. Non-diminution of Benefits.* – Nothing in this Act shall be construed in any manner to reduce whatever retirement and separation pay or gratuity or other monetary benefits which any person is heretofore receiving or is entitled to receive under the provisions of existing law.

## **TITLE X**

### **Miscellaneous Provisions**

*SEC. 33. Penal Clause.* – Any person found to have participated directly or indirectly in the commission of fraud, falsification, misrepresentation of facts, collusion or any similar anomaly in the issuance of any certificate or document for any purpose connected with this Act shall upon conviction be punished by a fine of not less than the amount defrauded but not more than threefold such amount or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months and one (1) day to six (6) years and perpetual disqualification from holding public office and from practicing any profession or calling licensed by the government.

*SEC. 34. Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days upon the effectivity of this Act, the DOF, DND, DILG, DOJ, Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), GSIS, and DBM, in coordination with the AFP, PNP, PCG, BJMP, BFP, BuCor, NAMRIA, and other relevant offices shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 35. *Repealing Clause.* – Presidential Decree No. 1656, Presidential Decree No. 1638, Republic Act No. 340, Republic Act No. 5976, Republic Act No. 6975, Republic Act No. 8551, Republic Act No. 9263, Republic Act No. 9993 and Republic Act No. 10575, and all laws, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 36. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 37. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,