

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 10801



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND
DEVELOPMENT REGIONAL WAREHOUSE IN EVERY REGION OF THE
COUNTRY, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The continuing COVID-19 pandemic has revealed an important gap in social services infrastructure, which hampers the timely, cohesive, and coordinated response of our government frontliners. The dynamic public health situation—driven by community quarantine measures, targeted interventions, and family- or household-level aid—have demonstrated the need for *regional warehouses* to meet localized demand and complex logistical exigencies.

In particular, this lack of regional warehouses is a barrier to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)—the national government agency mandated by law to develop, administer, and implement comprehensive social welfare programs designed to uplift our fellow Filipinos' living conditions. The DSWD has been given a statutory duty to empower the disadvantaged—including families in crisis or at-risk, communities needing assistance, and other vulnerable groups.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DSWD has been active in providing aid and relief to adversely affected Filipino families. Its experience has validated that COVID-19 is far from being just a public health crisis. It is a socio-economic crisis that continues to threaten the welfare of millions of Filipino families all over Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Thus, on top of the delivery of essential social services that DSWD Field Offices pursue every day, the pandemic has compelled the DSWD to also augment and address the increasing and rapidly changing needs of local government units (LGUs) and other government agencies, as well as civil society, non-government organizations, and people's organizations. DSWD Field Offices' COVID-19 aid and relief operations also cater to a wide range of beneficiaries, from pandemic-marginalized families to Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) and repatriates.

The expanded responsibilities require the DSWD to process, pack, and prepare aid—often, more than its capacity due to the magnitude of need and its duties to other beneficiaries, such as victims of fire, natural disasters, and other catastrophes.

DSWD's extensive experience has, however, shown that the use of warehouses for storing emergency relief items improves the overall responsiveness, efficiency, and effectiveness of the humanitarian supply chain. At the same time, warehouses decrease the costs incurred in the process of providing social relief and amelioration. Yet, despite the clear effectivity and practicality of warehouses, the DSWD currently has a very limited number of warehouses that could serve both as a storage facility and repacking area during emergencies.

This bill, therefore, seeks to address this critical gap in social welfare infrastructure. By establishing a DSWD regional warehouse in every region of the country, this bill aims to drastically improve how social services are provided to the most affected Filipinos during this COVID-19 pandemic and in calamities and emergencies. This measure further supports our country's overall disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation efforts and institutionalizes a best practice that ultimately redounds to the benefit of our most vulnerable fellow Filipinos.

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



ALFRED VARGAS

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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 “*DSWD Regional Warehouses Act.*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It shall be the policy of the State to protect the people’s right to life and property, and to promote their general welfare. Toward this end, the State, in cognizance of the vulnerability of the Philippines to calamities and disasters, shall provide for the establishment of a regional warehouse in every region of the country to serve primarily as storage facility for emergency relief items, to strengthen the region’s disaster preparedness, and to improve the delivery of social services in communities and local government units.

SECTION 3. *DSWD Regional Warehouse in Every Region.* – There shall be established a Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Regional Warehouse in every region of the country. The Regional Warehouse, under each regional office of the DSWD, shall serve as a storage facility for emergency relief items to strengthen the overall responsiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, and adequacy of the humanitarian supply chain and improve the delivery of social services in the region especially during calamities, disasters, and other emergencies.

SECTION 4. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the budget of the DSWD. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the DSWD.

SECTION 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within thirty days (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DSWD, in consultation with other government agencies and concerned stakeholders, shall issue the rules and regulations necessary to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause. – If any provision is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 7. Non-Impairment Clause. – Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or made available to disadvantaged, marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 9. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,