

## **AAP Urges Sustainable Long-Term Solutions Instead of No Garage, No Registration Act**

As the country braces for the return of pre-pandemic levels of traffic on the streets, especially with the return of face-to-face classes, different measures are being proposed in Congress to reduce traffic congestion in urban areas. House Bill No. 31 (HB 31), better known as the No Garage, No Registration Act, is among these.

In 2016 and 2019, similar bills were filed, the “No Garage, No Car Act of 2016” and the “Proof of Parking Space Act,” respectively.

Aside from addressing traffic congestion, HB 31 aims to curb the number of private vehicles on the road and thus provide safe and uncluttered pathways. But it will have an impact on individuals who live and/or work in the metropolitan areas. A huge number of those who will be adversely affected by this bill would be the working class for which owning a private vehicle is not a luxury but a necessity in a country like ours with a grossly inadequate public transportation system.

Additionally, it will negatively affect the automotive industry which has provided jobs for so many Filipinos and has continuously been a major contributor to economic growth.

The Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) urges the government to also look at long-term sustainable solutions that would benefit everyone instead of only stopgap measures that would inconvenience a large segment of the population.

The foremost solution is to ramp up efforts to build an integrated, efficient mass transportation system that moves people and not just cars. Countries all over the world have accomplished this, why can't the Philippines? Making it more difficult for people to own cars will only lead to more scenes of stranded commuters taking over more than half of the main roads or endless queues at bus carousel stations and at MRT and LRT stations.

We also need to effectively enforce existing traffic regulations, such as the No Parking Zone. AAP suggests identifying “heavy traffic areas” and strictly implementing the law against illegal parking there, imposing heavy fines, and thereby instilling discipline not just among private car owners, but among all road users.

To complement this, the LGUs should provide public parking space or allow pay parking only during certain hours on streets that are not heavily congested with traffic. Building car park buildings on empty government-owned lots is another attractive solution as there would be income from parking fees.

This brings us to the issue of lack of space in Metro Manila and similar mega cities around the country. The national government should put more effort in decentralizing metro areas for a more sustainable and healthier environment. It's among the lessons that the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us.

AAP understands that immediate solutions are required to resolve the gigantic problem of traffic congestion especially in Metro Manila. However, if we do not also seek long-term solutions, we would be dooming ourselves to a transport crisis limbo. There's just no way for all car owners to take on this added burden of requiring a garage, so it's best to focus on providing more viable measures instead.

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