



LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

ON A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONSTITUTION AND REGULATION OF A COAST GUARD FOR ENSURING THE ADMINISTRATION, SECURITY AND PROPER POLICING OF THE MARITIME ZONES OF NIGERIA WITH A VIEW TO THE PROTECTION OF MARITIME AND OTHER NATIONAL INTERESTS IN SUCH ZONES; AND FOR RELATED MATTERS

SPONSOR: SENATOR YELE OMOGUNWA.

PROTOCOL

❖ Mr. President, My dear Colleagues, it is with a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you to lead the debate on the Second Reading of the bill which seeks to establish the Coast Guard of Nigeria.

❖ PREAMBLE

I would like to bring to remembrance several occurrences in Nigeria that has led to the need for this enactment. On Christmas day 2013, the media was agog with the news of the drowning of a teenage girl called Agnes in Bar Beach, Lagos State. Earlier, on idel fitr day that same year, a teenage boy had drowned in that same beach. About two years later, a 200 level Medical Student of University of Lagos drowned at Elegusi beach followed by the death of a Chinese national three days later. These are just few of promising Nigerian citizens that have lost their lives in beaches and coastlines around Nigeria. These loses would have been averted with the presence of qualified and well trained guards in our maritime and beaches nationwide. This is the practice obtainable in other jurisdictions such as

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South Africa, especially because the so called live guards at some of these locations are not always present and at times are not capable of containing the emergencies that do arise from time to time.

There is presently no functional government organ that is responsible for the proper administration of the Nigerian beaches and the protection of tourists and fishermen alike along our inland coastal lines. This Bill is therefore necessary to curtail and prevent the constant loss of lives that takes place in these locations. It would also bring Nigeria in conformity with international Best Practices as obtainable in other climes in this regard

In addition, the guard could also be administered in such a way as to generate revenue from tourists and other users alike for the government of Nigeria. This would go a long way to augment the revenue base of Nigeria. It would be responsible for the proper policing and administration of persons and infrastructures on seas and seashores.

The Guard would also play a complementary role to other bodies present along our coastal lines for the preservation of the maritime and its environs as well as prevent anti-smuggling operations and other illegal activities that occurs along our seas and its shores.

The Guard would ensure the enforcement of such other enactments that are in force within the maritime zones.

3. MANDATE OF THE GUARD

- ❖ Disaster Management along the beaches, seas and sea shores
- ❖ Emergency response
- ❖ Administration and policing of beaches, seas and sea shores
- ❖ Prevention of illegalities such as illegal fishing, smuggling and violation of other maritime laws
- ❖ Rescue and salvage operations in times of natural catastrophes
- ❖ Dissemination of information, including warnings by radios and other mass media as the needs arises

4. OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Guard shall have a central Unit divided into Zones for ease of operation and full coverage of Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION

Distinguished colleagues, through the Coast Guard, there would be a legalized body responsible for the proper policing of our beaches and coastal lines. This would help us to save lives lost by tourists and other users of our coast lines. This would attract more tourists that would lead to generation of revenue for the country as signals of safety would be sent to both national and international tourists of government presence and responsibility to secure lives and property alike. Proper administration would also bring about generation of income and business opportunities to the teeming Nigerian youths. I therefore wish to solicit your support to ensure that the Bill is read the second time. Our action would further prove to the entire world that our nation is responsive to the needs of its citizens, capable of protecting their lives on land, water and seashores and a safe haven for tourists alike.

Thank you.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION OF THE BILL.

The Bill operates to serve the whole of Nigeria, so it has a national coverage with offices in each State of the Federation and the FCT. The Board shall have zonal and state commands under the supervision of the Commandant-General.

PERSONNEL

The guard will have about 1000 officers' nationwide structured into ranks whose salary shall be determined by the Governing board using the same criteria applicable to the Immigration Service.

OVERHEAD COST

This includes cost of running of the offices, training of personnel amongst others

CAPITAL

This will include cost of building to be rented as offices nationwide for a start as well as uniforms, shoes and other security gadgets to be used by the officers.

The body will be an income generating outfit as levies will be imposed on all commercial activities that are ongoing in the area. There are lots of commercial and income generating activities in our coastal lines especially because they are main hubs of tourists attractions.

It is therefore suggested that 50% of the financial obligation be borne by government while the remaining 50% should be sourced by the Guard.