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SENATE
S.B. No. 3486

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Fire is one of our country's major challenges. The Bureau of Fire Protection has recorded a total of 8,823 fire incidents nationwide in 2006 that led to 271 fatalities, 596 injuries, and an estimated P3.2 billion worth of damage to properties.¹ Not only do these fires destroy properties, more importantly, they destroy lives. No one is more vulnerable to fire related injuries and deaths than people who cannot care for themselves. Under the principle of *parens patriae*, the State has the responsibility to protect the people who cannot protect themselves. Institutions providing long term care services such as nursing homes, hospice facilities, assisted living facilities, residential care program facilities, and board and care facilities find themselves in a constant dilemma of having to choose between allocating their resources on safety facilities and addressing the needs of their clients directly. As most of these institutions cater to our less fortunate countrymen, they are often forced to make the decision of having to take only one of these options.

A state grant covering the retrofit of these establishments to provide them with the latest fire safety technology will go a long way towards protecting both the institutions and their clients. This bill seeks to mandate the Secretary of Health to extend grants to institutions providing long term health care in order to help them secure the necessary fire safety technology for their establishments, thereby affording better protection to them and to our loved ones in their care.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

¹ Fire Prevention Saves Lives and Property. Business Mirror. 22 February 2007.

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1 AN ACT
2 TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH TO MAKE GRANTS TO
3 PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL RETROFIT INSTALLATION OF FIRE ALARM
4 DETECTION SYSTEMS AND OTHER FIRE DETECTION AND PREVENTION
5 TECHNOLOGIES IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES

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

6 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Long Term Care Fire*
7 *Safety Act*”.

8 SECTION 2. *Definition.* – As provided in this Act, the following shall mean:

9 a) “FIRE ALARM DETECTION SYSTEM OR OTHER FIRE
10 DETECTION AND PREVENTION TECHNOLOGY”, means a system, a portion of a
11 system, or a combination of systems and components for fire protection, such as
12 integrated systems of manual devices and automatic sensors that, when activated, cause
13 the systems to warn building occupants and emergency forces; smoke detectors;
14 automatic fire sprinkler systems; specialized suppression systems and other active fire
15 protection systems or components installed in accordance with the National Building
16 Code and other applicable laws and regulations;

17 b) “SECRETARY”, means the Secretary of Health;

18 SECTION 3. *Grant Program.* – Not later than 120 days after the date of
19 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall establish a program to award grants to
20 nursing homes, hospice facilities, assisted living facilities, residential care program
21 facilities, board and care facilities, and any other long term care facilities that are duly
22 licensed or certified and are determined by the Secretary to be appropriate for a grant
23 under this Act, for the purpose of retrofitting such homes and facilities with any

24 professionally installed fire alarm detection system or other fire detection and prevention
25 technology.

26 SECTION 4. *Determination of Priority.* – In awarding grants under this Act, the
27 Secretary shall give priority to applicants that demonstrate a need or hardship. In
28 determining hardship, the Secretary may take into account factors such as the age and
29 condition of the facilities of the applicant, the need for facility beds in the community
30 involved, and requirements imposed on the applicant to meet applicable fire safety
31 regulations.

32 SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid
33 or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
34 remain valid and subsisting.

35 SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
36 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to,
37 or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended
38 accordingly.

39 SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
40 after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.

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