

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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S E N A T E

S. No. 494

Introduced by Senator S. R. Osmeña III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Time and again, politicians have to be reminded that public office is a public trust. To be faithful to this creed, one must serve selflessly, without expectations in return. To serve the people who voted them in office is the ultimate form of public service.

Thus, R.A. 6713, otherwise known as the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees envisions to set standards for the practice of political public relations.

This bill is hereby proposed to deter political strategists and public relations persons who deliberately corrupt the integrity of channels of communications for selfish ends. Furthermore, it is hoped that these media and public relations practitioners shall conduct themselves properly and adhere to the rules and regulations and code of ethics of their professions. Moreover, this is intended to encourage practitioners to improve their competence through continuing academic endeavor.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


SERGIO OSMEÑA III
Senator

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**THE CODE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE PRACTICE OF
POLITICAL PUBLIC RELATIONS**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives in Congress
Assembled*

1 SECTION 1. Definition of Political Public Relations - Political Public
2 Relations is defined as those areas of public relations that relate to:

- 3 a. The counseling of holders of public office; and groups constituted
4 for purpose of influencing the vote on any ballot issue.
- 5 b. The counseling of holders of public office;
- 6 c. The management, or direction of a political campaign for or against
7 a candidate or public office, or for or against a ballot issue to be
8 determined by voter approval; or rejection;
- 9 d. The practice of public relations on behalf of a client or an employer
10 in connection with the client's or employer's relationships with any
11 candidates or holders of public office, with the purpose of
12 influencing legislation or government regulation or treatment of a
13 client or employer, regardless of whether the public relations
14 practitioner is a recognized lobbyist;
- 15 e. The counseling of government bodies, or segments thereof, either
16 domestic or foreign.

1 SEC. 2. **Public Interest** - A practitioner in political public relations shall
2 conduct his or her professional life in accordance with the public interest.

3 SEC. 3. **Honesty and Integrity** - A practitioner shall exemplify high
4 standards of honesty and integrity while carrying out dual obligations to a client
5 or employer and the democratic process.

6 SEC. 4. **Fair Dealing** - A practitioner shall deal fairly with the public, with
7 past or present clients or employers and with fellow practitioners, giving respect
8 to the ideal of free inquiry and to the opinion of others.

9 SEC. 5. **Accuracy and Truth** - A practitioner shall adhere to the
10 highest standards of accuracy and truth, avoiding extravagant claims or unfair
11 comparisons and giving credit for ideas and words borrowed from others.

12 SEC. 6. **False Information** - A practitioner shall not knowingly
13 disseminate false or misleading information and shall act promptly to correct
14 erroneous communications for which he or she is responsible.

15 SEC. 7. **Corruption**- A practitioner shall not engage in any practice which
16 has the purpose of corrupting the integrity of channels of communication or the
17 process of government.

18 Among the practices prohibited by the paragraph are those that tend to
19 place representatives of media or government under any obligation to the
20 practitioner, or the practitioner's employer or client, which is in conflict with their
21 obligations to media or government. Such as:

- 22 a. The giving of gifts of more than nominal values;
- 23 b. Any form of payment or compensation to a member of the media in
24 order to obtain preferential or guaranteed news or editorial
25 coverage in the medium.
- 26 c. Any retainer or fee to a media employee or use such employee if
27 retained by a client or employer, where the circumstances are not
28 fully disclosed to and accepted by the media employer.

1 d. Providing trips, for media representatives, that are unrelated to
2 legitimate news interest.

3 e. The use by a practitioner of an investment or loan or advertising
4 commitment made by the practitioner, or the practitioners client or
5 employer, to obtain preferential or guaranteed coverage in the
6 medium.

7 This Code paragraph does not prohibit hosting media or government
8 representatives at meals, cocktails, or news functions and special events that are
9 occasions for the exchange of news, information or views, or the furtherance of
10 understanding, which is part of the public relation function. Nor does it prohibit
11 the *bona fide press event or tour when media or government representative are*
12 *given the opportunity for an on-the spot viewing of a newsworthy product,*
13 *process, or event in which the media or government representatives have a*
14 *legitimate interest. What is customary or reasonable hospitality has to be a*
15 *matter of particular judgment in specific situations. In all these cases, however, it*
16 *is, or should be, understood that no preferential treatment or guarantees are*
17 *expected or implied and that complete independence always is left to the media*
18 *or government representatives.*

19 **SEC. 8. Public Identification** - A practitioner shall be prepared to identify
20 publicly the name of client or employer on whose behalf any public
21 communication is made.

22 **SEC. 9. Undisclosed Interest** - A practitioner shall not use any individual
23 or organization professing to serve or represent an announced cause, or
24 professing to be independent or unbiased, but actually serving another
25 undisclosed interest.

26 **SEC. 10. Guarantee Achievement** - A practitioner shall not guarantee the
27 achievement of specified results beyond the member's direct control.

1 SEC. 11. **Conflicting Interest** - A practitioner shall not represent
2 conflicting or competing interests without the express consent of those
3 concerned, given after a full disclosure of the facts.

4 SEC. 12. **Personal Interest** - A practitioner shall not place himself or
5 herself in a position where the practitioner's personal interest is or may be in
6 conflict with an obligation to an employer or client, or others, without full
7 disclosure of such interests to all involved.

8 SEC. 13. **Gifts and other considerations** - A practitioner shall not
9 accept fees, commissions, gifts, or any other consideration from anyone except
10 clients or employers for whom services are performed without their express
11 consent, given after full disclosure of the facts.

12 SEC. 14. **Damage to Professional Reputation** - A practitioner shall not
13 intentionally damage the professional reputation or practice of another
14 practitioner.

15 SEC. 15. **Responsibility of Strict Adherence** - It is the responsibility of
16 practitioners to abide by this Code of Professional Standards.

17 SEC. 16. **Good Faith** - Practitioners shall represent clients or employers
18 in good faith, and while partisan advocacy on behalf of a candidate or public
19 issue may be expected, practitioners shall act as an accord with the public
20 interest and adhere to truth and accuracy and to generally accepted standards of
21 good taste.

22 SEC. 17. **Signed Material** - Practitioners shall not issue descriptive
23 material or any advertising or publicity information or participate in the
24 preparation or use thereof that is not signed by responsible persons or is false,
25 misleading, or unlabeled as to its source, and are obligated to use care to avoid
26 dissemination of any such material.

27 SEC. 18. **Disclosure of Remuneration** - Practitioners have an obligation
28 to clients to disclose what remuneration beyond their fees they expect to receive
29 as a result of their relationship, such as commission for media advertising,

1 printing and the like, and should not accept extra payment without their client's
2 consent.

3 **SEC. 19. Improper Use of Position** - Practitioners shall not
4 improperly use their positions to encourage additional future employment or
5 compensation. It is understood that successful campaign directors or managers,
6 because of the performance of their duties and the working relationship that
7 develops, may well continue to assist and counsel, for pay, the successful
8 candidate.

9 **SEC. 20. Other Clients** - Practitioners shall voluntarily disclose to
10 employers or clients the identity of other employers or clients with whom they are
11 currently associated, and whose interests might be affected favorably or
12 unfavorably by their political representation.

13 **SEC. 21. Confidentiality of Information** - Practitioners shall respect the
14 confidentiality of information pertaining to employers or clients past, present, and
15 potential, even after relationships cease, avoiding future associations wherein
16 insider information is sought that would give a desired advantage over a
17 practitioner's previous clients.

18 **SEC. 22. Undisclosed Gifts** - In avoiding practices that might tend to
19 corrupt the processes of government, practitioners shall not make undisclosed
20 gifts of cash or other valuable considerations that are designed to influence
21 specific decisions of voters, legislators, or public officials on public matters. A
22 business lunch or dinner or other comparable expenditure made in the course of
23 communicating a point of view or public position, would not constitute such a
24 violation. Nor, for example, would a plant visit designed and financed to provide
25 useful background information to an interested legislator or candidate.

26 **SEC. 23. Political Contributions** - Nothing herein should be construed
27 as prohibiting practitioners from making legal, properly disclosed contributions to
28 the candidates, party, or referenda issues of their choice.

1 SEC. 24. **Injury to Public Reputation** - Practitioners shall not, through
2 the use of information known to be false or misleading, conveyed directly or
3 through a third party, intentionally injure the public reputation of an opposing
4 interest.

5 SEC. 25. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
6 the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

7 Approved,