


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Third Regular Session )

 Senate  
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE  
S. No. 2996

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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AN ACT  
TO PROVIDE FOR SAFE ACCESS IN FIRE EMERGENCIES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is a fact that window bars are most prevalent in low-income areas and high crime areas, where other security risks often overshadow fire safety standards.

According to the Bureau of Fire Protection, children, the elderly, persons who are mobility-impaired, and firefighters are especially vulnerable to fatalities or injuries involving residential window bars. Many people have died in residential fires as a result of being trapped by window bars. There should be a campaign to raise public awareness on the risks and casualties of window bar entrapment during residential fires.

The Bureau of Fire Protection encourages fire prevention through fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, and planned escape routes as main goals of avoiding casualties in residential and commercial fires.

This bill seeks to give the local governments, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Bureau of Fire Protection jurisdiction with respect to releasing systems on residential window bars and to establish a consumer product safety standard ensuring that all such bars include a quick-release mechanism.<sup>1</sup>

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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<sup>1</sup> This bill was originally filed in the Thirteenth Congress, Third Regular Session, and refiled in the Fifteenth Congress, First Regular Session.

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AN ACT  
TO PROVIDE FOR SAFE ACCESS IN FIRE EMERGENCIES

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Safe Access in Fire  
2 Emergencies Act.”

3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State  
4 to ensure the safety of its people against fire emergencies, through establishing measures  
5 which will prevent injuries, most especially death.

6 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, “window bars” mean  
7 any metal or other bars, grills, grates, heavy-duty screens, glazing, or other barriers that  
8 are designed –

9 (A) to cover exterior and interior escape windows in residential dwelling units;  
10 and

11 (B) to deter any physical security threats to the home, including threats from  
12 burglars.

13 Such term does not include any such barriers that (a) protect children from falling  
14 from open windows in upper floors of buildings, and (b) protect nonresidential or  
15 commercial properties

1           SECTION 4. *Safety Standard for Window Bars.* –

2           (a) *Rulemaking Required.* – The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in  
3 cooperation and coordination with the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) shall initiate a  
4 rulemaking proceeding within 90 days after the date of effectivity of this Act to establish  
5 a consumer product safety standard for window bars, except that the DTI and the BFP  
6 may extend such 90-day period for good cause.

7           Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the DTI and BFP shall promulgate a  
8 final rule establishing such consumer product safety standard within 12 months after the  
9 date on which the rulemaking is initiated, except that both may extend such 12-month  
10 period for good cause. Such consumer product safety standard shall take effect upon the  
11 expiration of the 6-month period beginning on the date on which the final rule  
12 establishing such standard is promulgated.

13           (b) *Releasing System Requirement.* – The standard established pursuant to  
14 paragraph (a) shall:

15                 (1) require all window bars that are manufactured or installed in the  
16 Philippines to incorporate releasing systems that meet the minimum standards  
17 under paragraph (c); and

18                 (2) address releasing systems for interior- and exterior-based window bars.

19           (c) *Minimum Standards for Releasing Systems.* – The minimum standards for  
20 releasing systems for window bars shall require that such systems:

21                 (1) when actuated, can move such bars and provide egress to occupants of  
22 residential dwelling units equipped with such bars; and

23                 (2) at a minimum, can be actuated manually from the interior of a  
24 residential dwelling unit and provide escape through the protected opening.

25           (d) *Consultation.* – In developing the standard pursuant to paragraph (a), the DTI  
26 and BFP shall consult with experts, including manufacturers of window bars, housing and

1 building codes authorities, and representatives of the appropriate government agencies,  
2 officials in different regions that have in effect window bar safety standards, and other  
3 similar public safety-related organizations.

4 SECTION 5. *Labeling Requirement.* – The DTI shall require each manufacturer  
5 selling, or offering for sale, in the Philippines, any window bars to include in the  
6 packaging for the window bars a written statement clearly explaining how the window  
7 bars are to be configured and installed and the inclusion and operation of the releasing  
8 system incorporated pursuant to Section 4(b).

9 SECTION 6. *Provision of Data.* – The DTI and the BFP shall establish and  
10 maintain a National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) code and system for  
11 collection of information and statistics on casualties associated with window bars.

12 SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or  
13 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other  
14 provisions hereof.

15 SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or  
16 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby  
17 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

18 SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after  
19 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

/fldp23Oct2015