

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



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

76 JAN 20 P 6 05

SENATE  
S.B. No. 3089

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by: Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

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**AN ACT**  
**PROHIBITING GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND AGENCIES FROM DENYING CITIZENS ACCESS TO**  
**FRONTLINE SERVICES AND ATTENDANCE IN PRIVATE OR PUBLIC MEETINGS ON THE BASIS OF**  
**ATTIRE**

Explanatory Note

With the Philippines fast becoming the rising star of Asia and the rest of the world, it is our mandate to build an inclusive and prosperous country for all Filipinos.

We have made strides to build an improved society through policies that uplift and empower the marginalized sectors. However, we often overlook the seemingly trivial but unjust hurdles many Filipinos face on a daily basis, such as their inability to adhere to unnecessary government regulations.

Tragically, not every Filipino can afford to buy shoes and more formal clothing. But every Filipino should be permitted to participate in assemblies that affect them and their community, particularly legislative hearings and sessions. All Filipinos must be granted access to frontline services, especially from public offices.

Unfortunately, needless dress code policies serve as barriers to many of our marginalized Filipinos as they seek to become more participative and rightfully demand services. How can they raise their voice when they're standing in the heat and behind cold walls? These are the countrymen we are called to serve. Thus, it is high time to open our government offices and be more considerate of our policies for all Filipinos, regardless of our economic status.

The Philippine Government Agency Open Door Act of 2016 aims to mandate all government offices to accept entry to all Filipinos and to eliminate the dress code that some government agencies and units are following.

We are called to open the doors to those that have the least in our society, those we have the most to learn from, and those that we desperately need to hear. We have the opportunity and a duty to generate policies that contribute to a nation that is fair, just, and inclusive. We have a responsibility to create a Philippines where all Filipinos, even minorities and marginalized sectors can live free from discrimination.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.

  
Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

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*Be It enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines In Congress assembled:*

- 1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "*Open Door Policy Act of 2016.*"
- 2 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - The State recognizes the need to value the dignity of every  
3 human person and the promotion of social justice in all phases of national development.  
4 Furthermore, the Constitution also mandates Congress to give highest priority to the  
5 enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity,  
6 reduce social and economic inequalities, and remove cultural inequities.
- 7 **SECTION 3. *Coverage.*** - This Act shall apply to all government offices and agencies including the  
8 national government and all its agencies, departments, bureaus, offices and instrumentalities,  
9 constitutional commissions and constitutionally mandated bodies, local governments and all  
10 their agencies including legislative bodies, government-owned or -controlled corporations,  
11 state universities and colleges, and all offices in the Congress of the Philippines including the  
12 offices of Senators and Representatives that provide frontline services and/or hold meetings as  
13 defined in this Act. Dress codes for public officials and employees in the course of their duties in  
14 their respective government offices or agencies will not be affected or prohibited by this Act.
- 15 **SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.*** - For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be  
16 defined as follows:  
17  
18 a. *Frontline Service* refers to the process or transaction between citizens as clients and  
19 government offices or agencies involving applications for any privilege, right, permit,  
20 reward, license, concession, or for any modification, renewal, or extension of the  
21 enumerated applications and/or requests which are acted upon in the ordinary course  
22 of business of the office or agency concerned.
- 23 b. *Simple Transactions* refer to requests or applications submitted by clients of a  
24 government office or agency which only require ministerial actions on the part of the  
25 public officer or employee, or that which present only inconsequential issues for the  
26 resolution by an officer or employee of said government office. Such requests or  
27 applications are acted upon by the assigned officer or employee during the period  
28 stated in the Citizen's Charter, as provided by Republic Act No. 9485 or the Anti-Red  
29 Tape Act of 2007, which shall not be longer than five (5) working days.

- 1 c. *Public Meetings* refers to meetings, hearings, or sessions conducted by any government  
2 office or agency, including legislative bodies, that are open to the public, where citizens  
3 act as guests, observers, or participants, whichever the case may be.  
4 d. *Strict Dress Code* refers to rules and regulations that prescribe particular clothing and  
5 footwear that effectively prevent citizens from accessing frontline services from  
6 government offices and agencies or attending public meetings.  
7 e. *Marginalized Sectors* refer to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of citizens in  
8 Philippine society including, but not limited to farmers, peasants, landless rural workers,  
9 fisherfolk, workers in the formal sector, workers in the informal sector, urban poor, rural  
10 poor, indigenous peoples and cultural communities, and disaster survivors.

11 **SECTION 5. *Prohibition of Strict Dress Codes in Government Frontline Service Offices.*** - All  
12 government institutions with frontline service offices shall be barred from implementing strict  
13 dress codes that prevent citizens, especially those belonging to marginalized sectors, from  
14 making inquiries or undertaking simple transactions. The said institutions shall not be allowed  
15 to prescribe the types of clothing and footwear that can or cannot be worn by citizens whom  
16 they are serving in their respective frontline service offices; *Provided*, That the attire of the  
17 citizen acting as a client is not integral or essential to the transactions being undertaken.

18 **SECTION 6. *Prohibition of Strict Dress Codes in Private or Public Meetings.*** - All government  
19 institutions, including legislative bodies, shall be barred from implementing strict dress codes  
20 that prevent citizens, especially those belonging to marginalized sectors, from attending private  
21 or public meetings as guests, observers, or participants.

22 **SECTION 7. *Administrative Liability.*** - Failure to comply with this Act shall be tantamount to  
23 gross neglect of duty and shall constitute grounds for administrative and disciplinary sanctions  
24 against any public officer or employee who deliberately and knowingly implements a strict  
25 dress code which shall prevent any citizen from accessing government frontline services or  
26 attending public meetings.

27 **SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - The Civil Service Commission (CSC), in  
28 consultation with the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor (PCUP) and the National  
29 Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations  
30 within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

31 **SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.*** - If any section or part of this Act is held unconstitutional, no  
32 other section or provision shall be affected.

33 **SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.*** - All provisions of existing laws, presidential decrees or  
34 issuances, executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules and regulations  
35 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or  
36 modified accordingly.

37 **SECTION 11. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete  
38 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation

39 Approved,