

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

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B FEB 18 1979

SENATE

RECEIVED BY _____

S. No. 1921

INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE MAR ROXAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Different government agencies maintain their respective database and information in the pursuit of their mandate to provide basic services and social security to the public or in the exercise of their regulatory function. This function also necessitates the issuance of various reference numbers to those who transact with these agencies. Consequently, an ordinary citizen would have various numbers issued to him by the Social Security System (SSS), Government Service Insurance system (GSIS), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), PhilHealth, Commission on Elections (COMELEC), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Philippine Postal Corporation (PPC), and other government agencies. Keeping track of these numbers would be too tedious for the ordinary citizen. This would likewise spell inefficiency and red tape for the government.

This bill seeks to address this problem and expedite dealings with the government by harmonizing the existing database and information system of different government agencies. The SSS, for instance, has a total membership of 25 million. Each member is issued his own number for the purpose of transacting with the SSS. The NSO, on the other hand, has about 80 million persons registered in its records. Those persons holding SSS numbers are also the persons registered with the NSO.

Bureaucratic red tape has been identified as the main source of graft and corruption in our country. Studies here and abroad reveal that despite government efforts to make our country attractive to foreign investments and to ensure fast and efficient delivery of basic social services, our government's operating efficiency and performance continue to be hampered by pervasive delays in public transactions. In a study made by the Center for International Private Enterprise (1999) on levels of red tape and corruption in the Asia and the Pacific regions, it was reported that the Philippines has 14 levels of bureaucratic procedure, slightly lower than that of Vietnam which has 16 levels. In contrast, Australia has only two procedures and Singapore has seven.

This proposed measure, which will consolidate all existing government-initiated identification systems into one integrated and multi-purpose system without compromising our citizens' right to privacy, will facilitate speedy, accurate and simplified processes and procedures of transacting with the government. Thus, red tape and unnecessary levels of procedure in the bureaucracy will be reduced, if not totally eliminated.

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


MAR Roxas
Senator

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5 FEB 18 P4:49

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S. No. 1921

Introduced by the HONORABLE MAR ROXAS

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE EXPEDIENCY AND EFFICIENCY IN DEALING WITH
GOVERNMENT, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE A HARMONIZED DATABASE
SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SEC. 1. Title. This Act shall be known as "*The Ease of Dealing with Government Act of 2005.*"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It shall be the policy of the State to ensure efficiency in the bureaucracy by simplifying processes and procedures in transacting with the government consistent with the rights of citizens to privacy and equal protection of the laws.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – The following terms as used in this Act shall refer to :

- a. *National Reference Number* – The Population Reference Number assigned and issued by the National Statistics Office to a citizen or permanent resident of the Philippines;
- b. NSO – The National Statistics Office;
- c. SSS – The Social Security System;
- d. *Data* – The name, address, date of birth, gender and other personal circumstances of the person to whom a National Reference Number was issued, all of which are encoded therein and kept strictly confidential in the records of the National Statistics Office;
- e. *Agencies concerned* – These agencies shall refer to all agencies issuing identification cards to citizens such as, but not limited to, Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) , Land Transportation Office (LTO), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), Commission on Elections (Comelec), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Philippine Postal Corporation (PhilPost).

SEC. 4. Harmonization of Government Identification System. – There is hereby established a Harmonized Reference System to cross reference all government identification numbers. This shall be created by mandating all government agencies to harmonize into one National Reference Number to be assigned to each person so that eventually all information from all concerned agencies pertaining to the same person shall be embodied in the National Reference Number.

The National Statistics Office, in consultation with other agencies concerned, shall design and implement a system wherein a National Reference Number shall be assigned to one person and shall include all the information included in the database of all the government agencies concerned.

The government agencies concerned shall agree among themselves the information which shall be represented by the National Reference Number assigned to each person and the format thereof. The National Reference Number may contain numbers representing specific information that can identify the person to whom it had been assigned or information pertaining to a specific agency.

SEC. 5. Operationalization. – The database of the National Statistics Office shall be the core database of the Harmonized Reference System. The records of the SSS shall then be harmonized with the NSO database. The process of harmonizing the NSO database and SSS records shall be implemented within two (2) years from the effectivity of this Act. Thereafter, all information from other agencies shall be harmonized. Complete harmonization shall be made within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 6. Confidentiality. – Any data or information pertaining to each record as referred to by the Harmonized Reference Number shall be kept strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed to any person or used by any person for any purpose. Violation of this provision shall warrant the imposition of the penalty of imprisonment from two (2) years to four (4) years and/or perpetual disqualification from holding a public office.

SEC. 7. Access to Database. – Each agency shall have access limited only to the information relevant to its function. The NSO, in consultation with the other government agencies shall establish a system wherein agencies may be allowed access to database of other agency when necessary. Any person who shall access any information without proper authorization shall be liable for imprisonment for not more than four (4) to six (6) months and/or perpetual disqualification from holding public office.

SEC. 8. Congressional Oversight Committee. – To oversee the proper implementation of this Act, there is hereby created a Congressional Oversight Committee composed of three (3) members from the Senate President and ~~five (5)~~ ^{three (3)} members from the House of Representatives designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; Provided, That of the three (3) members to be designated by each house of Congress, three (3) of them shall come from the majority and the remaining two (2) from the minority.

SEC. 9. Appropriation. – The amount of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated out of the funds of the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, as operating funds for the implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such funds sufficient to fully carry out the purposes of this Act shall be appropriated for every participating agency every fiscal year in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – Any portion or provisions of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions and provisions hereof as long as such remaining portion or provision can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SEC. 11. Repealing Clause. – All other laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,