

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

7 JUN 30 P2:51

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

S.B. No. 165

---

Introduced by Senator Ramon Bong Revilla, Jr.

---

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution under Article 111 of the Bill of Rights Section 4 provides that "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances".

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by a government of free public press for its citizens and their association, extended to members of news gathering organizations, and their published reporting. It also extended to news gathering and processes involved in obtaining information for public distribution.

Freedom of the press implies that all people should have the right to express themselves in writing or in any other way of expression of personal opinion or creativity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights indicates: "*Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers*".

Republic Act No. 53 as amended, otherwise known as Sotto law was enacted to protect the newspaper journalist for being compelled to name his news source but, look again the law does not mention broadcast journalist.

The Sotto Law, Republic Act No. 53 "An Act Exempting the Publisher, Editor or Reporter of any Publication from Revealing the Source of Published News or Information Obtained in Confidence" protects journalist from being compelled to reveal their news source. It is silent about radio or TV journalist. The rule on interpreting statutes is that what is not included is considered excluded Sotto law was named after Cebuano journalist Vicente Sotto "the father" of Cebuano journalist, literature and language, who was jailed for months over an article he printed in his newspaper.

This bill seeks to amend the Sotto Law to include broadcast and Internet media in the privilege statute allowing journalist to decline from revealing his or her source except when the court or Congress finds the revelation necessary for national security.

The amendment will give them the same protection: "the journalist cannot be compelled to reveal the source of my news item, news report or information reported or disseminated in the media which was related in confidence to the journalist."

The fear of broadcast journalist and other media practitioners of being taken to court for refusing to reveal sources of news and articles or commentaries will soon be over.

The bill will not only strengthen the confidence of journalist in broadcast, news agencies and in the Internet sector but will recognize the important role they play, alongside print reporters, and in nation building.

The reasons for this rule is that the identity of sources of a confidential news report or information must be protected otherwise the spring of data for news commentary, abridge expressions and unalloyed pleasure dries up and the mission of the press to check and balance and expose wrongdoing is defeated.

Hence early approval of this bill is highly recommended.




**RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.**

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*First Regular Session* )

7 JUN 30 P2:51

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

S.B. No. 165

---

Introduced by Senator RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

---

**AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 53, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT TO EXEMPT THE PUBLISHER, EDITOR OR REPORTER OF ANY PUBLICATION FROM REVEALING THE SOURCE OF PUBLISHED NEWS OR INFORMATION OBTAINED IN CONFIDENCE BY, INCLUDING WITHIN ITS COVERAGE, JOURNALISTS FROM BROADCAST, NEWS AGENCIES AND INTERNET PUBLICATIONS**

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 1 of Republic Act No. 53, as mended, is hereby further amended as follows:

“Section 1. Without prejudice to his liability under the civil and criminal laws, [the publisher, editor, columnist or duly accredited reporter of any newspaper, magazine or periodical of general circulation cannot be compelled to reveal the source of any news-report or information appearing in said publication which was related in confidence to such publisher, editor or reporter unless the court as or a House or committee of Congress] **A DULY ACCREDITED JOURNALIST OF ANY PRINT, BROADCAST, INTERNET, OR WIRE SERVICE ORGANIZATION, INCLUDING THE PUBLISHER, STATION OWNER AND/OR MANAGER, BUREAU CHIEF, EDITOR, NEWS EDITOR, WRITER OR REPORTER, CORRESPONDENT, OPINION COLUMNIST OR COMMENTATOR, CARTOONIST, PHOTOGRAPHER, OR OTHER PRACTITIONER INVOLVED IN THE WRITING, EDITING, COMMENTING OF THE NEWS FOR MASS CIRCULATION CANNOT BE COMPELLED TO REVEAL THE SOURCE OF ANY NEWS ITEM, NEWS REPORT OR INFORMATION APPEARING OR BEING REPORTED OR DISSIMINATED IN SAID MEDIA, WHICH WAS RELATED IN CONFIDENCE TO SUCH JOURNALIST OR PRACTITIONER UNLESS THE COURT OR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OR THE SENATE OR ANY OF ITS COMMITTEES finds that such revelation is demanded by the security of the state.**”

**SECTION 2. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules or regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified.

**SECTION 3. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least two newspapers of national circulation.

*Approved,*