

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

Office of the Secretary

12 APR 19 P2 29

SENATE
S. No. **3169**

RECEIVED

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Consumer protection consists of laws and organizations designed to ensure the rights of consumers as well as fair trade competition and the free flow of truthful information in the market. Philippine laws on consumer protection include Republic Act No. 7394, otherwise known as the "Consumer Act of the Philippines," the Civil Code, and the Revised Penal Code, among others.

Though the national government should certainly be primarily responsible in implementing these laws, local agencies can play key roles in protecting consumer rights and ensuring a competent marketplace, thus promoting economic growth and stability.

This bill seeks to create and institutionalize local consumer protection offices in every province and city. This will make it easier for ordinary individual consumers to access immediate assistance and information that would address their needs.


Each office is envisioned to be a one-stop consumer help center, that will provide relevant information on goods and services available, finance and credit schemes, product safety, and redress options. It will also protect professionals from unfair competition by unlicensed practitioners and refer those who wish to pursue legal action to the Public Prosecutors' Office.

Consumer protection has not only gained ground but has become strong and vibrant movements in other parts of the world. It is time that we empower the individual consumer, whose hard-earned money has been used to prop up this economy.

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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12 APR 19 P2:29

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A CONSUMER PROTECTION OFFICE IN EVERY PROVINCE AND
CITY

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Consumer Protection Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and serve consumers while ensuring a competent and fair marketplace. The State shall endeavor to prevent businesses that engage in fraud or unfair practices from gaining an advantage over competitors and provide additional protection for the weak and those unable to take care of themselves.

To this end, there is a need to establish an office responsible for consumer protection in every province.

SECTION 3. *Consumer Protection Bureau.* – There shall be a Consumer Protection Bureau (CPB) under the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG). The CPB shall be headed by an undersecretary of the DILG. The CPB shall coordinate with other departments and agencies in the enforcement of consumer protection laws. The CPB shall provide all local consumer protection offices with the latest information on product safety and consumer issues and assist them in the implementation of this act. It shall also propose legislation and regulations to improve trade and business practices.

SECTION 4. *Consumer Protection Office.* – A Consumer Protection Office (CPO) shall be established in every province and every city.

The CPOs shall have the following functions:

1 (A) Provide information and establish education programs on consumer laws,
2 commercial laws, consumer rights, how to recognize, avoid and report scams, product safety,
3 product recalls, current news on consumer issues and a complete list of licensed establishments
4 and professionals.

5 (B) Assist consumers in filing their complaints with the proper agencies and referring
6 them to public prosecutors' office if needed;

7 (C) Informally mediate consumer complaints;

8 (D) Gathering data surrounding complaints to help identify business practices that
9 may harm consumers or reflect a pattern or practice of unfairness or deception substantially
10 affecting the public interest; such data will then be transmitted to the proper law enforcement
11 agencies for investigation;

12 (E) Maintain a website that will contain all the above information.

13 SECTION 5. *Appropriations.* — To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as
14 may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.
15 Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of the CPB and each CPO shall be
16 included in the annual appropriation of the DILG.

17 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision, or part hereof is held invalid or
18 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
19 valid and subsisting.

20 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
21 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
22 with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

23 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
24 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,