

SENATE
S. No. 54

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 3, Section 27, provides:

The State shall maintain honesty and integrity in the public service and take positive and effective measures against graft and corruption.

The Constitution, Article 9, Section 1, further provides:

Public office is a public trust. Public officers and employees must at all times be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency, act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives.

It is a prevalent practice among public officers, whether elected or appointed, to append their names on public works projects which were either funded or facilitated through their office. The media has dubbed this unprincipled practice as “epal.”

“Epal” comes from “mapapel,” a Filipino term for attention-grabbers, scene-stealers, or people who crave a role in affairs that are not necessarily theirs to handle or decide.¹

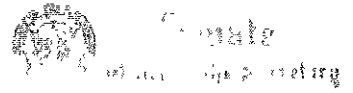
Crediting individual public officers, instead of the Government, fosters and promotes a culture of political patronage and corruption, and diminishes the importance that the public needs to place on supporting government officials, not because of their popularity, but because of their essential role in policy determination, whether on the local or national level. It diminishes the concept of continuity in good governance in the mind of the public.

This bill seeks to promote good governance by curbing the unethical practice of some public officers of claiming credit for public works projects funded by taxpayers’ money.²

Miriam Defensor Santiago
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¹ <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/87821/sen-santiago-to-shame-vain-politicians-thru-%E2%80%98anti-epal%E2%80%99-bill>

² This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, First Regular Session.



15 JUL 1978

SENATE
S. No. 54

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1 AN ACT
2 PROHIBITING PUBLIC OFFICERS FROM CLAIMING CREDIT THROUGH SIGNAGE
3 ANNOUNCING A PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Anti-Signage of Public Works
5 Act."

6 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the State's policy for public officers to serve
7 with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency, and to maintain honesty and
8 integrity in public service.

9 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For the purpose of this Act, the term:

10 (A) "Government" means the national government, local governments, government-
11 owned and government-controlled corporations, and all other instrumentalities or agencies of the
12 Republic of the Philippines and their branches;

13 (B) "Public officer" means elective and appointive officials and employees, permanent or
14 temporary, whether in the classified or unclassified or exempt service receiving compensation,
15 even nominal, from the government as defined in the preceding paragraph;

16 (C) "Public works" includes, but is not limited to streets, bridges, sidewalks, walkways,
17 public buildings, public parks, sewage facilities, basketball courts, waiting sheds, and lampposts,
18 which are funded, wholly or partly, though public funds released by the Government; and

1 (D) "Signage" means any form of written announcement installed, posted, hanged,
2 painted or otherwise displayed in a public place.

3 SECTION 4. *Prohibited Acts.* - The following constitute a violation of this Act:

4 (A) Affixing, or causing to be affixed, the name or image of any public official to a
5 signage announcing a proposed, on-going, or existing public works project.

6 (B) Installing, or causing to be installed, signage announcing the maintenance,
7 rehabilitation, and construction of public works crediting an individual public officer, or bearing
8 his or her image, for the maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction of such public works.

9 SECTION 5. *Allowed Practices.* - Nothing in this Act shall be construed to exclude
10 agencies, departments, and local government units from:

11 (A) Affixing, or causing to be affixed, their official name or logo to a signage announcing
12 a proposed, on-going, or existing public works project; or

13 (B) Installing, or causing to be installed, signage announcing the maintenance,
14 rehabilitation, and construction of public works crediting the agency, department, or local
15 government unit, or bearing their logo, for the maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction of
16 such public works.

17 SECTION. 6. *Removal of Existing Signage.* - The Department of Public Works and
18 Highways, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Metro
19 Manila Development Authority, is hereby ordered to remove all existing signage announcing a
20 proposed, on-going, or existing public works project, and all existing signage announcing the
21 maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction of a public works project bearing the name or
22 image of an individual public officer, within three (3) months after the effectivity of this Act.

23 SECTION 7. *Prescription of Offenses.* - All offenses punishable under this Act shall
24 prescribe in ten (10) years.

1 SECTION 8. *Penalties for Violations.* - Any public officer committing any of the
2 prohibited acts in Section 4 shall be punished with imprisonment for not less than six (6) months
3 nor more than one (1) year, and perpetual disqualification from public office.

4 SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within thirty (30) days after the
5 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Public Works and Highways shall promulgate the rules
6 and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

7 SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
8 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
9 valid and subsisting.

10 SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
11 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent
12 with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

13 SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
14 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,