


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



'16 FEB -2 P 6 22

SENATE
S. No. 3217

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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

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 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.

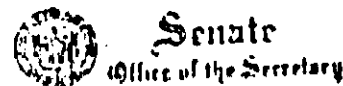
Each office is envisioned to be a one-stop consumer help center that will provide relevant information on goods and services available, finance and credit schemes, product safety, and redress options. It will also protect professionals from unfair competition by unlicensed practitioners and refer those 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.¹


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
DP

¹ This bill was originally filed during the Fifteenth Congress, Second Regular Session.

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

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

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

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

10 SECTION 3. *Consumer Protection Bureau.* – There shall be a Consumer
11 Protection Bureau (CPB) under the Department of Interior and Local Government
12 (DILG). The CPB shall be headed by an undersecretary of the DILG. The CPB shall
13 coordinate with other departments and agencies in the enforcement of consumer
14 protection laws. The CPB shall provide all local consumer protection offices with the
15 latest information on product safety and consumer issues and assist them in the

1 implementation of this Act. It shall also propose legislation and regulations to improve
2 trade and business practices.

3 **SECTION 4. *Consumer Protection Office.*** – A Consumer Protection Office (CPO)
4 shall be established in every province and every city. The CPOs shall have the following
5 functions:

6 **(A)** Provide information and establish education programs on consumer laws,
7 commercial laws, consumer rights, how to recognize, avoid and report scams, product
8 safety, product recalls, current news on consumer issues and a complete list of licensed
9 establishments and professionals;

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

12 **(C)** Informally mediate consumer complaints;

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

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

18 **SECTION 5. *Appropriations.*** – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such sums
19 as may be necessary are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.
20 Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of the CPB and each CPO
21 shall be included in the annual appropriation of the DILG.

22 **SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
23 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
24 provisions hereof.

1 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or
2 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
3 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

4 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
5 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

/ml6Jan2016