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SENATE

S.B. No. 1535

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INTRODUCED BY: SENATOR EMMANUEL D. PACQUIAO

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AN ACT  
PROHIBITING INCUMBENT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO NAME  
GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AFTER THEM OR OTHER PERSONS WHOSE NAME  
OR IDENTITY MAY IN ANY MANNER BE ASSOCIATED WITH SAID OFFICIALS  
AND/OR FROM CLAIMING CREDIT THROUGH SIGNAGE ANNOUNCING A  
PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT

Article 9, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution provides that, "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."

Over the years, elected or appointed public officials have been either appending their names on signage of public works projects and various government activities or label such projects after their names. Although these government projects are facilitated by their office, the fact remains that these are funded by the tax levied from Filipino people. In colloquial term, these public officials are referred to as "epal" or credit-grabbers and attention-seekers.

This unethical practice has led the public to believe that the projects named before the incumbent government officials are indeed sponsored by them, thus tolerating said officials to prematurely campaign for reelection and cultivate a culture of political patronage.

This bill seeks to uphold the honesty, integrity, and transparency to foster good governance in public service.

In view of the foregoing, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



EMMANUEL D. PACQUIAO

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

- 1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the “Anti-Epal Law.”  
2  
3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State that the public officials serve with  
4 utmost honesty and integrity, setting a primordial interest on public trust.  
5  
6 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purpose of this Act, the term:  
7 a. “Government” means the national government, local governments, government-owned  
8 and controlled corporations, and all other instrumentalities or agencies of the Republic of  
9 the Philippines and their branches;  
10 b. “Government Official” means any person, appointed or elected, in government whose  
11 office is given the authority, privilege or right to identify, administer, implement,  
12 coordinate or propose a government project;  
13 c. “Government Project” covers goods and infrastructure projects as defined in Section 5,  
14 paragraphs h and k, respectively, of Republic Act No. 9184;  
15 d. “Public Officer” means elective and appointive officials and employees, permanent or  
16 temporary, whether in the classified or unclassified or exempt service receiving  
17 compensation, even nominal, from the government as defined in the preceding paragraph;  
18 e. “Public Works” includes, but not limited to, streets, bridges, sidewalks, walkways, public  
19 buildings, public parks, sewage facilities, basketball courts, waiting sheds, and lamp  
20 posts, which are funded, wholly or partly, through public funds expended by the  
21 Government; and  
22 f. “Signage” means any form of written announcement installed, posted, hanged, painted or  
23 otherwise displayed in a public place.  
24  
25 SEC. 4. *Prohibited Acts.* – The following constitute a violation of this Act:



- 1 a. Naming or identifying government projects after any government officials or other  
2 persons whose identity may in any manner be associated with said government officials,  
3 except those as may be determined by the National Historical Commission of the  
4 Philippines (NHCP) in accordance with law or its duly issued guidelines or regulations;  
5 b. Affixing, or causing to be affixed, the name or image of any public official to a signage  
6 announcing a proposed, on-going, or existing public works project;  
7 c. Installing, or causing to be installed, signage announcing the maintenance, rehabilitation,  
8 and construction of public works crediting an individual public officer, or bearing his or  
9 her image, for the maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction of such public works.

10  
11 **SEC. 5. *Allowed Practices.*** – Nothing in this Act shall be construed to exclude agencies,  
12 departments, and local government units from:

- 13 a. Affixing, or causing to be affixed, their official name or logo to a signage announcing a  
14 proposed, on-going, or existing public works project; or  
15 b. Installing, or causing to be installed, signage announcing the maintenance, rehabilitation,  
16 and construction of public works crediting the agency, department, or local government  
17 unit, or bearing the logo, for the maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction of such  
18 public works.

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

27  
28 **SEC. 7. *Prescription of Offenses.*** – All offenses punishable under this Act shall prescribe in ten  
29 (10) years.

30  
31 **SEC. 8. *Penalties for Violations.*** – The penalty of one (1) year imprisonment and a fine of  
32 Php100,000.00 to Php1,000,000.00 shall be imposed upon any person who violated the  
33 provisions of this Act. The determination of the amount of fine imposed herein shall be  
34 dependent on the amount of the of the government project concerned.

35  
36 A second violation shall, in addition to the above penalty, subject the offender to absolute  
37 perpetual disqualification to hold office.

38  
39 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of  
40 this Act, the Secretary of Public Works and Highways shall promulgate the rules and regulations  
41 to implement the provisions of this Act with respect to the prohibition on claiming credit through  
42 signage announcing a public works project.

43  
44 In the same period, the Government Procurement Policy Board in coordination with the  
45 NHCP shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively carry out the

1 provisions of this Act with respect to prohibition on the use of names of incumbent government  
2 officials on naming public works or any government projects.

3  
4 **SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or  
5 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain  
6 valid and subsisting.

7  
8 **SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, decree, executive order or parts thereof inconsistent with  
9 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

10  
11 **SEC. 12. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in  
12 at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

13  
14  
15           Approved,