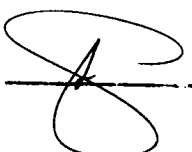


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



23 SEP 13 P1:21

SENATE
S. No. 2440

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Robinhood Padilla

AN ACT
DEFINING THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AS A NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION (NHRI) AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) is an independent office created under the 1987 Constitution to protect and promote the human rights of all persons within the Philippines, as well as Filipinos residing abroad.

On 5 May 1987, under the Executive Order No. 163, s. 1987, CHR was created as the country's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), to give effect to the State policy that "the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights." Its functions and powers are set forth in Article XVIII on Social Justice and Human Rights.

Over the course of 36 years, the CHR has carried out its fair share of wins and challenges through numerous legislations and judicial interpretations of its mandate. Persistent concerns and impediments on human rights in the country have constrained CHR in fully fulfilling its potential, particularly, in compliance with the Paris Principles on national institutions or the "Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions."

Regarded as a "toothless tiger,"¹ the Commission has endured its limitations in

¹ Hon. Isidro Cariño & Erlinda Lolarga v. The Commission on Human Rights, et al., R.A. No. 96681 (1991).

rightfully carrying out its mandate within its jurisdiction. Hence, it is imperative to further strengthen its mandates, powers, and functions and clearly establish its cardinal role in cultivating a culture of human rights culture in the country.

This bill seeks to strengthen the CHR by providing an effective and expanded structural, operational, and functional independence, in order to meet the minimum requirement under the Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions. It also guarantees the CHR's full fiscal autonomy to ensure prompt, immediate, and unrestricted discharge of its functions. It defines the general powers and functions of the Commission, with full authority to act on a complaint or *motu proprio*, in all cases of human rights violations. In addition, it vests the CHR with the power to issue injunctive reliefs and legal measures.

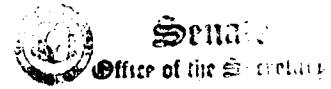
A just and democratic country cannot be attained without a truly independent national human rights institution. Today, more than ever, we need a more active CHR, one that is not strapped to the task of investigation or cannot recognize violations of human rights other than those involving civil and political rights. We need a CHR that can address the challenge of protecting and promoting the human rights of all, especially the vulnerable, the disadvantaged, and the marginalized sectors of society.

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



ROBINHOOD PADILLA
Senator

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
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DEFINING THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AS A NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION (NHRI) AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the "Commission on Human
2 Rights (CHR) Charter."

3 Sec. 2. *State Policy on Human Rights.* — The State values the dignity of every
4 human person and guarantees full respect for human rights. It shall give the highest
5 priority to the enactment of measures that respect, protect, and fulfill the right of all
6 people to human dignity at all stages of human life.

7 Sec. 3. *Definition of Human Rights.* — Human rights are the supreme,
8 universal, inherent, and inalienable rights to life, dignity, and self-development of
9 every person regardless of race, sex, gender, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion,
10 or any other status. These rights include those guaranteed by the Philippine
11 Constitution, domestic laws, and international human rights instruments such as, but
12 not limited to, the international bill of rights, i.e., the Universal Declaration of Human
13 Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International
14 Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; and all other existing and future
15 human rights instruments to which the Philippines is a State Party.

16 Sec. 4. *The Commission as an Independent Office.* — The independence of the

1 Commission on Human Rights, hereinafter referred to as the *Commission*, shall always
2 be respected and upheld. The Commission shall enjoy full fiscal autonomy.
3 Appropriations for the Commission shall not be reduced and shall be automatically
4 and regularly released.

5 Sec. 5. *The Commission as a National Human Rights Institution.* — The
6 Commission is the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of the Philippines in
7 accordance with the *Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris*
8 *Principles)* and other United Nations (UN) Resolutions and Instruments pertaining to
9 the effective functioning of NHRIs. As such, the State and all its agents shall ensure
10 and respect the compliance of the Commission with the Paris Principles.

11 Sec. 6. *The Commission En Banc as a Collegial Body.* — The Commission *en*
12 *banc*, as a collegial body, is responsible for the promulgation of policies, decisions,
13 orders, and resolutions necessary for the efficient administration of the Commission
14 and for the proper execution of its constitutional mandate. Every policy, decision,
15 order, or resolution of the Commission must bear the concurrence and signature of a
16 majority of the Members.

17 In the exercise of its powers and functions, the Commission shall sit and render
18 its decision *en banc*, unless otherwise provided in an internal resolution, adopted by
19 the Commission *en banc*. The Commission shall meet regularly. A majority of the
20 Members shall constitute a quorum.

21 Sec. 7. *The Commission, Composition, and Qualifications.* — The Commission
22 shall be composed of a Chairperson and four (4) Members who must be:

- 23 (a) Natural-born citizens of the Philippines;
- 24 (b) At least thirty-five years of age at the time of their appointment;
- 25 (c) With proven probity, integrity, and competence in the field of human
26 rights work;
- 27 (d) Must not have been convicted by final judgment of any crime involving
28 moral turpitude, and
- 29 (e) Must not have been candidates for any elective position in the elections
30 immediately preceding their appointment.

31 A majority thereof shall be members of the Philippine Bar, who have been
32 engaged in the practice of law for at least ten (10) years. The composition must

1 observe gender-balanced and pluralist representation, which shall be in accordance
2 with the Paris Principles.

3 *Sec. 8. Appointment and Term of Office of the Chairperson and Members of*
4 *the Commission.* — The Chairperson and Members of the Commission shall be
5 appointed by the President for a term of seven years without reappointment.

6 Of those first appointed under the enactment of this Charter, the Chairperson
7 shall hold office for seven (7) years, two Members for five (5) years and the other two
8 Members for three (3) years. The term of the Chairperson and Members shall start on
9 the day immediately after the end of the previous one, regardless of the date of
10 appointment. In no case shall any Chairperson or Member be appointed, reappointed,
11 or designated in a temporary or part-time capacity. Appointment to any vacancy
12 occurring during the term shall be only for the unexpired portion of the term of the
13 predecessor.

14 Vacancies in the offices of the Chairperson and of the Commissioners shall be
15 filled within ninety (90) days from its occurrence.

16 *Sec. 9. Prohibition and Disqualification.* — The Chairperson and Members of
17 the Commission shall not, during their tenure, hold any other office or employment.
18 Neither shall they engage in the practice of any profession or in the active
19 management or control of any business, which in any way may be affected by the
20 functions of their office, nor shall they be financially interested, directly or indirectly,
21 in any contract with, or in any franchise or privilege granted by the Government and
22 its subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities, including government-owned or
23 controlled corporations or their subsidiaries.

24 They shall avoid conflict of interest in the conduct of their office. They shall not
25 be allowed to appear or practice before the Commission within one year following the
26 completion of their term of office, resignation, or any other manner of separation from
27 office.

28 *Sec. 10. Structural Organization.* — The Commission shall have the following
29 offices in the Central Office: Office of the Chairperson, Offices of the Commissioners,
30 Office of the Executive Director, Office of the Commission Secretary, Planning and
31 Management Office, General Administration Office, Financial Management Office,
32 separate offices for the performance of its powers and functions, which shall include

1 but not limited to offices for human rights protection services, human rights education
2 and training services, human rights prevention and visitorial services, human rights
3 policy advisory services, as well as regional offices and such other offices as the
4 Commission may establish in accordance with its functions.

5 The Commission shall have regional offices in every region, each of which shall
6 be headed by a Regional Director and each shall have their own office building. The
7 regional offices will include the geographically grouped regional offices and the
8 Cordillera Administrative Region.

9 The authority and responsibility for the exercise of the mandate of the
10 Commission and for the discharge of its powers and functions shall be vested in the
11 Commission En Banc, who shall have supervision and control of the said office.

12 The Commission may affect changes in the organization as the need arises,
13 *Provided*, that such reorganization shall be funded out of the personnel services
14 appropriation of the Commission.

15 *Sec. 11. Powers and Functions of the Commission.* — The Commission shall
16 promote and protect all human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and
17 cultural rights, and shall have the following general powers and functions:

- 18 (a) Investigate, on its own or on complaint by any party, all forms of
19 violations of human rights;
- 20 (b) Adopt its operational guidelines and rules of procedure and cite for
21 contempt any person for violations thereof or its lawful orders and, for
22 this purpose, the Rules of Court shall have suppletory application;
- 23 (c) Provide appropriate legal and preventive measures, which include but
24 not limited to the following:
- 25 (1) Legal assistance and counseling to victims;
 - 26 (2) Directing concerned government agencies in giving
27 protection to victims of human rights violations;
 - 28 (3) Issuing cease and desist orders; and
 - 29 (4) Petition the Court for Writ of *habeas corpus*, *Writ of*
30 *Amparo*, *Writ of Habeas Data*, *Writ of Kalikasan*, and any
31 other protective writs, in behalf of the victims of human
32 rights violations.

- 1 (d) Provide legal aid services to the underprivileged whose human rights
2 have been violated or need protection. Clients needing legal
3 assistance/representation may also be referred to the Public Attorney's
4 Office or Legal Aid Offices, as may be necessary and appropriate;
- 5 (e) Exercise unannounced, unhampered, unrestricted visits over jails,
6 prisons, camps, custodial/detention or confinement facilities, safe
7 houses, and similar places of deprivation of liberty as stated under Sec.
8 16 of this Act;
- 9 (f) Establish a continuing program of research, education, and information
10 to enhance respect for the primacy of human rights. The Commission
11 shall coordinate with the Department of Education (DepEd),
12 Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Legal Education Board
13 (LEB), Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA), and other State Colleges
14 and Universities to ensure the objective of above stated;
- 15 (g) Recommend to Congress effective measures to promote and protect
16 human rights;
- 17 (h) Recommend effective measures to provide compensation to victims of
18 violations of human rights, or their families;
- 19 (i) Monitor the Philippine government's adherence to international treaty
20 obligations regarding human rights, and actively oversee the
21 compliance of government departments, bureaus, offices, and
22 agencies to their international human rights commitments;
- 23 (j) Grant immunity from prosecution to any person whose testimony or
24 possession of documents or other evidence is necessary or convenient
25 to determine the truth in any investigation conducted by it or under
26 its authority;
- 27 (k) Request the assistance of any department, bureau, office, or agency
28 in the performance of its functions;
- 29 (l) Perform its Gender and Child Ombudsman roles, as well as to ensure
30 that the status, rights, and interests of the marginalized and
31 vulnerable sectors, are upheld in accordance with the Constitution,
32 laws, and international instruments on human rights;

- 1 (m) Issue human rights advisories, positions papers/opinions on all matters
- 2 affecting the human rights of all persons, directed to concerned
- 3 agencies of government for their consideration and implementation;
- 4 (n) Appoint its officers and employees in accordance with law; and
- 5 (o) Perform such other duties and functions as may be provided by law.

6 Sec. 12. *Investigative Powers and Functions.* — The Commission shall

7 investigate, on complaint or on its own, cases of human rights violations. In the

8 exercise of its investigative function, the Commission shall:

- 9 (a) Act promptly on reports or complaints, filed in any form, by any
- 10 individual or organization. Findings of human rights violations shall
- 11 include recommendations for appropriate remedies, and referral to
- 12 proper government agencies for the filing of administrative, criminal,
- 13 or civil actions. The recommendations may include proposals for
- 14 legislative, administrative, or judicial reforms. The investigation and
- 15 other proceedings conducted by any administrative, judicial, or quasi-
- 16 judicial bodies shall not bar the investigation of the Commission on
- 17 allegations of human rights violations;
- 18 (b) Investigate alleged violations of human rights, international
- 19 humanitarian law, and anti-terrorism law violations, as provided in
- 20 pertinent laws;
- 21 (c) Compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of evidence,
- 22 to place the witness under oath or affirmation, issue *subpoenas*, and
- 23 take testimony in any investigation or inquiry conducted by the
- 24 Commission or any of its offices;
- 25 (d) Employ forensic and medical sciences in making findings of human
- 26 rights violations, including but not the limited to: collection of physical
- 27 evidence from locations relevant to its investigation; assessment of
- 28 living victims of human rights violations to determine their physical and
- 29 mental well-being; and conduct independent examination of the
- 30 remains of alleged victims to document any injury and to determine
- 31 cause and manner of death. Pursuant thereto, the Commission shall
- 32 have the authority to exhume and conduct autopsy on the aforesaid

1 human remains, subject to the consent of the family of the deceased,
2 if applicable;

3 (e) Provide psychosocial support, which includes but not limited to referral
4 to primary health care centers with existing mental health programs to
5 victims of human rights violations as well as human rights defenders
6 under threat;

7 (f) Ensure provision of compensation for victims of human rights violations
8 or their families, as appropriate and proportional to the gravity of the
9 violation and the circumstances of each case, resulting from gross
10 violations of international human rights law and serious violations of
11 international humanitarian law;

12 (g) Provide safety to witnesses, as well as human rights defenders under
13 threat. For this purpose, the Commission shall implement and manage
14 a Witness Protection Service, which will provide security, shelter,
15 relocation, and livelihood assistance to witnesses and their families,
16 until such time the threat ceases, or when the case can be endorsed
17 to the Depart of Justice and the witness, or person under threat
18 qualifies for the latter's protection service.

19 The funding for the provision of compensation and for the Witness
20 Protection Service shall be taken from the current year's appropriation
21 of the Commission. Thereafter, the funding requirement shall be
22 included in the annual GAA.

23 (h) Grant immunity from prosecution to any person whose testimony or
24 possession of documents or other evidence is necessary or convenient
25 to determine the truth in any investigation conducted by it or under
26 its authority;

27 (i) Cite for contempt of any person for violating the Commission's Rules
28 of Procedures and lawful orders. In matters concerning contempt, the
29 Rules of Court shall apply suppletory to the Rules of Procedures of the
30 Commission; and

31 (j) Perform such other powers and functions as may be necessary or
32 incidental for the effective exercise or conduct of its investigative

1 powers.

2 Sec. 13. *Visitorial powers.* — The Commission or its duly authorized
3 representatives are hereby mandated and authorized to conduct regular,
4 independent, unannounced, unhampered, and unrestricted visits to or inspection of
5 all places of detention and confinement at any hour.

6 Places of deprivation of liberty refer to any place of detention, imprisonment,
7 confinement, or the placement of a person in a public or private custodial or
8 rehabilitative setting under or within the jurisdiction and control of the Philippines
9 where persons are or may be deprived of their liberty by virtue of an order given by
10 a public authority, at his/her instigation, or with his/her consent or acquiescence.

11 Sec. 14. *Scope of Legal Measures.* — In order to strengthen the exercise of its
12 investigatory power, the Commission, including its Regional Offices, may issue the
13 following legal measures as well as provisional remedies, which shall include, but not
14 limited to:

15 (a) Mandatory Protection Orders (MPOs) directing government security
16 forces and other government agencies or private institutions to provide
17 specific protection to victims of and witnesses to human rights
18 violations;

19 (b) Petition for the protection of the rights of persons, such as:

20 (1) Temporary liberty for medical examination especially for sick
21 and/or pregnant persons deprived of liberty; and

22 (2) Such other legal remedies to correct government actions that
23 encroach on or have the threat to violate human rights, such as
24 petitions for certiorari, mandamus, and declaratory relief;

25 (c) Other remedies in relation to the protection of the rights of children
26 such as, but not limited to:

27 (1) Actions for protective custody of minor-victims of violation of
28 children's rights;

29 (2) Petitions for involuntary commitment, in coordination with the
30 concerned social work and development office; and

31 (3) Petitions, motions, or pleadings to correct an error in the
32 commitment, detention, and/or taking of custody of children in

1 conflict with the law (CICL);

- 2 (d) Mediation between parties on issues that are and can be subject to
3 settlement.

4 Sec. 15. *Monitoring Functions.* — In the exercise of its mandate to monitor the
5 Government's compliance with its international human rights obligations, the
6 Commission shall:

- 7 (a) Monitor and advise government on its responsibilities and obligations
8 under international human rights treaties to which the Philippines is a
9 signatory;

- 10 (b) Prepare its own independent reports to the UN, human rights treaty
11 bodies, and other international human rights mechanisms, including
12 the Universal Periodic Review and special procedures mechanisms, in
13 relation to its monitoring of government's compliance with its
14 international human rights obligation;

- 15 (c) Make the appropriate recommendations to the concerned government
16 agency with regard to requests for official visits of Special Procedures
17 mandate-holders and other treaty and charter-based mechanisms;

- 18 (d) Recommend ratification of, or accession to, international human rights
19 instruments, and ensure their implementation;

- 20 (e) Conduct inquiries on the manner of implementation by the
21 Government of specific human rights obligations;

- 22 (f) Request the cooperation of any public official on the measures
23 undertaken by his or her agency to comply with the State's
24 international human rights obligations;

- 25 (g) Coordinate with relevant government agencies in terms of its
26 compliance with international human rights obligations; and

- 27 (h) Undertake other activities as may be necessary in the conduct of its
28 monitoring and reporting function as an NHRI.

29 Sec. 16. *Other Monitoring Functions.* — The Commission shall also monitor
30 observance by non-state actors of human rights obligations arising from international
31 and domestic laws or agreements entered into with the government, as well as
32 unilateral declarations and similar undertakings.

1 Violations of human rights committed by non-state actors that may be subject
2 to the Commission's monitoring functions shall include, but not limited to:

3 (a) Those committed by rebel groups in relation to international
4 humanitarian law;

5 (b) Those committed by persons, both natural and juridical, in relation to
6 economic, social, and cultural rights, such as but not limited to labor,
7 environment, and demolition of houses; and

8 (c) Those committed by individuals in relation to violations of rights and
9 protections of marginalized, disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors.

10 *Sec. 17. Human Rights Education and Information.* — The Commission shall
11 establish a continuing program of education and information to enhance respect for
12 the primacy of human rights through its education and promotion office, in line with
13 the 1987 Constitution, domestic laws, applicable treaty obligations of the Philippines,
14 and the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

15 The Commission shall develop and implement a Human Rights Education and
16 Training Program for law enforcement officers, education and training institutions, and
17 other government agencies in coordination with the Department of the Interior and
18 Local Government (DILG), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of
19 National Defense (DND), the DepEd, CHED, LEB, PHILJA, and the Professional
20 Regulation Commission (PRC) and all other concerned agencies.

21 Likewise, the Commission shall develop and implement a Human Rights
22 Information Campaign Program for civil society and the general public.

23 *Sec. 18. Human Rights Institute.* — The Commission shall establish a Human
24 Rights Institute (HRI). It is an educational and training institute responsible for the
25 promotion and education of human rights and related fields, with in-house capability
26 in these areas of specialization. The Institute shall focus on formal education programs
27 and shall offer certificate courses on human rights and related fields.

28 *Sec. 19. Functions of the Human Rights Institute.* — The Institute shall have
29 the following functions:

30 (a) Serve as a training institute for investigators, prosecutors, justices,
31 judges, lawyers, and other human rights workers in government and
32 civil society human rights organizations on human rights and related

1 issues. For this purpose, it shall provide and implement curricula on
2 human rights and shall conduct seminars, workshops, and other
3 training programs designed to develop human rights knowledge, skills,
4 attitudes, and behaviors;

5 (b) Receive income, legacies, and donations for the benefit of the Human
6 Rights Institute or for its support or maintenance, which shall be
7 exempt from the payment of taxes and other fees and charges of the
8 government, its branches and subdivision, and which shall constitute
9 a special fund to be administered and disbursed exclusively for the
10 Institute;

11 (c) Enter into consortiums agreements with other educational and training
12 institutes for the development and implementation of its programs on
13 human rights education; and

14 (d) Advise basic and higher education institutions and regulators on the
15 teaching of human rights and related issues including recommending
16 effective measures to promote human rights.

17 **Sec. 20. *Annual Report.*** — The Commission shall prepare and make public an
18 annual report on the findings of its monitoring activities with regard to the status of
19 the government's compliance with its international human rights treaty obligations.
20 The report shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

21 (a) Recommendations for legal, legislative, and institutional reforms for
22 the greater promotion and protection of human rights; and

23 (b) Adoption and implementation by the concerned government agency of
24 the recommendations on the protection and promotion of human
25 rights contained in the Commission's policy issuances and case and
26 investigation resolutions.

27 The Commission shall directly submit its annual report to the Office of the
28 President, the House of Representatives, and the Senate for consideration of the
29 corresponding recommendations and if necessary conduct public hearings pursuant
30 to said report.

31 **Sec. 21. *Legal Assistance Program.*** — The Commission shall maintain a Legal
32 Assistance Program to benefit underprivileged victims of human rights violations,

1 which may be in coordination with human rights organizations and lawyers' groups,
2 the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the Public Attorney's Office, and the Philippine
3 Association of Law Schools.

4 *Sec. 22. Protection of Filipinos Abroad.* — The Commission shall undertake
5 measures for the protection and promotion of human rights of Filipinos living abroad
6 in coordination and cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department
7 of Migrant Workers, or deputize Philippine Embassy or Consulate officers, resident
8 private individuals of known probity and active involvement in human rights, or
9 foreign-based human rights and migrant workers' non-government organizations in
10 countries where the incidence of human rights violations against Filipinos is
11 widespread and commonplace, including traditional host countries of overseas Filipino
12 workers.

13 The Commission may establish multilateral relationships with other national
14 human rights institutions for the protection of the human rights of Filipinos.

15 *Sec. 23. Security of Data.* — All documentation and information collected by
16 the Commission shall be kept strictly confidential unless the Commission decides
17 otherwise in relation to a particular document: *Provided*, That no sensitive information,
18 whether personal or otherwise, shall be published without the express consent of the
19 individual or authority concerned: *Provided further*, That this provision shall be in
20 accordance with all applicable existing and future laws, particularly, but not limited to,
21 the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Publication of sensitive information without the express
22 consent of the individual or authority concerned will be dealt with accordingly, which
23 may include, but will not be limited to, being penalized under the Data Privacy Act of
24 2012.

25 *Sec. 24. Franking Privilege.* — The Commission may transmit through ordinary
26 mail and/or registered mail with a return card, free of charge, all official
27 communications and papers directly connected with the conduct of its duties,
28 functions, or the exercise of administrative supervision over its personnel.

29 *Sec. 25. Financial Report.* — The Commission shall make available to the public
30 its annual financial statements and related financial reports as required by governing
31 oversight agencies.

1 Sec. 26. *Appropriations.* — The amount needed for the initial implementation
2 of this Act shall be taken from the current year's appropriations of the Commission.
3 Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be
4 included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

5 Sec. 27. *Transitory Provisions.* — Nothing in this Act shall prejudice the
6 positions, emoluments, security of tenure, qualifications, privileges, and benefits of
7 the incumbent Chairperson and Members of the Commission, and the officers and
8 employees of the Commission upon its effectivity. However, officials and employees
9 of the Commission, in aid of its reorganization upon the effectivity of this Act, may
10 avail of an early retirement program as may be provided for by the Commission.

11 Sec. 28. *Implementing Rules and Regulation.* — The Commission shall, within
12 sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, formulate the implementing rules and
13 regulations in the exercise of its general, investigative, monitoring, education, and
14 advocacy powers and functions in consultation with other concerned government
15 agencies and stakeholders.

16 Sec. 29. *Separability Clause.* — If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
17 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall
18 remain in force and effect.

19 Sec. 30. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
20 executive order, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent with the provisions
21 of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

22 Sec. 31. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days
23 following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general
24 circulation.

Approved,