

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

7 JUL -3 AM 11:38

SENATE
S.B. No. 743

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is a fact that window bars are most prevalent in low-income areas and high crime areas, where other security risks often overshadow fire safety standards.

According to the Bureau of Fire Protection, children, the elderly, persons who are mobility-impaired, and firefighters are especially vulnerable to fatalities or injuries involving residential window bars. Many people have died in residential fires as a result of being trapped by window bars. There should be a campaign to raise public awareness on the risks and casualties of window bar entrapment during residential fires.

The Bureau of Fire Protection encourages fire prevention through fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, and planned escape routes as main goals of avoiding casualties in residential and commercial fires.

This bill seeks to give the local governments, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Bureau of Fire Protection jurisdiction with respect to releasing systems on residential window bars and to establish a consumer product safety standard ensuring that all such bars include a quick-release mechanism.¹


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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¹ This bill was originally filed in the Thirteenth Congress, Third Regular Session.

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1 AN ACT
2 TO PROVIDE FOR SAFE ACCESS IN FIRE EMERGENCIES

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

5 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Safe Access in Fire
6 Emergencies Act of 2007.”

7 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the
8 State to ensure the safety of its people against fire emergencies, through establishing
9 measures which will prevent injuries, most especially death.

10 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.*

11 “Window Bars” means any metal or other bars, grills, grates, heavy-duty screens,
12 glazing, or other barriers that are designed--

13 (1) to cover exterior and interior escape windows in residential dwelling units;

14 and

15 (2) to deter any physical security threats to the home, including threats from
16 burglars.

17 Such term does not include any such barriers that (a) protect children from falling
18 from open windows in upper floors of buildings, and (b) protect nonresidential or
19 commercial properties.

20 SECTION 4. *Safety Standard for Window Bars.* –

21 (a) Rulemaking Required- The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in
22 cooperation and coordination with the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) shall initiate a

1 rulemaking proceeding within 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act to
2 establish a consumer product safety standard for window bars, except that the DTI and
3 the BFP may extend such 90-day period for good cause. Notwithstanding any other
4 provision of law, the DTI and BFP shall promulgate a final rule establishing such
5 consumer product safety standard within 12 months after the date on which the
6 rulemaking pursuant to this subsection is initiated, except that both may extend such 12-
7 month period for good cause. Such consumer product safety standard shall take effect
8 upon the expiration of the 6-month period beginning on the date on which the final rule
9 establishing such standard is promulgated.

10 (b) Releasing System Requirement - The standard established pursuant to
11 subsection (a) shall--

12 (1) require all window bars that are manufactured or installed in the Republic of
13 the Philippines to incorporate releasing systems that meet the minimum standards under
14 subsection (c); and

15 (2) address releasing systems for interior- and exterior-based window bars.

16 (c) Minimum Standards for Releasing Systems - The minimum standards under
17 this subsection for releasing systems for window bars shall require that such systems--

18 (1) when actuated, can move such bars and provide egress to occupants of
19 residential dwelling units equipped with such bars; and

20 (2) at a minimum, can be actuated manually from the interior of a residential
21 dwelling unit and provide escape through the protected opening.

22 (d) *Consultation*- In developing the standard pursuant to subsection (a), the DTI
23 and BFP shall consult with experts, including manufacturers of window bars, housing and
24 building codes authorities, and representatives of the appropriate government agencies.,
25 officials in different regions that have in effect window bar safety standards, and other
26 similar public safety -related organizations.

27 SECTION 5. Labeling Requirement. – The Department of Trade and Industry
28 shall require each manufacturer selling, or offering for sale, in the Philippines, any

1 window bars to include in the packaging for the window bars a written statement clearly
2 explaining how the window bars are to be configured and installed and the inclusion and
3 operation of the releasing system incorporated pursuant to section 4(b).

4 SECTION 6. *Provision Of Data.* – The Department of Trade and Industry and the
5 Bureau of Fire Protection shall establish and maintain a National Electronic Injury
6 Surveillance System (NEISS) code and system for collection of information and statistics
7 on casualties associated with window bars.

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

11 SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
12 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to,
13 or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended
14 accordingly.

15 SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
16 after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

spsc/5-28-07