


THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Second Regular Session

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SENATE

S. No. 2347

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANNY VILLAR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It was reported that the number of human rights violations in the year 2005 was the highest ever recorded since the time of the Marcos government. The Alliance for the Advancement of Human Rights of KARAPATAN, a human rights organization based in Manila, documented 874 cases of human rights violations with 99,011 individual victims from January to November 30, 2005. The violations affected 14,302 families in 288 communities. Further, there were 179 victims of politically motivated killings compared with 63 victims in 2004. This number does not include 52 victims who survived assassination attempts. There were also 46 victims of abductions/forced disappearances in 2005. Currently, the target of human rights violations is the local leaders of progressive party list groups who have been reported to be harassed, threatened, illegally detained and killed.

The number of human rights violations happening in almost every corner of the local community is alarming. The response of the national government appears to be inadequate in fully and promptly addressing the rising number of human rights violations in the country. Hence, the local governments must be mobilized to play a primordial role in the implementation of human rights laws in their communities. On this note, the attached bill establishes human rights resource centers in local communities to integrate the promotion and protection of human rights in the conduct of local governance and in local law enforcement.


Accordingly, approval of this bill is highly recommended.


MANNY VILLAR

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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SENATE

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S. No. 2347

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANNY VILLAR

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN PHILIPPINE COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION AND PROTECTION BY ESTABLISHING HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE CENTERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

^{if}
Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in congress assembled:

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the **“Human Rights Resource Center Act of 2006”**.

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby the policy of the State to promote social justice in all phases of national development as it values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights. It shall articulate the twenty-three (23) international covenants and treaties on human rights, to which it is a signatory and has ratified in its national and local laws.

It shall also be the policy of the State to give priority to education among the youth to foster patriotism and nationalism that shall promote their total liberation and development as a human being.

Section 3. *The Human Rights Resource Centers.* – Human rights resource centers, hereinafter referred to as the HR Resource Centers, are hereby established throughout the country to integrate the promotion and protection of human rights in the implementation of the criminal justice system, in the conduct of local governance and in local law enforcement. These centers shall be the repository of all human rights concerns at the provincial level.

The HR Resource Centers shall be attached to the Office of the Governor but the planning, policy-making and implementation shall be done with transparency and accountability. However, the Regional Office of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Office of the Provincial Prosecutor, the Office of the Provincial Commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Office of the Provincial Director of the Philippine National Police (PNP) shall collaborate and coordinate in ensuring the effective operation of the HR Resource Centers including, but not limited to, the mobilization of resources and the provision of technical support.

At the operational level, the HR Resource Centers shall be headed by a volunteer lawyer from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines with support staff composed of volunteers from students of law schools who are rendering paralegal services as part of their curriculum requirements, people's organizations and nongovernment organizations (Pos and NGOs, respectively) with credibility in the locality and independent of the local government.

Section 4. *Functions of the HR Resource Centers.* – The HR Resource Centers shall have the following functions:

- (a) Set up a library of international covenants and treaties to which the Philippines is a signatory, has acceded to and/or has ratified;
- (b) Provide the necessary resource persons, literary and other educational materials to persons or group of persons who advocate and work for a continuing program of education that enhances respect for the primacy of human rights;
- (c) Monitor compliance with international treaty obligations and national legislation on human rights for the purpose of ensuring the proper enforcement of laws and observance of international obligations at the local level;
- (d) Coordinate with various government agencies involved in the promotion and protection of various aspects of human rights, as well as with the Presidential Committee on Human Rights;
- (e) Coordinate with barangay, municipal and provincial human rights officers, desks or committees, as the case may be, and with the Regional Office of the CHR on issues arising from violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the people, particularly those of women and children, for purposes of referring or endorsing the same through an appropriate mechanism to the proper government agencies for appropriate actions and immediate resolution;
- (f) Take an active part in efforts aimed at promoting peace and development in the area and serve as the convergence point for these efforts at the local level;
- (g) Recommend the enactment of necessary local legislation that will protect and promote human rights in the province; and
- (h) Participate in the development planning and budgeting process of the local government unit concerned using the principles of rights-based development wherein development plans for the locality come from the citizens who are targeted to be the direct beneficiaries of the plans rather than the government imposing the plans on the citizens.

Section 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The CHR, in consultations, coordination and collaboration with the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice, the AFP, the PNP, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and human rights NGOs and POs duly recognized and accredited by the government, shall prepare the implementing rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any provisions, or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Section 7. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, executive order, decree, issuance, ordinance, rule and regulation or any part thereof contrary or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is also hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

Section 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.