

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

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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SENATE

S.No. 298

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Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 5 of Republic Act No. 6713, otherwise known as the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees", enjoins all public servants to respond or act promptly on letters, telegrams or other means of communication sent by the public.

The law gives such officials a period of fifteen (15) working days within which to respond or take action on the request. However, not a few government officials are remiss in this obligation whether due to oversight or deliberate failure. In most instances, it takes an unreasonably long time for a response to come along.

The failure to respond may not necessarily be a conscious and deliberate act to ignore a letter-request because some officials are really mired in work. Yet the wisdom of the law is beyond cavil. Public office is a public trust, and all government officials and employees must at all times be accountable to the people. Certainly, a citizen however ordinary deserves nothing less than public service discharged with utmost responsibility, integrity and efficiency.

It is within this context that this measure is being proposed. This bill provides stiffer penalties for the failure of public officials to respond or act on letters and other communications from the public if only to put more teeth to the law.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is strongly recommended.


ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator

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S. No. 298

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Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR STIFFER PENALTIES AGAINST PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND
EMPLOYEES WHO REFUSE OR NEGLECT TO ACT PROMPTLY ON THE
PUBLIC'S PERSONAL TRANSACTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS AS
REQUIRED UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6713, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE "CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC
OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES"

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Prompt Action on Letters and Requests.*** – All public officials and
2 employees shall, as a great rule, respond to letters, telegrams, or other means of
3 communication sent by the public within fifteen (15) working days from receipt thereof,
4 in accordance with the provisions of Section 5 of Republic Act. No. 6713, otherwise
5 known as the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and
6 Employees". The reply must contain the action taken on the request.

7

8 **SEC. 2. *Exceptions.*** – In cases where the subject matter of the written requests,
9 petitions or motions sent by means of letters, telegrams or the like, is non-routine or the
10 issues involved are not simple or ordinary or where the action desired cannot be acted
11 upon in the ordinary course of business of the department or agency concerned, action on
12 such cases shall be made in accordance with the procedures prescribed under Rule VI,
13 Section 3 of the Implementing Rules of R.A. 6713 promulgated by the Civil Service
14 Commission.

1 **SEC. 3. *Other Duties.*** – All public officials and employees are likewise under
2 obligation to see to it that all official papers and documents are processed and completed
3 within a reasonable time from the preparation thereof and that public documents are
4 made accessible to and readily available for inspection by the public within reasonable
5 working hours. In the discharge of the abovementioned duties and responsibilities, public
6 officials and employees shall be guided by the procedures prescribed under Rule VI,
7 Section 4 to 7 of the Implementing Rules of R.A. 6713 referred to in the preceding
8 section.

9
10 **SEC. 4. *Penalties.*** – Any public official or employee, regardless of whether or
11 not he holds office or employment in a casual, temporary, hold-over, permanent or
12 regular capacity, who commits any violation of this Act shall, after due notice and
13 hearing by the appropriate body or agency, be punished with a fine of not less than the
14 equivalent of three (3) months salary but not exceeding the equivalent of six (6) months
15 salary or suspension for a period of not less than six (6) months but not exceeding one (1)
16 year, *or* removal from office, depending upon the gravity of the offense and taking into
17 consideration other aggravating factors, such as recidivism on the part of the respondent
18 officials or employee.

19
20 **SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.*** – The provisions of Section 11 of R.A. 6713, other
21 laws, decrees, orders, rules or regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith, are
22 repealed or modified accordingly.

23
24 **SEC. 6. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
25 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,