

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Fifteenth Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 629

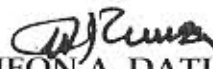
Introduced by the Honorable Simeon A. Datumanong

Explanatory Note

It is common knowledge that the successful prosecution of criminal offenses primarily rests on the willingness of witnesses to fully cooperate with the authorities who investigate and prosecute criminal offenses. Many cases were lost because of the natural reticence of prospective witnesses to involve themselves in criminal actions because of fear for their lives and limbs. It is therefore imperative for the State to encourage prospective witnesses to help the authorities prosecute criminal offenses by providing them the necessary assistance not only for their safety but also their welfare.

This seeks to amend certain provisions of Republic Act 6981, otherwise known as the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act, to further protect the rights and benefits of the witness whose life and limb are put in peril as he/she acts upon his/her social duties. Among the expanded rights and benefits which are intended to be given to him are free medical treatment and hospitalization. In case of death, the witness' minor or dependent children shall also be entitled to free education if they are qualified thereto.

This representation believes that these amendments will go a long way to promote the welfare of the witness and his/her family, and further strengthen the administration of justice. In view thereof, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


SIMEON A. DATUMANONG
2nd District, Maguindanao

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AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6981, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
"WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY AND BENEFIT ACT", AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Section 8, paragraphs (e) and (g) of Republic Act No. 6981, otherwise known as the "Witness protection, Security and Benefit Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 8. *Rights and Benefits.* – The Witness shall have the following rights and benefits:

"a) x x x

"b) x x x

"c) x x x

"d) x x x

"e) To be provided with **NEEDED** free medical treatment, hospitalization and medicines **PARTICULARLY** for any injury, [or] illness **OR ANY OTHER MEDICAL CONDITION** incurred or suffered by

him/HER [because of] **WHILE ON** witness duty **OR WHILE IN THE SAFEHOUSE** in any private or public hospital, clinic, or at any such institution at the expense of the Program.

" WITNESS DUTY SHALL INCLUDE THE ATTENDANCE OF THE WITNESS IN THE COURT, BODY OR AUTHORITY WHERE HIS/HER TESTIMONY IS REQUIRED AS WELL AS CONFERENCES AND INTERVIEWS WITH PROSECUTORS OR INVESTIGATING OFFICERS. A WITNESS WHO IS RELOCATED TO AN ACCREDITED WITNESS PROTECTION SECURITY AND BENEFIT PROGRAM (WPSBP) SAFEHOUSE/TEMPORARY SHELTER SHALL BE CONSIDERED TO BE UNDER WITNESS DUTY.

"f) x x x

"g) [In case of death or permanent incapacity, his] THE WITNESS' minor or dependent children shall be entitled to free education, from primary to college level in any state[, or private] school, college or university [as may be determined by the Department,] as long as they shall have qualified thereto. THE EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT HEREIN PROVIDED CAN BE AVAILED BY THE WITNESS' MINOR OR DEPENDENT CHILDREN DURING HIS/HER ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM AND UP TO ONE (1) YEAR AFTER THE TERMINATION OF HIS/HER WITNESS DUTY."

SEC. 2. A new section shall be inserted between Section 12 and Section 13 of the same Act, which shall read as follows:

a) "SEC. 12-A. PERPETUATION OF TESTIMONY. - A WITNESS ONCE ADMITTED INTO THE PROGRAM SHALL PERPETUATE HIS/HER TESTIMONY PURSUANT TO RULE 134 OF THE REVISED RULES OF COURT."

SEC. 3. The Department of Justice shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 4. If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such shall not invalidate any other section of this Act.

SEC. 5. All laws, decrees, orders, rules, regulations, ordinances or parts

thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days upon its publication in at least two (2) general newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,