

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

15TH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3364

Introduced by **REP. SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Revised Penal Code lists some minor felonies, offenses and infractions which cause little or no damage to persons, property and community, and which are often motivated not by malice but by some psychological disorders that should be addressed with treatment, rather than with punishment.

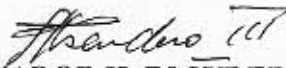
One good example is vagrancy, penalized under Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code, which fails to see that vagrants are victims of poverty and the lack of opportunities for employment and access to decent standards of living and quality of life.

Aside from vagrancy are such felonies as simple disobedience to an agent of a person in authority, alarms and scandals, refusal of assistance, refusal to discharge elective office, abandonment of minor by a person entrusted with his custody and care and indifference of parents and premature marriages.

In the case of crimes of anticipation of duties of a public office, reckless imprudence and negligence respecting damage only to property, the applicable penalties are fines, indemnification, restitution, compensation and community service, rather than deprivation of liberty.

This bill seeks to decriminalize the above offenses in order to decongest the load of the justice system, which prioritizes the rehabilitation of the offender and acknowledges the value of every human life.

In view of the foregoing, early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.


SALVADOR H. ESCUDERO III
Representative
1st District, Sorsogon

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AN ACT
TO IMPROVE THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE BY DECRIMINALIZING
AND PROVIDING FOR THE IMPOSITION OF ALTERNATIVE PENALTIES
SHORT OF DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY FOR CERTAIN OFFENSES

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide for a more humane, realistic and responsive mode of dealing with criminal offenders. This objective shall be attained, among others, by decriminalizing or declaring as lawful certain offenses.

SEC. 2. *Offenses Decriminalized.* – The following offenses are hereby decriminalized:

- a) Simple disobedience to an agent of a person in authority as defined in Article 151 of the Revised Penal Code;
- b) Alarms and scandals as defined in Article 155 of the Revised Penal Code except those committed inside public buildings, churches and schools on occasions when there are assemblies or official functions taking place;
- c) Vagrancy as defined in Article 202 of the Revised Penal Code: *Provided*, that prostitution as defined by the same Article shall continue to be punishable;
- d) Refusal of assistance as defined in Article 233 of the Revised Penal Code;
- e) Refusal of discharge elective office as defined in Article 234 of the Revised Penal Code;
- f) Premature marriages as defined in Article 351 of the Revised Penal Code; and
- g) All offenses similar to the foregoing which are penalized by special laws or ordinances.

SEC. 3. *Offenses with Substituted Penalties.* – In lieu of the existing penalties involving deprivation of liberty for anticipation of duties of a public office as defined in Article 365 resulting only in damage to property, respectively of the Revised Penal Code, the following sanction shall be imposed either alternatively or cumulatively in the discretion of the Court:

- a) Fine
- b) Indemnification
- c) Restitution
- d) Compensation
- e) Community service for not more than thirty (30) days

SEC. 4. *Transitory Provisions.* – All cases pending before the courts and the prosecutors' offices involving offenses decriminalized herein shall be ipso facto dismissed or terminated. All convicts serving sentence herein shall be released immediately.

SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations and other issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are deemed modified, revoked or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) leading newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,