

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 6540



Introduced by the HON. MARK A. VILLAR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is taunted to have the longest holiday celebration in the world. It is said that as soon as the month of September begins, the air starts to fill with the tell tale signs of the holiday season. On radio, we hear the strings of Christmas carols; on television, we start to witness advertisements of holiday items and programs with Christmas themes and all around us, ordinary families are starting to air out the decors which they only placed in storage barely eight months ago.

The most important feature of the Filipino holiday is the serving of holiday dishes which are sought after in parties and other gatherings. Most of these savory holiday culinaria are made of meat and meat food products which fill the mind and the spirit with nostalgia of past holidays with family and loved ones.

It is unfortunate however that our holiday celebrations are often marred with news of food poisoning and of incidents where double dead found in markets within and around the metropolis. Commonly known as "*Botcha*" or hot meat, the product is not only of poor quality but also a major health hazard for consumers.

Some crafty businesses have also resorted to processing "*botcha*" into meat products such as *longganisa*, *tocino*, *tapa*, ham and siomai while some have been cut into pieces and mixed with fresh meat for sale to the general public. Thus, it is essential that public interest be upheld by assuring that meat and meat food products offered for sale are not only certified to have passed the standards of meat inspection but also to be properly labelled in order to inform the consumer of information which are needed to make a proper and healthy choice.

Taking into consideration Article 2 Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution which requires the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them, this bill institutes proper labeling of meat and meat food products, in order to protect the public against deceptive, unfair and unconscionable sales of meat and meat food products in the country.

CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES
FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

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For the reasons stated above and in the interest of public health and welfare, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Villar', with a stylized, flowing script.

MARK A. VILLAR

CONGRESS OF THE PHILIPPINES
FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
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Introduced by the HON. MARK A. VILLAR

AN ACT REQUIRING THE PROPER LABELLING OF MEAT AND MEAT FOOD PRODUCTS

Be it enacted by the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines in Congress Assembled;

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as "**Anti-Botcha Act of 2012.**"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to protect the interest of consumers against deceptive, unfair, and unconscionable sales, acts and practices, and to adopt measures to ensure the safe supply of meat and meat food products in the country.

SECTION 3. Labeling of meat and meat food products. -

a. **Mandatory Labeling.** - The National Meat Inspection Service hereinafter referred to as the NMIS shall provide by regulation that the following offered for retail sale bear a label that identifies its place of origin:

1. Imported meat and meat food product imported into the Philippines shall bear or shall be accompanied by labeling that identifies the place of origin of the animal that is the source of the imported carcass, or part thereof or meat that is part of the contents of the imported meat food product;

2. Imported meat food product prepared in the Philippines using any carcass, or part thereof, or meat imported into the Philippines shall bear or shall be accompanied by a labeling that identifies the place of origin of the animal that is the source of the imported carcass, or part thereof, or meat;

3. Muscle cuts of Philippine beef, Philippine pork, Philippine lamb, imported beef, imported lamb, and imported pork; and,

4. Ground beef, ground lamb, and ground pork.

b, **Audit Verification System for Philippine and Imported Muscle Cuts of Beef, Lamb, and Pork and Ground Beef, Lamb, and Pork.** - The NMIS may require by regulation any person that prepares, stores, handles, or distributes muscle cuts of Philippine beef, imported beef, Philippine lamb, imported lamb, Philippine pork, imported ground beef, ground lamb, or ground pork for retail sale to maintain verifiable record keeping audit trail that will permit the NMIS to ensure compliance with the regulations promulgated under subsection (a). For this purpose, the term "place of origin" means the locality or country in which an animal is raised before slaughter or where the animal was subsequently slaughtered.

SECTION 4. Packaging Requirement. - Any person who packages meat for sale which has been treated using an additive, colorant, or any other method to enhance the appearance of the meat, including but not limited to carbon monoxide, vitamin E, or any other substance either approved or not by the Food and Drug Administration to improve the appearance of the meat, shall include a clear, conspicuous, and easily readable label on the packaging stating: **THIS MEAT HAS BEEN TREATED TO ENHANCE ITS APPEARANCE.**

SECTION 5. Public Education and Information Campaign. - A continuing information and education campaign on the hazardous effects in the consumption of meat and meat food products from dead or diseased animals shall be promoted by the National Meat Inspection Service, in partnership with the Local Government Units and private sector.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Not later than thirty (30) days after the date of enactment of this Act, the NMIS in consultation with the private sector shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 7. Improving Meat Inspection. - An amount of twenty percent (20%) accrued from the fees, fines and charges collected by the National Meat Inspection Service shall be used for the improvement of its monitoring services including the printing of information materials for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. Penalties. - Any person who shall violate Section 4 of this Act shall upon conviction, be subject to a fine of not less than Ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than two (2) years, or both upon the discretion of the court. If the offender is an alien, he shall be deported after service of sentence and payment of fine without further deportation proceedings.

The business license of an entity that violated any provision of this act shall be revoked.

SECTION 9. Disposal of confiscated meat and meat food products. - Any meat or meat food products found to have been prepared, handled, packed, stored, transported or offered for sale as human food not in accordance with the provisions of this Act shall be confiscated and disposed of as provided in the Implementing Rules.

SECTION 10. Separability Clause. - If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. Repealing Clause. - All laws, orders, rules or regulations which are inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

SECTION 12. Effectivity. -This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, which ever comes earlier.

Approved,