

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 796



Introduced by Representative Harlin Cast. Abayon
First District of Northern Samar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

There is an urgent need to provide protection and security to witnesses and resource persons who attend legislative investigations conducted by the Congress of the Philippines. It is our duty to provide for their safety and well-being who, unless protected, may not give us evidence because of the fear of death.

This measure was previously filed by Senator Pangilinan in the 15th Congress. The passage of this bill is earnestly sought here in the 16th Congress.


HARLIN CAST. ABAYON
Representative
First District of Northern Samar

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AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 6981
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT PROVIDING
FOR A WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY
AND BENEFIT PROGRAM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Section 4 of Republic Act No. 6981 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 4. *Witness in Legislative Investigations.* ~ In case of legislative investigations in aid of legislation, **THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES OR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS THE CASE MAY BE, SHALL PROVIDE FOR A SEPARATE "WITNESS PROTECTION, SECURITY AND BENEFIT PROGRAM" FOR THE RESOURCE PERSONS AND/OR WITNESSES.** The witness and/or resource persons, with his express consent, may be admitted into the Program upon the recommendation of the legislative committee where his testimony is needed when in its judgment there is pressing necessity therefor: Provided, that such recommendation is approved by the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as the case may be.

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES OR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS THE CASE MAY BE, SHALL HAVE PRIMARY JURISDICTION AS TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM. THE CONGRESS MAY REQUEST THE NECESSARY ASSISTANCE FROM ANY DEPARTMENT, BUREAU, OFFICE OR ANY

OTHER EXECUTIVE AGENCY TO ASSIST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM.

HOWEVER, THE PROGRAM SHALL BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE SENATE OR THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INDEPENDENT FROM ANY OTHER DEPARTMENT, BUREAU, OFFICE, OR ANY OTHER EXECUTIVE AGENCY WHEN IT IS APPARENT THAT THE INVESTIGATION MIGHT BE PREJUDICED AND/OR WHEN THE SAFETY OF THE WITNESS MIGHT BE JEOPARDIZED ESPECIALLY WHEN PUBLIC OFFICIALS ARE INVOLVED. CONGRESS WILL PROMULGATE ITS OWN RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROVISION."

SEC. 2. All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions, rules and regulations contrary or inconsistent with the provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspaper of general circulation whichever comes first.

Approved,