

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

House of Representatives
Quezon City

16th Congress
3rd Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6374



Introduced by Congressman Alfredo D. Vargas III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Tourism is an important part of our country's development plans. The Philippines' rich biodiversity, beaches, mountains, rainforests, islands, and diving spots attract more than four million visitors from around the world. The tourism industry is also vital in economic development as it has contributed 7.8% to the country's gross domestic product in 2014. Thus, not only tourism helps spread our heritage, it also supports the grassroots economy, advances work creation, and increases the consumption of local produce.

However, over-enthusiastic locals tend to harass or, to the worst extent, bully tourists into buying their products and availing of their services. Thus, tourists end up being traumatized during their stay in the country, causing our tourism industry to suffer in the long-run.

This bill seeks to prevent the harassment of tourists by directing the Department of Tourism and local barangay officials to coordinate with local vendors and service providers in promoting a more responsible type of marketing practices.

Through this measure, we are ensuring that our tourists have a pleasant experience in the country, thus securing the development of the country's tourism industry and its contribution to economic development.

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


ALFREDO D. VARGAS III

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**AN ACT
TO PREVENT THE HARASSMENT OF TOURISTS**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Anti-Tourist Harassment Act”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Principles.* – The state recognizes tourism as a major contributor to our country’s economic growth. Towards this end, the State shall enact measures to protect our tourists, domestic or international, from unnecessary inconveniences during their stay. The right of the local businesses to reasonably promote their business shall be respected.

SECTION 3. *Tourist Havens.* – The Department of Tourism (DOT) shall identify the barangays which shall be considered as Tourist Havens. For the purposes of this Act Tourist Havens are barangays which have a high volume of tourists who stay for longer than one day.

SECTION 4. *Unlawful Solicitation.* – It shall be unlawful for persons to repeatedly and aggressively solicit business from tourists who have already expressed their desire not to be bothered by solicitations. Persons who commit unlawful solicitation shall incur the following penalties:

1. First offense: Warning
2. Subsequent offense against the same person: Five hundred pesos fine for each incursion.

SECTION 5. *Deputization of Barangay Officials.* – The DOT may deputize the Barangay Officials in the Tourist Havens to enforce this Act.

SECTION 6. – *Tourism Help Desk and Regular Patrol.* – The DOT or the Deputized Barangay Officials in the Tourist Havens shall set up an assistance desk/office in the areas frequented by tourists to receive tourist complaints and manage all tourist related issues in their barangays.

The DOT or the Deputized Barangay Officials shall also conduct regular patrols in such areas to ensure that the provisions of this Act are observed and immediate assistance to tourists are offered.

SECTION 7. *Responsible Marketing.* – The DOT, in coordination with the barangay officials shall conduct regular seminars and programs addressed to local vendors and service providers promoting responsible marketing to tourists.

SECTION 8. – *Implementing Rules.* – The DOT, in consultation with the Department of Justice and the Department of Interior and Local Government, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within one year from its effectivity.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule of regulation contrary to or is inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,