

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6490



Introduced by Congressman Alfredo D. Vargas III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Road accidents are one of the leading causes of deaths in the Philippines. According to the Philippine National Police Highway Patrol Group, the number of road accidents in the country is going up every year due to "human errors and lack of road discipline."

One critical factor that leads to road accidents is the lack of proper road signs. In the Philippines, in particular, these are either stolen or vandalized. According to the Department of Public Works and Highways, a total of 42,558 road signs have already been stolen and vandalized in 2013. The reported vandalized road signs can still be seen in various areas in Metro Manila and are rendered almost useless.

The State values life and so shall promote road safety to prevent accidents. This bill seeks to impose stricter penalties for stealing or vandalizing road signs. Through this, we will be able to help prevent people from stealing or damaging road signs and ensure that these road signs serve their purpose—to safeguard Filipino drivers and pedestrians.

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


ALFREDO D. VARGAS III

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AN ACT
IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES FOR THE STEALING OR VANDALIZING OF
GOVERNMENT ROAD SIGNS AND OTHER RISK REDUCTION DEVICES, ACCESSORIES
AND OTHER FACILITIES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Stealing and Vandalism of Traffic Signs Act of 2016.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared as the policy of the State to protect the people from damage to property and loss of lives by improving conditions of roads and making vehicular traffic as safe as possible by providing effective driver information through signs and accident-prevention devices. In pursuit of this, the State has mandated concerned government agencies and instrumentalities to install in conspicuous and appropriate places road signs and devices to warn drivers of risks and dangers on the road.

SEC. 3. *Theft and damage of traffic signs and road safety devices.* – It shall be unlawful to dismantle, remove, transfer, and take into possession the road warning devices installed by national and local governments or non-government organizations for the purpose of warning motorists of dangers along the road.

SEC. 4. *Traffic signs and accident warning devices and instruments.* – For the purpose of this Act, “traffic signs and accident warning devices and instruments” shall mean road or traffic signs exemplified by signs of “stop”, “yield”, “slippery when wet”, signs of zigzagging sections of roads, railings, and similar devices. Man-hole covers shall also be included as part of the accident-prevention devices warning the public to avert, or prevent the loss and properties covered under this Act.

The Department of Public Works and Highways shall provide a list of all traffic signs and accident reduction/prevention devices and instruments. The list shall be updated as the need arises.

SEC. 5. *Punishable actions under this Act.* – The following actions are punishable under this Act:

- (A) Mere possession without authority of any devices or instrument or piece of equipment listed under Section 4 of this Act or accessories thereof;
- (B) Selling or buying of stolen traffic signs and warning devices listed under Section 4 of this Act or any accessories thereof.
- (C) Vandalizing or damaging of road signs and warning devices under Section 4 of this Act or any accessories thereof.

SEC. 6. *Penalties.* – The following penalties shall apply to violations under this Act:

- (A) *Stealing of or possessing road signs and warning devices including man-hole covers and their accessories.* – The penalty of Twelve (12) to Fifteen (15) years of imprisonment or a fine ranging from Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php200,000.00) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php500,000.00) or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any person found guilty of stealing or in possession of road signs and warning devices including man-hole covers as defined in Section 4 of this Act;
- (B) *Damaging/vandalizing or destroying road signs and warning devices including man-hole covers and their accessories.* – The penalty of Six (6) to Ten (10) years of imprisonment or a fine ranging from One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000.00) to One Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php150,000.00) or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any person found guilty of damaging/vandalizing or destroying road signs and warning devices and their accessories including man-hole covers as defined in Section 4 of this Act.
- (C) *Selling or buying of road signs and warning devices including man-hole and their accessories.* – The penalty of selling or buying disaster warning and risk reduction instruments and their accessories as defined in Section 4 of this Act shall be similar to those under paragraph (A) of the same Section of this Act; and
- (D) *Government employees as accomplice in the violation of provisions of this Act.* – Government employees found guilty of this Act either as principal or as an accomplice shall be penalized according to the same Section of this Act. In addition, such government employee shall forfeit all his/her retirement benefits and shall be barred from any employment within the government service.

SEC. 7. *Incentives.* – Incentives shall be provided to a person or persons who will provide information leading to the apprehension of violators of this Act. The nature and

amount of incentives shall be provided for in the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Non-applicability of Articles 308, 309, 310 and 311 of the Revised Penal Code.* – Articles 308, 309, 310 and 311 of the Revised Penal Code, as amended, shall not be applicable to cases contemplated or enumerated in this Act. For theft cases, the provisions in this Act shall apply.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Public Works and Highways shall issue within One Hundred Eighty (180) days from the date of the approval of this Act, the implementing rules and regulations

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* – Any portion or provision of this Act, which may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, ordinances, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect immediately after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,