

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7151



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
PENALIZING PRANK CALLERS TO EMERGENCY HOTLINES

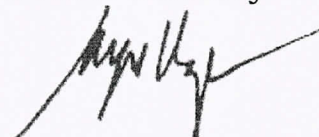
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Emergency situations are serious, unexpected, and often dangerous circumstances that require immediate attention and action. To improve the prompt delivery of emergency services to the public, President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order No. 56 in 2018, institutionalizing the Emergency 911 Hotline as the nationwide emergency hotline number which serves as a call and dispatch center connecting people in need of assistance to government emergency response resources such as the Philippine National Police, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and other medical workers and rescue services.

With limited government resources, to call on the Emergency 911 Hotline with the intent to malign and mischievously abuse these services do not only undermine emergency response efforts, but would also risk the lives and safety of those who are truly in need at any given time.

This bill seeks to discourage mischievous calls and ensure proper operation of emergency services by prohibiting and penalizing prank callers to emergency hotlines.

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


ALFRED VARGAS

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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-Prank Callers Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State promote the general welfare of the people. Towards this end, the State aims to prohibit malicious and improper use of telecommunication devices.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

- (a) *Emergency* – refers to a serious, unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate attention and action;
- (b) *Hotline* – refers to a direct telecommunication set up for a specific purpose; and
- (c) *Prank call* – refers to a mischievous or malicious phone call made to trick or fool someone with the intent to annoy, abuse, threaten, harass, or solicit any comment, request, suggestion or sound which are obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy or indecent, or a call intending to make false requests or false alarm of an emergency, knowing the report or information or alarm to be false.

SECTION 4. Prohibited Act. – Emergency hotlines established for the

purpose of responding to emergency situations shall, at all times, be free from receiving unnecessary calls. It shall be prohibited for any individual to make prank calls to any emergency hotline at any time.

SECTION 5. *Penalties.* – Any person who violates this Act shall be penalized with:

- (a) *Arresto menor* and a fine of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) for the first offense;
- (b) *Arresto mayor* and a fine of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) for the second offense;
- (c) *Prison correccional* and a fine of Fifteen Thousand Pesos (P15,000.00) for the third and succeeding offenses;

Provided, That the foregoing penalties shall be imposed without prejudice to other liabilities under the Revised Penal Code or any special law arising out of the prohibited act herein.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – Any portion or provision of this Act that is declared unconstitutional shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,