



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2973



Introduced by: **Hon. Josephine Veronique "Jaye" Lacson-Noel** and
Hon. Florencio Gabriel G. Noel

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Verbal abuse is defined under the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) Board Resolution No 01, Series of 2017 – 077 as the “use of degrading or insulting words resulting to loss of self-esteem, public humiliation, and loss of public dignity”. No less than the Constitution under Article II, Section 11, guarantees in its policies that “the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.” In advocating for Social Justice and Human Rights in Article XIII of the Constitution, the first section gives a mandate to Congress by stating that it shall “give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and **enhance the right of all the people to human dignity**, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good.”.

Nowadays, it can be said that verbal abuse has become a harmful practice against the marginalized such as the elderly, women, children, and persons with disability. Such has been ignored because there is no penal law that punishes abusers, thus demeaning the dignity of the oppressed individuals and groups who continue to be victims and choose to suffer in silence because there is no law protecting them from this type of abuse.

This bill seeks to remedy the lack of sanction for verbal abuse by providing a penalty to those who would demean the dignity of the elderly, women, children, and persons with disability by uttering degrading or insulting words aimed at them with the purpose of humiliating them or subjecting them to unnecessary embarrassment detrimental to their human dignity.

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


Josephine Veronique "Jaye" R. Lacson-Noel


Florencio Gabriel G. Noel



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AN ACT

DEFINING AND PENALIZING VERBAL ABUSE AGAINST THE ELDERLY, WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

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 “**Verbal Abuse Act**”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to value the dignity of the elderly, women, children, and persons with disability and thereby guarantee full respect to human rights. The State also recognizes the need to protect the family and its members from all forms of abuse, including verbal abuse.

Towards this end, the State shall exert efforts to address verbal abuse which are deleterious and discriminatory to the elderly, women, children, and persons with disability in keeping with the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the provisions of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

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

- a) *Children* refers to those below eighteen (18) years of age or older but are incapable of taking care of themselves as defined under Republic Act No. 7610, otherwise known as the “Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act”;
- b) *Elderly* refers to senior citizens who resides in the Philippines at least sixty (60) years old as defined under Republic Act No. 9994, otherwise known as the “Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010”;
- c) *Persons with disability* are those suffering from restriction of different abilities, as a result of a mental, physical or sensory impairment, to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being as defined under Republic Act No. 7277, otherwise known as the “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons”; and
- d) *Verbal abuse* is the use of degrading or insulting words resulting to loss of self-esteem, public humiliation, and loss of public dignity, which includes shouting, swearing, scaring

or humiliating the elderly, women, children, and persons with disability through name-calling, ridicule, constant criticism, accusing, blaming, or showing disrespect.

SECTION 4. Penalties – Commission of the acts described under Section 3(d) hereof shall be punishable by *prision correccional* and a fine not less than ten thousand pesos (P 10,000) but not more than twenty thousand pesos (P 20,000). Whenever applicable, administrative charges may also be filed.

SECTION 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, the Department of Social Welfare and Development shall prepare and issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. Suppletory Application – For purposes of this Act, the Revised Penal Code and other applicable laws shall have suppletory application.

SECTION 7. Separability Clause. – If any of the sections or provisions of this Act is held invalid, all other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, issuances, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,