



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1655**



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) records 6,440 deaths due to transportation accidents between January to September 2021, a 4.2% increase from the previous year. Considering mobility restrictions were still being enforced because of the pandemic, the reported number of accident cases with no significant decrease is very alarming.

Most road accidents in the country are caused by human error. Unfortunately, one of the contributing factors is missing, damaged, or vandalized road and traffic signages. This reprehensible practice, which to some perpetrators is just a prank, is costly and inconvenient, to say the least. For one, it costs taxpayers money to replace new signs. Another is extracting expense and nuisance to people whose properties are damaged. Most tragically, it could lead to death for road users like motorists, passengers, drivers, and pedestrians.

In view of the above, this bill seeks to improve road conditions and ensure road safety for road users with proper signs and preventive devices. The proposed measure aims to discourage theft and vandalism of government roads and traffic signs and similar devices through stiffer penalties.

A similar version of this bill was filed in the 18th Congress, passed the Third and Final Reading, and transmitted to the Senate on December 16, 2020. And was previously filed by this representation during the 19th Congress. Support for this bill is earnestly sought.


CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO
Representative
2nd District, Davao Oriental



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AN ACT
IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES FOR THE OFFENSES OF STEALING OR
VANDALIZING OF GOVERNMENT ROAD AND TRAFFIC SIGNS,
WARNING DEVICES, ACCESSORIES AND OTHER FACILITIES

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title** – This Act shall be known as the “*Stealing or*
2 *Vandalizing of Government Road and Traffic Signs and Devices Act*”.

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy** – It is the policy of the State to protect
4 the safety of people and their property, in this regard, the State shall endeavor
5 to continually improve the condition of roads and make vehicular traffic as
6 safe as possible by providing motorists with appropriate information through
7 signs and accident-prevention devices. In pursuit of this end, the State shall
8 mandate concerned government agencies and instrumentalities to install, in
9 conspicuous and appropriate places, road and traffic signs and devices, to
10 warn motorists of risks and dangers on the road.

11 **SEC. 3. Theft and Damage of Government Traffic and Road Signs**
12 **and Devices** – It shall be unlawful to steal or vandalize government road and
13 traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and other facilities, installed by
14 national and local governments to caution motorists of imminent dangers
15 along the road.

16 **SEC. 4. Government Road and Traffic Signs Warning Devices and**
17 **Accessories** – As used in this Act, the term “road and traffic signs, warning
18 devices and accessories, and other facilities” shall mean road or traffic signs
19 exemplified by the signs “Stop”, “Yield”, “Slippery When Wet”. Signs indicating
20 zigzagging sections of roads, railings, and similar devices shall serve to provide

road information, notices, and warnings to motorists and the public to facilitate vehicular traffic and avoid the occurrence of accidents and loss of life, and damage to property. A man-hole cover shall be considered a road accident-prevention accessory.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall provide a list of all lawful road and traffic signs, warning devices and accessories, and other facilities owned by the government. The list shall be updated as the need arises.

SEC. 5. Prohibited Acts – It shall be unlawful for any person to commit any of the following acts:

1. Steal government road and traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any parts thereof, installed by national and local governments, listed and duly provided by the DPWH under Section 4 of this Act;
2. Vandalize, damage, destroy, dismantle, or disassemble government road and traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part thereof, installed by national and local governments, listed and duly provided by the DPWH under Section 4 of this Act;
3. Sell or buy stolen road and traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part thereof, listed and duly provided by the DPWH under Section 4 of this Act;
4. Attempt to commit any of the aforementioned prohibited acts; and
5. Benefit from the proceeds or fruits of any of the abovementioned prohibited acts knowing that the same is derived from the commission of a prohibited act.

SEC. 6. Penalties – The violation of this Act shall be punished with the following penalties:

- a. The penalty of imprisonment of not less than twelve (12) years but not more than (15) years or a fine twice (2x) the market value of the government property stolen in Philippine Currency, or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any person found guilty of stealing government road and traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part thereof, including manhole covers as defined in Section 4 of this Act;
- b. The same penalty provided under paragraph (a) of this Section shall be imposed on any person found guilty of selling or buying government road and traffic signs, other risk reduction or warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part thereof as defined in Section 4 of this Act;

- 62 c. The penalty of imprisonment of not less than six (6) years but not
63 more than ten (10) years or a fine twice (2x) the market value of
64 the government property in Philippine Currency, or both, at the
65 discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any person found
66 guilty of vandalizing, destroying, damaging, tempering, and
67 disassembling government road and traffic signs, warning
68 devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part thereof,
69 including manhole covers as defined in Section 4 of this Act;
70 d. The penalty of imprisonment of not less than two (2) years but not
71 more than seven (7) years or a fine twice (2x) the market value of
72 the government property in Philippine Currency, or both, at the
73 discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any person found
74 guilty of unlawfully benefiting from the proceeds or fruits of any
75 of the prohibited acts enumerated in Section 4 of this Act; and
76 e. Government employees found guilty of a violation of this Act either
77 as principal or as an accomplice shall be penalized according to
78 the penalties prescribed in Section 6 of this Act. In addition, such
79 government employees shall forfeit all their retirement benefits
80 and shall be barred from further employment with the
81 government.

82 **SEC. 7. Incentives** – Cash incentives shall be provided to a person or
83 persons who will provide information leading to the apprehension of violators
84 of this Act. The amount of incentives shall be provided for in the rules and
85 regulations to be promulgated to implement this Act.

86 **SEC. 8. Non-applicability of Articles 308, 309, and 310 of the**
87 **Revised Penal Code** – Articles 308, 309, and 310 of the Revised Penal Code
88 shall not apply to cases contemplated or enumerated in this Act.

89 **SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations** – Within one hundred
90 eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DPWH shall issue the
91 necessary rules and regulations for its implementation.

92 **SEC. 10. Separability Clause** – Any portion or provision of this Act
93 which may be declared unconstitutional or contrary to any existing law shall
94 not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof.

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

98 **SEC. 12. Effectivity** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
99 its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

100 *Approved.*