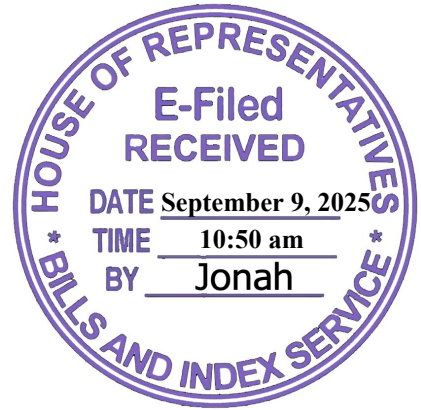


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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4449



INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right of the people to petition the government for redress of grievances and to participate in the formulation of public policy is enshrined in the Constitution. Lobbying, as a mechanism for such participation, is a legitimate and recognized practice in democratic societies. It enables individuals, organizations, and interest groups to convey their views to policymakers and advocate for legislative or regulatory outcomes that align with their interests. However, in the absence of a comprehensive legal framework governing lobbying activities in the Philippines, this practice remains largely unregulated, opaque, and susceptible to abuse.

The proposed measure aims to establish a comprehensive and transparent system for regulating lobbying activities across all branches and levels of government. It aims to promote accountability, integrity, and public confidence in the policymaking process by ensuring that lobbying is conducted in a manner that is open, ethical, and subject to public scrutiny.

This bill repeals Republic Act No. 1827, which narrowly defined and regulated lobbying only within the confines of the legislative branch, and replaces it with a more expansive and modern framework. The proposed legislation covers lobbying activities directed not only at Congress and the Commission on Appointments but also at the Executive Department, constitutional commissions, and local government units.

The proposed measure clearly defines what constitutes lobbying, distinguishes between direct and indirect lobbying, and identifies who qualifies as a lobbyist, whether an individual or an entity.

It requires all individuals or organizations engaged in lobbying activities to register with the appropriate regulatory body and obtain a license to lobby. Registration includes the disclosure of clients, the nature of lobbying engagements, and the specific issues or legislation being influenced.

The bill mandates the creation of a centralized, publicly accessible, regularly updated, and maintained Register of Lobbyists by a Joint Congressional-Executive Secretariat. This register will serve as a central repository of information on all registered lobbyists and their activities. Lobbyists are also required to submit periodic, notarized reports detailing their lobbying expenditures, sources of income, and the legislative or policy matters they have sought to influence. The bill requires that all lobbying-related information be made publicly

1 available through an online portal, allowing citizens to monitor lobbying activities and assess
2 their impact on public policy.

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4 The measure, meanwhile, provides reasonable exemptions for communications made
5 in an official capacity, media reporting, judicial proceedings, and public petitions, while
6 ensuring that these exemptions are not used to circumvent the law. However, any violation of
7 the measure is subject to administrative and criminal penalties.

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9 By institutionalizing a transparent and accountable lobbying framework, this proposed
10 legislation seeks to uphold the integrity of democratic governance, prevent undue influence in
11 public affairs, and ensure that policymaking remains responsive to the broader public interest
12 rather than to a narrow or concealed agenda.

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

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MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO
Representative
1st District, Marikina City

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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4449

INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

AN ACT
REQUIRING FULL DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES IN THE
GOVERNMENT SECTOR, REPEALING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1827, AND
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

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 "Lobbying Disclosure Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in public office by mandating full public disclosure of lobbying activities. The State recognizes lobbying as a constitutionally protected form of expression and participation in governance. However, such activities must be regulated to prevent undue influence, corruption, and conflicts of interest in the policymaking process.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* As used in this Act:

- (a) "Lobbying Activities" shall refer to any direct or indirect communication with public officials intended to influence legislation, policy, regulation, or government action.
- (b) "Direct Lobbying" shall refer to personal communication with public officials or their staff, including meetings, calls, letters, or emails, with the intent to influence decisions.
- (c) "Indirect Lobbying" shall refer to activities aimed at shaping public opinion or the policy environment, such as media campaigns, grassroots mobilization, or opinion polling.
- (d) "Lobbyist" shall refer to any individual or entity engaged in lobbying for compensation or benefit, including former public officials, law firms, corporations, NGOs, and industry associations.
- (e) "Register of Lobbyists" shall refer to a centralized, publicly accessible database of all registered lobbyists and their declared activities.

SEC. 4. *Scope of Application.* This Act shall apply to all lobbying activities directed at:

- (a) Members, officials, and committees of Congress and their staff;
- (b) Officials of the Executive Department;
- (c) Constitutional commissions;
- (d) Local government units; and

(e) Government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs).

SEC. 5. *Registration and Licensing.* All lobbyists must register with the appropriate government registering agency and obtain a license to lobby. The registration shall include:

- (a) Name and contact details of the lobbyist;
- (b) Name and business address of the client or principal;
- (c) Description of lobbying objectives and subject matter;
- (d) Identification of targeted public officials or agencies; and
- (e) Estimated lobbying expenditures and income.

Licenses shall be valid until December 31 of the year they are issued and must be renewed annually.

SEC. 6. *Establishment of Lobbying Registries.* Each department and constitutional office shall establish a Lobbying Registration Office responsible for:

- (a) Processing registrations and licenses;
- (b) Monitoring compliance;
- (c) Investigating conflicts of interest;
- (d) Submitting reports to the Joint Secretariat.

SEC. 7. *Joint Secretariat.* A Joint Congressional-Executive Secretariat shall be created to:

- (a) Maintain the national Register of Lobbyists;
- (b) Publish annual reports on lobbying activities;
- (c) Ensure public access to lobbying records via an online portal.

SEC. 8. *Reporting Requirements.* Licensed lobbyists shall submit periodic reports, including:

- (a) Notarized statements of lobbying expenses and income;
- (b) List of legislative or policy matters influenced;
- (c) Updates to registration information; and
- (d) Reports shall be submitted at the end of each Congress (for legislative lobbying) or annually (for executive lobbying).

SEC. 9. *Prohibited Acts.* The following acts are prohibited:

- (a) Lobbying without a valid license;
- (b) Failure to file required reports;
- (c) Submission of false or misleading information; and
- (d) Obstruction of lawful lobbying activities.

SEC. 10. *Penalties.* To ensure strict compliance with the provisions of this Act and to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability in lobbying activities, both administrative and criminal penalties shall be imposed on individuals or entities found in violation of this law.

- (a) Administrative Penalties - Any person or organization engaged in lobbying without proper registration or license, or who fails to submit the required disclosures and reports, shall be subject to administrative sanctions. These may include:

- (1) Suspension or revocation of lobbying license for a period determined by the regulatory authority, depending on the gravity of the offense;
- (2) Debarment from engaging in lobbying activities for a period of up to five (5) years;
- (3) Imposition of administrative fines, which may range from Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00) per violation;
- (4) Public censure or blacklisting in the Register of Lobbyists for repeated or willful violations.

Administrative penalties shall be imposed after due notice and hearing, and may be appealed to the appropriate judicial or quasi-judicial body.

(b) Criminal Penalties - In cases where violations are committed with intent to deceive, defraud, or obstruct the lawful implementation of this Act, criminal liability shall be incurred. The following acts shall be punishable under criminal law:

- (1) Willful failure to register or obtain a license prior to engaging in lobbying activities;
- (2) Knowingly submitting false, misleading, or fraudulent information in registration or disclosure reports;
- (3) Bribery, coercion, or other corrupt practices in the course of lobbying;
- (4) Obstruction of investigations or refusal to comply with lawful orders of the regulatory authority.

Any person found guilty of such offenses shall, upon conviction, be punished by:

- (a) Imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than five (5) years, and/or
- (b) A fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00).

In the case of juridical entities, the responsible officers, directors, or managing partners shall be held liable. If the offender is a public official, the penalty shall be imposed in addition to any administrative or criminal liability under existing laws, including dismissal from service and perpetual disqualification from holding public office.

Sec. 11. Exemptions. This Act shall not apply to certain communications and activities that, while potentially related to public policy, do not constitute lobbying as defined herein.

Exempted from the coverage of this Act are communications made by individuals or entities in the course of performing their official duties as public officials or employees, including those made in the discharge of their legislative, executive, judicial, or administrative functions. Also excluded are journalistic activities and media reporting undertaken in good faith and in the pursuit of public information, as well as statements or publications made in the exercise of constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and of the press.

Furthermore, communications made in the context of judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings, including pleadings, motions, and oral arguments, are not considered lobbying under this Act. Public petitions, citizen initiatives, and other forms of civic engagement that are not compensated or conducted on behalf of a client are likewise exempt. These exemptions

1 are intended to preserve the integrity of democratic participation and ensure that legitimate
2 expressions of opinion, advocacy, or legal representation are not unduly restricted by the
3 regulatory framework established in this Act.
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5 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** Republic Act No. 1827 and all other laws, decrees, or regulations
6 inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
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8 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
9 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
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11 **Approved.**
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