

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5593**



Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right of the people to information is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution (Article III, Section 7 and Article II, Section 28). This foundational principle recognizes that citizens have the right to access official records, documents, and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as government research data used as the basis for policy development.

However, despite this constitutional guarantee, the lack of a comprehensive enabling law has historically hampered its full and effective implementation across all branches and levels of government.

While an Executive Order (E.O. No. 2, s. 2016) operationalized the right to information within the Executive Branch, it has limitations. It does not automatically apply to the Legislative and Judicial branches, nor does it mandate compliance for Local Government Units (LGUs), creating significant accountability gaps.

Without a law, the processes, exemptions, and appeal mechanisms for accessing information can be inconsistent and confusing. An Executive Order does not carry the same weight of penalties as a law for public officials who unjustly deny or intentionally conceal public information.

This proposed bill addresses these critical gaps by creating a comprehensive, institutionalized framework for the right to information. It will elevate the constitutional right to information into a predictable, standardized, and enforceable law, thereby promoting transparency, accountability, and participatory democracy.

In view of the aforesaid, the immediate approval of this measure is hereby earnestly sought.


SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.

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HOUSE BILL NO. **5593**

Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE PEOPLE'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO
INFORMATION ON MATTERS OF PUBLIC CONCERN, ESTABLISHING A
FRAMEWORK OF ACCESS THERETO, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR
VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*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 “Right to
Information Act”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State recognizes the right of the
people to information on matters of public concern and adopts a policy of full
public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest. This right is
indispensable to the exercise of the people's right to effective and reasonable
participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* - This Act shall cover all government agencies in the
Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches, including:

1. Constitutional Offices.
2. Local Government Units (LGUs).
3. Government-Owned and -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs).
4. State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).
5. All other offices and instrumentalities of the government.

It shall also cover private entities to the extent that they deal, contract, or
transact with a government agency, or when the information relates to the
utilization of public funds.

SEC. 4. *Right to Information.* - Every Filipino citizen shall have the right
to access official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official
acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as government research data used as
basis for policy development, subject only to the limitations provided in
Section 7 of this Act.

SEC. 5. *Mandatory Proactive Disclosure.* - All government agencies shall proactively disclose and publish on their official websites, in print, and/or on accessible physical bulletin boards, without the need for a request, the following information:

1. Annual Budget and Expenditures: Detailed annual and quarterly budgets, and actual disbursement and utilization reports.
2. Procurement: All invitations to bids, names of participating bidders, contract awards, contractors/suppliers, and financial terms of all public contracts.
3. SALN: Statements of Assets, Liabilities, and Net Worth (SALN) of all officials covered by Republic Act No. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees), subject to the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012.
4. Performance: Agency mandates, functions, charters, organizational structure, performance targets, and official rules and procedures.
5. Citizens Charter: A comprehensive Citizens' Charter detailing frontline services.

SEC. 6. *Simplified Access Procedure.*

1. Written Request: A request for information shall be in writing, stating the name and contact information of the requesting party, valid proof of identity, a reasonable description of the information requested, and the purpose of the request.
2. No Wrong Door: If the requested information is not held by the agency, the receiving officer shall immediately refer the request to the correct agency and notify the requesting party.
3. Time to Respond: The government agency concerned shall act on the request and notify the requesting party of the decision to grant or deny the request within fifteen (15) working days from its receipt. The period may be extended for a maximum of twenty (20) working days only for justifiable reasons, with written notification to the requesting party.
4. Reasonable Fees: No fee shall be charged for the filing of the request. Agencies may only impose a reasonable fee to reimburse the actual cost of reproduction, copying, and/or postal delivery.

SEC. 7. *Inventory of Exceptions.* - The right to information shall not extend to the following matters, which shall be strictly construed and limited:

1. National Security: Information pertaining to national defense or security which, if disclosed, would pose a clear and present danger to the security of the State.

2. Privacy: Sensitive personal information and privileged information protected by the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. No. 10173), unless the individual concerned has consented to the disclosure.
3. Executive Privilege: Matters covered by executive privilege, as recognized and limited by the Supreme Court.
4. Law Enforcement: Information that would compromise ongoing law enforcement or criminal investigations, or endanger the life or safety of any person.
5. Confidentiality by Law: Information that is specifically declared by an existing law or a decision of the Supreme Court as confidential.
6. Pre-Decisional Records: Records of internal deliberations and opinions which form part of the decision-making process, provided that once the decision has been finalized, the records of the decision and the facts upon which it was based shall be disclosed.

SEC. 8. *Remedies in Case of Denial.*

1. Administrative Appeal: A denial of an information request shall be immediately subject to a mandatory administrative appeal within the agency, or to an independent oversight body/Central Appeals Committee, within fifteen (15) days from the notice of denial.
2. Judicial Relief: Failure of a government agency to comply with the mandated period for response or a denial upon appeal shall be a ground for the requesting party to file a Verified Petition for Mandamus before the appropriate court, free of all court and filing fees.

SEC. 9. *Administrative and Criminal Liability.*

1. Failure to Act: An administrative penalty of suspension without pay for six (6) months for the first offense, and dismissal from service for the second offense, shall be imposed upon any public official or employee who maliciously delays, obstructs, or denies access to information.
2. Destruction of Records: Any public official or employee who knowingly destroys, conceals, or falsifies information to prevent public disclosure shall be liable for an administrative penalty of dismissal, and a criminal penalty of imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than six (6) years, and a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00).

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and operative.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,