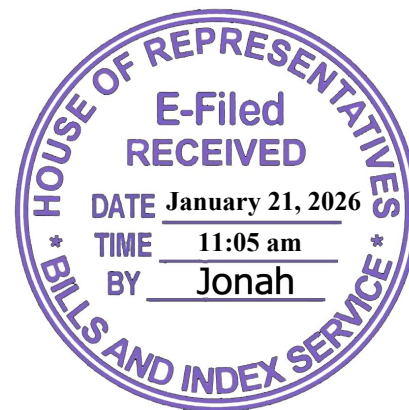




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7229



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
PROHIBITING AND PENALIZING THE UNAUTHORIZED PRACTICE
OF LAW AND OTHER RELATED ACTS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Despite the practice of law being a privilege granted only to those duly admitted to the bar through the exclusive regulatory authority of the Supreme Court¹, cases of unauthorized practice of law still persist, and many unqualified individuals misrepresent themselves as lawyers, prepare legal documents, or give legal advice, thereby exposing the public to fraud, incompetence, and denial of justice.

Thus, this bill seeks to protect the legal profession and the public from unscrupulous individuals who misrepresent themselves as lawyers by penalizing the unauthorized practice of law. The measure intends to strengthen the trust and confidence of the public in the legal system through mitigating the instances of fraud, misrepresentation, and deceit that undermine the proper administration of justice.

This bill was also filed during the 19th Congress, where it was approved on third and final reading by the House of Representatives.

¹ 1987 Constitution, Article VIII, Section 5(5)

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



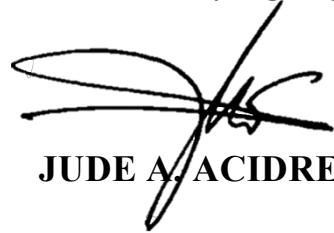
FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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

SECTION 1. The penalty of *prision mayor* in its minimum period to *prision mayor* in its medium period, or a fine of at least One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00), or both, shall be imposed on any person who has engaged or is engaging in the unauthorized practice of law as defined in this Act.

For purposes of this Act, the following acts are considered as unauthorized practice of law if committed by a person who is not a member of the Philippine Bar:

- a) Representing oneself as, or holding oneself out to be, a member of the Philippine Bar, to the public or to another person, whether or not for profit, or for any other purpose;
- b) Except in the instances allowed by law or the Rules of Court, entering an appearance in court or signing any pleading, motion, entry of appearance, manifestation, letter, or any other paper filed before any court, tribunal, quasi-judicial body, or any agency or instrumentality of the government, thereby representing oneself as a member of the Philippine Bar;
- c) Advertising or representing oneself as a member of the Philippine Bar by means of signs, cards, billboards, advertisements, written or printed matter, or through radio, television, social media platforms, websites, or any other means of publication, or otherwise publicizing or advertising oneself in any other manner to be a member of the Philippine Bar, including using the title "Attorney", "Attorney-at-law", or "Atty." attached to one's name, or attaching one's name as a partner, associate, or member of a law firm or law office; and
- d) Representing oneself, by the same means or in the same manner enumerated in the immediately preceding paragraph, to be capable of facilitating petitions, actions, or remedies, including actions for annulment or nullity of marriages, or declaration of presumptive death.

Any person bearing a fake, counterfeit, or tampered identification card purportedly issued by the Supreme Court or the Integrated Bar of the Philippines

exclusively for members of the Philippine Bar shall be prima facie evidence that such person is engaged in the unauthorized practice of law.

SECTION 2. The penalty of *prision correccional* in its medium period to *prision correccional* in its maximum period, or a fine of at least One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00), or both, shall be imposed upon any person who, not being a member of the Philippine Bar and, not having a valid notarial commission duly granted in accordance with law and the Rules of Notarial Practice promulgated by the Supreme Court, shall perform any act as a Notary Public as defined in the Rules on Notarial Practice, or shall represent, advertise, or otherwise hold oneself out as a Notary Public.

SECTION 3. Any person found guilty of the acts punishable under this Act shall likewise suffer the accessory penalty of perpetual absolute disqualification to hold public office.

SECTION 4. The same penalties provided in this Act shall also be imposed on persons who commit the same acts punishable herein after being disbarred or after their names are otherwise stricken off the roll of attorneys by order of the Supreme Court.

SECTION 5. The prosecution of any person pursuant to this Act shall not be a bar against prosecution under any other law or against any criminal, civil, or administrative liability arising from the commission of the acts provided herein.

SECTION 6. If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. All laws, rules, regulations, orders, circulars and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,