

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10523



Introduced by Representative Jaime R. Fresnedi

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to address the absence of a uniform standard for verifying the authenticity of government-issued documents by establishing a Government Document Authentication Framework that prescribes uniform security and verification standards for official government documents and communications. The proposed measure adopts a technology-neutral approach by providing for the use of appropriate authentication features, including standardized government watermarks, unique document identifiers, machine-readable verification features, digital authentication mechanisms, and such other security measures as may be prescribed under the implementing rules and regulations.

The authenticity of government documents is essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring the efficient delivery of public services. Every day, government agencies issue official documents that are relied upon by citizens, businesses, and other institutions in the exercise of legal rights and the conduct of official transactions. By promoting consistency in document security and facilitating reliable verification mechanisms across government, this measure aims to deter fraud, strengthen administrative integrity, improve public confidence in government-issued documents, and support the continuing modernization of public administration.

While existing laws already penalize the falsification of public documents, there remains no uniform standard for securing and verifying the authenticity of government-issued documents and communications. As government services continue to evolve in both physical and digital formats, there is a need to adopt consistent authentication measures that will make official documents easier to verify and more difficult to falsify.

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

JAIME R. FRESNEDI
Representative
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING UNIFORM SECURITY AND VERIFICATION STANDARDS FOR
OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS,
PROVIDING FOR A GOVERNMENT DOCUMENT AUTHENTICATION
FRAMEWORK, 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 "*Government Document Security Act.*"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to safeguard the integrity, authenticity, and credibility of official government documents and communications by adopting uniform security and verification standards that deter fraud, prevent falsification, and strengthen public confidence in government-issued documents. Towards this end, the State shall establish a Government Document Authentication Framework that shall govern the adoption of standardized security features for both physical and electronic government documents.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act:

- (a) **Authentication Feature** – refers to any physical, electronic, digital, optical, or machine-readable security mechanism capable of verifying the authenticity of a government document.
- (b) **Government Document** – refers to any official record, certificate, permit, license, clearance, correspondence, memorandum, order, notice, identification, report, certification, contract, or other document, whether physical or electronic, issued by any government office.
- (c) **Verification System** – refers to the centralized electronic platform established under this Act.

SEC. 4. *Coverage.* – This Act shall apply to all departments, bureaus, offices, agencies, instrumentalities of the National Government, including constitutional commissions,

government-owned or controlled corporations, state universities and colleges, and local government units, insofar as they issue official government documents and communications.

SEC. 5. *Government Document Authentication Framework.* – A Government Document Authentication Framework is hereby established to provide uniform standards for securing and verifying the authenticity of official government documents and communications. All covered government agencies shall adopt the authentication standards prescribed under this Act and its implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 6. *Minimum Security and Verification Features.* – The authentication standards shall consist of one or more of the following security and verification features, as may be appropriate to the nature and classification of the document:

- (a) A standard government watermark;
- (b) Unique government document identification numbers;
- (c) Machine-readable authentication features, including Quick Response (QR) Codes;
- (d) Digital signatures or electronic authentication mechanisms, where applicable;
- (e) Tamper-evident security features; and
- (f) Such other security measures as may be prescribed under the implementing rules and regulations.

The authentication features adopted shall be appropriate to the nature, purpose, and classification of the government document or communication.

SEC. 7. *Verification System.* – The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the concerned government agencies, shall establish or designate a secure verification mechanism through which the authenticity of government documents issued under this Act may be verified by authorized persons or the public, whenever appropriate.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Agency.* – The DICT shall be the lead implementing agency of this Act and shall, in coordination with the National Archives of the Philippines, the National Printing Office, the Department of Justice, the Department of Science and Technology, and such other agencies as may be necessary, formulate and periodically update the uniform standards for government document authentication.

SEC. 9. *Relation to Existing Laws.* — The authentication standards prescribed under this Act shall constitute the minimum standards for official government documents and communications, without prejudice to the adoption or continued implementation of more stringent security, authentication, verification, or issuance requirements under existing laws, rules, or regulations.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish, modify, impair, or supersede the security or authentication requirements governing documents that are subject to special statutory or regulatory regimes. In the event of inconsistency, the more stringent requirement shall prevail.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DICT shall, in consultation with the agencies referred to in the preceding section and other concerned stakeholders, promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned agencies. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,