

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 10617



Introduced by: **REP. ELMER V. CATULPOS**
(I Tahanan Partylist)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Picture the evening a Filipino family finally decides to begin. The savings from years of overtime, or the padala of a mother working abroad, counted and recounted on the kitchen table — enough, at last, for a carinderia, a sari-sari store, a small repair shop. The next morning they arrive at the government's window carrying the most fragile capital there is: hope, and a little money that cannot be replaced. Days pass. Fare and lost income eat the capital before the store ever opens. Some give up. Many open anyway without papers — and we call them “informal,” as though the family had failed the system, when it was the system that never learned how to receive them.

Remember who that family is. Micro, small, and medium enterprises are some *ninety-nine and a half percent (99.5%) of all business establishments and the majority of all private employment in the country* of Philippine business. Ang pinakamalaking employer ng Pilipinas ay hindi isang korporasyon; ito ay ang maliit na negosyante, pinagsama-sama. The carinderia and the vulcanizing shop, multiplied by a million, are the true economy of our barangays. When it is hard for them to begin, the Republic is not being strict. It is being poor at arithmetic.

This measure begins by honoring what our local governments have already accomplished, because the record is real and it is theirs. Quezon City brought its business permit down from six working days to three, and its building and occupancy permits from one hundred twenty working days to fourteen, through an online unified system that lets an applicant apply, pay, and receive a permit without standing in a single line. Iloilo City made permitting fully online from the city down to the barangay. Tagbilaran City earned a national commendation for a completely digitalized permitting system. Valenzuela, Manila, Marikina, Muntinlupa, Navotas, Parañaque, Balanga, Batangas City, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Ilagan, Lapu-Lapu, Legazpi, San Fernando, and even smaller units such as Ubay in Bohol and San Roque in Northern Samar have built systems that work. General Santos City, for its part, was cited in national studies for a simple act of consideration: separate lanes for bookkeepers

filing many transactions, so that an ordinary applicant with one transaction is not left waiting behind them. Ang patunay na kaya ito ay nasa ating mga lungsod at bayan na mismo.

And what these local governments discovered deserves the full attention of this Chamber, because it overturns the oldest assumption about regulation. Streamlining did not cost them revenue. It earned them revenue. National validation has found that streamlining, harmonization, and automation significantly increased the number of businesses formally registering with local governments and, consequently, increased their collections; in one measure, the combined business tax collection of compliant cities in the National Capital Region reached nearly two billion pesos in a single year, while earlier studies of reforming cities recorded average business tax increases of more than fifty percent, and one city saw fifty-three percent more entrepreneurs return to renew. Ang bawat negosyong nabubuksan ay buwis na hindi na kailangang habulin. Facilitation is not a favor that local governments grant to business. It is the most profitable public investment available to them.

Why, then, has the experience at the window not changed for millions? Not because of the men and women behind it. Our public servants inherited three structures that manufacture the very behavior everyone complains about. First, we measure the wrong thing: an officer is judged by the violations he catches, never by the enterprises he helps open — so approving feels risky and helping earns nothing. Second, we leave requirements undefined: where a list can grow at any moment, that ambiguity becomes the only commodity a padulas can buy. Third, we let the applicant arrive knowing nothing, so all the knowledge — and therefore all the power — sits on one side of the counter. Fix those three, and the counter changes without anyone needing to be scolded. Hindi masamang tao ang problema; masamang sistema.

The Republic, moreover, must be honest about its own share of the fault. It commanded every local government to build an electronic one-stop shop and then left them to find the money. Where a large corporation adopted a town, that town received modern equipment; where none did, the town was left with its old lines. Ang bilis ng serbisyo sa maliit na negosyante ay hindi dapat nakadepende sa donasyon ng malaking kumpanya. This bill therefore does not command local governments once more. It funds them, equips them, trains them, and then measures the Republic's promise rather than their goodwill. It creates no unfunded mandate.

What the bill installs is a different posture at the door, drawn from what has already worked here and abroad. Singapore, in 2004, adopted what it called the No Wrong Door policy: when a public office receives a concern outside its own mandate, it must find the right office and connect the citizen — and where several offices are involved, the office first approached must coordinate and return one integrated answer. Georgia rebuilt its public service halls around consultants stationed at the entrance whose only task is to receive citizens and route them properly, with hundreds of services under one roof. We are proposing the Filipino form of the same idea, in a word every citizen understands: walang maling pinto. Whichever office a Filipino entrepreneur walks into, that office becomes responsible for connecting them onward. Ang maghahanap ng tamang pinto ay ang gobyerno, hindi ang mamamayan.

Alongside it, this measure ends the practice that does the deepest damage of all: the requirement revealed one at a time. Under this Act, every deficiency in an application must be identified once, completely, and in writing, at the first assessment — and no requirement may be added afterward unless the law itself demands it. Isang listahan, isang sabi, isang beses. A deficiency, moreover, shall no longer mean rejection: the applicant is assisted to cure it, and a micro enterprise engaged in low-risk activity may operate provisionally while doing so. To the countless entrepreneurs who have stayed unregistered out of fear of scrutiny and penalty, this bill opens a door instead of a case: a first-time registration window in which a micro enterprise coming into the system is welcomed rather than fined. Mas mabuti sa Republika ang isang tindahang nagsisimulang magbayad ngayon kaysa sa tindahang habambuhay na nagtatago.

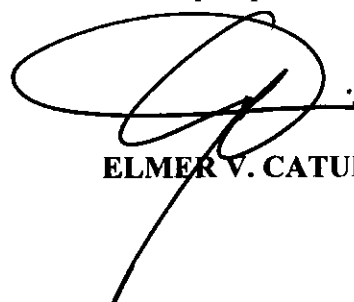
And because fear is not only the applicant's, this bill protects the honest public servant as deliberately as it protects the entrepreneur. An officer who follows the published checklist and the automatic approval rule shall bear no liability for having done so; the checklist that removes his discretion is the same document that removes suspicion from his name. Papel ang mananagot, hindi ang taong tapat na sumunod. Then the Republic will finally reward what it actually wants: performance measured by enterprises opened and applicants helped to completion, not by applications turned away.

This measure is the non-tax half of an agenda the President himself set. In his State of the Nation Address of July 27, 2026, he asked Congress for tax relief for the smallest enterprises — a call the leadership of this House answered within days with their own measures, which this Representation supports without reservation. This bill takes nothing from that lane and adds the half that remains: they lighten the tax; this clears the doorway. The same Address reported six trillion pesos' worth of green lanes built to speed the projects of our largest investors — and rightly so. Kung may green lane ang bilyun-bilyong pisong pamumuhunan, dapat may bukás na pinto ang puhunang pinagpaguran ng isang pamilya.

Let one thing be beyond misunderstanding: this Act accelerates process, never standards. Sanitary, fire, safety, environmental, and zoning requirements remain in full force, and nothing here shall be read to weaken them. Bilis sa proseso — hindi luwag sa pamantayan.

Every business that opens is a family that rises and a barangay that eats, because the carinderia buys from the farmer, hires the neighbor, and feeds the tricycle driver who brings its customers. This bill asks nothing new of the Filipino who dares to begin. It asks something new of us — that the Republic finally meet that family at the door, hindi bilang bantay na nagtatanong kung kulang ka, kundi bilang kaagapay na nagtatanong kung paano ka matutulungang makapagbukas.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this Bill is earnestly requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'E' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

ELMER V. CATULPOS

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10617**

Introduced by Representative ELMER V. CATULPOS

**AN ACT ACCELERATING THE STARTING, ESTABLISHMENT AND
RENEWAL OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, INSTITUTING A
NO-WRONG-DOOR AND END-TO-END BUSINESS FACILITATION
SERVICE, ESTABLISHING A UNIFIED NATIONAL CHECKLIST AND
SIMPLIFIED COMPLIANCE FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES,
SUPPORTING AND CAPACITATING LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS
FOR THE PURPOSE, STRENGTHENING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11032,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

ARTICLE I — GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known and cited as the “Bilis-Negosyo Act,” or the “MSME Ease of Doing Business and Investment Facilitation Act of 2026.”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to treat every person who seeks to establish or maintain a lawful enterprise — above all the micro and small entrepreneur — as a partner in nation-building to be assisted, and never as a suspect to be screened. The State declares that the burden of coordination among government offices shall rest upon the government and never upon the citizen; that requirements shall be defined, published, and limited to what law and public safety require; that a deficiency shall be met with assistance rather than refusal; and that the performance of regulatory offices shall be measured by the enterprises they help to open and sustain. The State further recognizes that local government units are the front line of this policy and shall be supported, funded, and capacitated to discharge it, and that the acceleration of processes shall in no case diminish the standards that protect public health, safety, and the environment. This Act strengthens and shall be read together with Republic Act No. 11032.

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to treat every person who seeks to establish or maintain a lawful enterprise — above all the micro and small entrepreneur — as a partner in nation-building to be assisted, and to provide accessible, prompt and transparent, regulatory assistance, without prejudice to the State’s duty to prevent fraud and enforce lawful standards. The State declares that the burden of coordination among government offices shall rest upon the government and never upon the citizen; that requirements shall be defined, published, and limited to what law and public safety require; that a deficiency shall be met with assistance rather than refusal; and that the performance of regulatory offices shall be measured by the enterprises they help to open and sustain. The State further recognizes that local government units are the front line of this policy and shall be supported, funded, and capacitated to discharge it, and that the acceleration of processes shall in no case diminish the standards that

protect public health, safety, and the environment. This Act strengthens and shall be read together with Republic Act No. 11032.

Section 3. Scope. — This Act shall apply to all local government units and to all national government agencies exercising business registration, permitting, licensing, or regulatory functions, with particular application to micro and small enterprises as defined under Republic Act No. 6977, as amended by Republic Act No. 9501. However, nothing in this Act shall be construed to transfer to a local government unit the jurisdiction, rule-making authority, inspection power, licensing authority, or enforcement responsibility vested by law in a national government agency.

Section 4. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- (a) *Micro Enterprise, Small Enterprise, and Medium Enterprise* shall have the same meanings under Republic Act No. 6977, as amended;
- (b) *BOSS and eBOSS* refer to the Business One-Stop Shop and its electronic form under Republic Act No. 11032 and Republic Act No. 12254;
- (c) *End-to-End Facilitation* refers to the service under Section 5;
- (d) *No Wrong Door Duty* refers to the obligation under Section 6;
- (e) *Negosyo Kaagapay Officer* refers to the personnel under Section 7;
- (f) *Complete Deficiency Notice* refers to the single written notice under Section 8;
- (g) *Unified Micro Checklist* refers to the national maximum list of requirements under Section 11;
- (h) *Low-Risk Activity* refers to a business activity classified as such under Section 9, being one that does not involve significant risk to public health, safety, or the environment;
- (i) *Community Enterprise Zone* refers to an area declared under Section 16.

ARTICLE II — WALANG MALING PINTO: ONE DOOR, ONE ANSWER

Section 5. End-to-End Facilitation Service. — The BOSS or eBOSS of every local government unit shall serve as the single point of transaction for the establishment and renewal of a business and shall, in addition to local permits and clearances: (a) receive the complete requirements for the registrations, permits, and clearances of national government agencies necessary to commence the business, including those of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and, where applicable, other agencies; and (b) transmit the same electronically to the agencies concerned through the interoperable systems mandated by Republic Act No. 12254, which agencies shall act within the periods fixed by Republic Act No. 11032. The applicant shall not be required to appear personally before, or to carry documents among, the agencies so served, except where a law expressly requires personal appearance. The joint issuances of the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and the agencies concerned on the eBOSS are hereby adopted and given the force of this Act, as the same may be updated consistently herewith. No provision of this Section shall be construed to authorize the BOSS or eBOSS to approve, waive, or modify a substantive requirement vested by law in another agency.

Section 6. The No Wrong Door Duty. — No applicant or inquiring person shall be turned away, referred without assistance, or required to determine on their own which office has jurisdiction over their concern. Any office of any local government unit or national government agency that receives an application, inquiry, or concern relating to the establishment or operation of an enterprise shall, even where the matter lies outside its own mandate: (a) identify the proper office; (b) transmit the matter or connect the person directly to that office, recording the referral; and (c) where several offices are concerned, coordinate among them and return a single consolidated response to the applicant. Walang maling pinto. Compliance with this Section shall be reflected in the citizen's charter of every office and measured under Section 22.

Section 7. Negosyo Kaagapay Officers. — Every BOSS shall be staffed with at least one (1) trained Negosyo Kaagapay Officer, who shall be stationed at the point of entry of the office and whose primary duty is to receive, guide, and assist applicants — particularly micro and small enterprises — in understanding, completing, and perfecting their applications at no cost. The Kaagapay Officer shall: (a) meet applicants upon arrival and direct them through the process; (b) act as case officer for an application until its completion, providing the applicant a name and a means of contact; (c) assist in curing deficiencies within the same transaction wherever practicable; and (d) render the same assistance through telephone, electronic, and online channels. The Kaagapay function shall be integrated and co-located with the Negosyo Centers under Republic Act No. 10644 wherever such Centers exist. It shall be unlawful for any Kaagapay Officer or any personnel to solicit or accept any fee or consideration for assistance rendered under this Section.

Section 8. Complete Deficiency Notice. — Where an application is found deficient, the office shall issue to the applicant, within the first assessment and in no case later than three (3) working days from filing, a single written Complete Deficiency Notice enumerating every deficiency, the precise document or action required to cure each, and the office and person to be contacted for assistance. No requirement not stated in the Complete Deficiency Notice may thereafter be demanded of the applicant, except one expressly required by law or ordinance and not reasonably discoverable at first assessment, which shall be raised in writing with a statement of its legal basis. Isang listahan, isang sabi, isang beses. Repeated failure to observe this Section shall constitute a ground for administrative liability, without prejudice to other remedies and liabilities under existing laws.

Section 9. Cure Period and Provisional Authority for Low-Risk Micro Enterprises. — An applicant issued a Complete Deficiency Notice shall be afforded a reasonable period to cure, during which the application shall remain pending and shall not be denied. Where the applicant is a micro enterprise engaged in a Low-Risk Activity and the deficiencies are curable and do not relate to public health, safety, fire, or environmental requirements, the local government unit shall issue a provisional authority to operate, valid for a period fixed in the implementing rules, pending completion. The DTI, with the DILG, ARTA, and the Department of Health and the Bureau of Fire Protection as to matters within their competence, shall publish the classification of Low-Risk Activities. Provisional authority shall not be issued for any activity requiring prior sanitary, fire safety, environmental, or similar clearance.

Section 10. Automatic Approval and Automatic Release. — To give full effect to the automatic approval mechanism under Republic Act No. 11032, upon the lapse of the prescribed processing period without any action by the concerned office or agency, the permit, license, clearance, or other authorization applied for shall be deemed approved by operation of law.

The concerned office or agency shall, *motu proprio* and without need of any further request or follow-up from the applicant, generate, issue, and release the corresponding electronic permit, license, clearance, or certification of approval reflecting such automatic approval. Any willful failure or refusal to generate, issue, or release the corresponding document shall constitute a violation of Republic Act No. 11032 and shall subject the responsible officer or employee to the penalties and administrative liabilities provided therein and under other applicable laws.

The automatic approval mechanism shall not apply to applications expressly excluded under Republic Act No. 11032, its Implementing Rules and Regulations, or any other applicable law, including applications requiring prior substantive evaluation or clearance in matters affecting public health, public safety, public morals, public policy, national security, or environmental protection.

ARTICLE III — THE MICRO AND SMALL TIER

Section 11. The Unified Micro Checklist. — ARTA, with the DILG, the DTI, the DICT, the Department of Finance, and the leagues of local government units, shall issue, within one

hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Unified Micro Checklist: the complete and exclusive national list of requirements that may be demanded of a micro enterprise for business registration and renewal, and a corresponding simplified list for small enterprises. No office and no officer may require of a micro or small enterprise any document, clearance, signature, or fee not included in the applicable Checklist. The Checklist shall be reviewed annually with the participation of the leagues of local government units and micro, small, and medium enterprise organizations, and shall be published prominently at every BOSS and online.

Section 12. Integrity of Standards. — Nothing in this Act shall be construed to reduce, waive, or weaken any sanitary, fire safety, occupational safety and health, building, environmental, or zoning standard, or any requirement imposed by law for the protection of public health, safety, or the environment. This Act simplifies and accelerates the process by which compliance is established; it does not lower what must be complied with. Neither shall anything in this Act be construed to alter any tax rate, tax base, tax liability, or the assessment and collection powers of any taxing authority.

Section 13. Simplified Sales Recording for Micro Enterprises. — Consistent with Republic Act No. 11976, micro enterprises may record sales through accredited point-of-sale devices, electronic receipt systems, or simplified manual books, without the obligation to maintain perpetual or itemized inventory records for purposes of business registration and renewal. The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) shall, within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate and publish the simplified rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Section.

Section 14. One-Transaction Renewal. — Business renewal for micro and small enterprises shall be completed in a single transaction, physical or electronic, encompassing all local requirements and the national requirements served under Section 5, within the periods fixed by Republic Act No. 11032.

Section 15. First-Time Registration Window for Unregistered Micro Enterprises. — Recognizing that many micro enterprises remain outside the system for fear of penalty rather than by design, local government units are hereby authorized, and shall be supported by national incentives under Section 23, to establish a First-Time Registration Window under which an unregistered micro enterprise that voluntarily registers within the period declared by the local government unit shall be: (a) assisted by a Kaagapay Officer through the entire process; (b) exempted, at the option of the local government unit exercising its authority over local impositions, from surcharges, penalties, and interest on prior unpaid local business taxes and fees; and (c) enrolled in the assistance and training programs of the DTI and the Negosyo Centers. This Section shall not apply to any activity requiring prior clearance for public health, safety, or environmental protection, nor to any liability arising from injury to third persons. Nothing herein shall be construed to affect any national internal revenue tax or any authority of the national taxing authorities.

Section 16. Community Enterprise Zones. — Local government units may declare food streets, public markets and their peripheries, night markets, souvenir and pasalubong clusters, and similar concentrations of micro enterprises as Community Enterprise Zones, which are hereby recognized as economic and cultural assets of the community and of Philippine tourism. Within a Zone, the local government unit may issue cluster or common permits, provide shared compliance facilities for sanitation and safety, and adopt simplified collective renewal, with the local government unit responsible for common-facility compliance. Enterprises within a Zone shall be afforded organization and training assistance and shall not be subjected to summary displacement except in accordance with law.

ARTICLE IV — SUPPORTING AND CAPACITATING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Section 17. The Bilis-Negosyo Fund for Local Government Systems. — There is hereby established the Bilis-Negosyo Fund, administered by ARTA with the DICT and the DILG, to finance the establishment, operation, connectivity, and maintenance of eBOSS and business permitting systems in local government units, including through the deployment of the integrated Business Permit and Licensing System of the DICT, with first priority to lower-income-class municipalities and to local government units without functional electronic systems. The digital capability of a local government unit to serve its entrepreneurs shall be guaranteed by the Republic and shall in no case depend upon private donation.

Section 18. Shared Services and Technical Assistance. — ARTA, the DICT, and the DILG shall provide to local government units, at no cost: shared or cloud-hosted permitting systems for units lacking their own; connectivity support in coordination with telecommunications providers; template ordinances, process designs, and citizen's charters; and on-site technical assistance teams. Provincial governments are encouraged to host shared services for their component municipalities.

Section 19. No Unfunded Mandate. — No obligation imposed upon a local government unit by this Act shall take effect with respect to that local government unit until the corresponding system, funding, or technical assistance under Sections 17 and 18 has been made available to it, except obligations that require no additional resources. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish the fiscal or corporate autonomy of local government units under Republic Act No. 7160.

Section 20. The Kaagapay Academy. — ARTA, with the Development Academy of the Philippines, the Local Government Academy, and the Civil Service Commission, shall develop and deliver a continuing curriculum in facilitative regulation — the Kaagapay standard — mandatory for all BOSS personnel, Kaagapay Officers, and business permitting and licensing officers, covering client service, the No Wrong Door Duty, the Unified Micro Checklist, assisted completion of applications, and the lawful handling of deficiencies. The curriculum shall include immersion in the operations of actual micro and small enterprises, that those who regulate may first understand those they serve. Completion shall be recognized in the personnel records and career advancement of the officers concerned.

Section 21. Protection of Public Officers Acting in Good Faith. — A public officer or employee who processes, approves, or releases an application in accordance with the Unified Micro Checklist, the Complete Deficiency Notice, the provisional authority under Section 9, or the automatic approval and release under Section 10 shall not, by reason thereof, be held administratively, civilly, or criminally liable, absent fraud, bad faith, gross negligence, or the solicitation or receipt of any consideration. The Republic recognizes that excessive caution born of fear of liability is itself a cause of delay, and that a published checklist protects the honest officer as much as it protects the applicant.

Section 22. The Facilitation Standard and the Bilis-Negosyo Scoreboard. — The performance of business permitting and licensing offices and of regulatory personnel shall be measured and rewarded primarily by facilitation outcomes — including time-to-open, the proportion of applications completed within a single transaction, compliance with Sections 6 and 8, assistance rendered to applicants, and applicant satisfaction — and not by the volume of denials or findings. ARTA shall publish an annual Bilis-Negosyo Scoreboard reflecting these measures, validated through client feedback and anonymous service testing, and shall report improvements and good practices by name. Existing citizen's charters shall be updated to reflect the facilitation standard.

Section 23. Recognition and Incentives for Local Government Units. — Local government units achieving or substantially improving facilitation outcomes, and those establishing First-Time Registration Windows under Section 15, shall be recognized annually by

ARTA and the DILG, and such performance shall be considered in national performance-based incentive and recognition systems, including the grant of additional support under Section 17. The Republic shall publish the revenue and registration gains realized by reforming local government units, that the experience of each may serve the ambition of all.

ARTICLE V — INVESTMENT FACILITATION AND AFTERCARE

Section 24. Local Investment Facilitation Offices and Guides. — Every province and highly urbanized city shall maintain a Local Investment Facilitation Office, which shall publish and annually update a Local Investment Guide following a standard template issued by the DTI, including the locality's market profile, available land and facilities, infrastructure, workforce, local incentives, and the step-by-step facilitated process for investing therein. The DTI shall provide the template, the analytical framework, training, and technical assistance at no cost to the local government unit.

Section 25. Aftercare and the Micro Fast Lane. — ARTA shall maintain a dedicated assistance and complaint fast lane for micro and small enterprises, accessible by telephone and online without cost. Local Investment Facilitation Offices and Negosyo Centers shall provide aftercare to enterprises established in their localities, assisting in subsequent permits, expansion, and the resolution of regulatory difficulties.

ARTICLE VI — ENFORCEMENT AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 26. Prohibited Acts. — In addition to the acts punished under Republic Act No. 11032, whose penalties shall apply to violations of this Act, the following are declared unlawful:

- (a) Demanding of a micro or small enterprise any requirement or fee beyond the applicable Unified Micro Checklist;
- (b) Demanding a requirement not stated in a Complete Deficiency Notice, in violation of Section 8;
- (c) Requiring an applicant to transact directly with an agency served under Section 5, except as expressly allowed;
- (d) Turning away or referring without assistance any person, in violation of Section 6; and
- (e) Soliciting or accepting any consideration in violation of Section 7.

Fixing and the facilitation of transactions for a fee by unauthorized persons shall be dealt with under Republic Act No. 11032 and Republic Act No. 3019.

The acts described in this Section shall be subject to the applicable administrative, civil, and criminal remedies under Republic Act No. 11032, Republic Act No. 3019, the Revised Penal Code, civil service laws, and other applicable laws. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to create a criminal offense or penalty unless the elements and penalty are expressly provided by law.

Section 27. Relationship to Other Laws. — This Act strengthens and shall be construed together with Republic Act No. 11032, Republic Act No. 12254, Republic Act No. 10644, Republic Act No. 6977 as amended, Republic Act No. 11976, and Republic Act No. 7160, and shall in no case be construed to diminish any streamlining, deadline, protection, or local autonomy thereunder, nor to affect any measure of tax relief enacted by Congress.

Section 28. Annual Report to Congress. — ARTA shall submit to both Houses of Congress an annual report on the implementation of this Act, including system compliance and support extended by local government unit, utilization of the Bilis-Negosyo Fund, violations found and acted upon, the Bilis-Negosyo Scoreboard, First-Time Registration Window results, and national time-to-open statistics.

Section 29. Appropriations. — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act, including the initial capitalization of the Bilis-Negosyo Fund, shall be charged against the current appropriations of the implementing agencies, augmented by an initial appropriation of Two Billion Pesos (₱2,000,000,000.00). Thereafter, the amounts necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 30. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — ARTA, as lead, with the DILG, the DTI, the DICT, and the Department of Finance, and in consultation with the leagues of local government units, micro, small, and medium enterprise organizations, and public sector employees' organizations, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within one hundred twenty (120) days from its effectivity.

Section 31. Separability Clause. — If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 32. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 33. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.