

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

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3699



Introduced by Honorable Michelle M. Antonio

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Bomb threats have long caused undue interruptions in the daily functions of Filipinos. Just recently, a spurious bomb threat allegedly issued by the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group triggered panic inside the University of the Philippines Diliman campus and made the U.P. Town Center a ghost town for a day.¹ Everytime a bomb threat is made, the public is highly inconvenienced. A false threat brings about unnecessary anxiety to the people, disruption of regular activities, economic costs due to evacuation, and waste of law enforcement and emergency response resources.

To firmly discourage people from making such threats, a stronger penalty must be meted out to violators of the law. P.D. 1727, the governing law for these false threats, is already viewed as archaic because it has been passed back in 1980, when Ferdinand Marcos was still president. It only provides for a penalty of imprisonment of not more than five (5) years, or a fine of not more than forty thousand pesos (₱40,000.00). In this day and age, these penalties are tantamount to a mere slap on the wrist, which cannot effectively deter the commission of said crimes. Furthermore, the same law is unclear because of the issue of jurisdiction. One of its provisions states that military tribunals or military courts shall have exclusive jurisdiction over cases involving any violation of the provisions of the decree. This can no longer be applicable in our current setting.

¹ "Alleged Abu Sayyaf bomb threat hits UP Diliman." Inquirer.net website. September 1, 2016.
<<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/811965/alleged-abu-sayyaf-bomb-threat-hits-up-diliman>, accessed September 14, 2016>

To address the outdatedness and vagueness of this presidential decree, this bill imposes stiffer penalties to initiators and disseminators of false threats. Violation of this Act shall be subject to imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year or a fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00) but not more than One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00).

With these changes in the existing law, incidences of false reports which highly inconvenience the public and cause huge economic losses are expected to be curtailed.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is highly recommended.


MICHELLE M. ANTONIO

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AN ACT PROHIBITING THE MALICIOUS DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION OR THE WILLFUL MAKING OF ANY THREAT CONCERNING BOMBS, EXPLOSIVES OR ANY SIMILAR DEVICE OR MEANS OF DESTRUCTION AND IMPOSING PENALTIES THEREFOR.

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the "*Anti-Bomb Threat Act of 2016.*"

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* The State shall ensure the protection of the public from the unnecessary yet damaging effects to life and property of malicious and wilful dissemination of false information on the presence or threats of bombs, explosives, or any life-threatening and destructive materials.

SECTION 3. *Prohibited Act.* No person or entity shall willfully make any threat or maliciously disseminate, by word of mouth or in written, printed, or video form, through the use of telephones, cellular phones, fax machines, and electronic communications, such as but not limited to electronic mails and social media or other means, false information, knowing the same to be false, concerning an attempt or alleged attempt being made to kill, injure, or intimidate any individual or unlawfully damage or destroy any building, vehicle, or other real or personal property, by means of bombs, explosives, incendiary devices, and other destructive forces of similar nature or characteristics.

SECTION 4. *Penalties.* Violation of this Act shall be subject to imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year or a fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00) but not more than One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00).

Any person found to have maliciously and wilfully accused another person or entity of violating this Act, knowing that the said charges are false and groundless, shall be subject to imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year or a fine of not less than Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000.00) but not more than One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00).

SECTION 5. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected hereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,