

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

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 723

Introduced by Representative Lucy Torres-Gomez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In view of the ever-growing population of the country, especially in urban areas, vertical living is fast becoming the reality of our 21st century existence. With high-rise commercial and residential structures (even including schools), safety considerations are assuming increasing importance. Owners and developers of said structures, on considerations of profit, tend to promote the "breath-taking" views as their major selling point. It is therefore necessary for the government to step in if only to promote public safety and interest.

In recent years, accidents, deliberate jump-offs and "falls" stemming from altered states of mind, have challenged both policy-makers and the private sector as to the safety features of the building industry. Unsupervised toddlers and emotionally intoxicated adults have become victims to great but avoidable tragedies that are becoming characteristic of our times.

This proposed measure represents a necessary government intervention through the simple expedient of requiring the installation of protective devices to windows and openings in buildings (residential, commercial, educational, etc.), whether public or private, with two or more floors. It also mandates the raising of the minimum heights of railings in balconies, porches or terraces to prevent or at least minimize incidents of suicides and accidents. While far from mandating a comprehensive or multi-pronged approach in solving tragic "falls" from high-rise buildings, this bill takes the necessary initial step in addressing this blight to modern urban living. We need not wait till the next tragedy happens before we finally act on this social need.

In view of all the foregoing considerations, the early approval of this bill is earnestly requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Torres-Comez', written in a cursive style.

LUCY TORRES-COMEZ

Representative

Fourth District of Leyte

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AN ACT
PROMOTING THE SAFETY OF RESIDENTS, TENANTS AND
GUESTS, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN, IN BUILDINGS, WHETHER
PUBLIC OR PRIVATE, WITH TWO (2) MORE FLOORS,
THROUGH THE INSTALLATION OF PROTECTIVE DEVICES
OR STRUCTURES TO PREVENT ACCIDENTAL FALLING OR
SUICIDE

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

SECTION 1. It is hereby mandated that all owners and developers of buildings with two (2) or more floors, whether public or private, already existing or still under design, shall install protective devices on windows and openings from the second floor up. These devices may consist of safety / security grills, bars, latches or similar devices intended to secure the inhabitants, visitors and other occupants of such structures from accidental falling, deliberate jump-offs and falls stemming from altered states of mind. It is, however, provided that such protective devices should not designed or constructed in such a way as to constitute a fire hazard that will restrict access of fire fighters to the building in necessary situations.

SEC. 2. It is further mandated that railings for balconies, landings or porches required under the building code for buildings, covered under Sec.

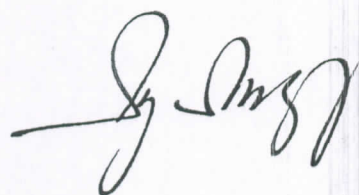
1 hereof, shall be raised to a height of one thousand millimeters (1,000 mm.) minimum from the existing seven hundred fifty millimeters (750 mm.) in order to protect public safety, especially of children.

SEC. 3. The Department of Public Works and Highways, in coordination with the Bureau of Fire Protection, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 4. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication either in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. M. S.", is written over the "Approved," text.