

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 803



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Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**  
**HON. MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

As an exercise of responsible citizenship, whistleblowing against corruption can help create new societal and organizational cultures and values that emphasize integrity and honesty in the workplace. As a courageous act, whistleblowing against corruption can create inspiring stories that may, in the long run, reduce people's tolerance for questionable practices of doing business and public service.

In the Philippines, initiatives to encourage whistleblowing are not new. In fact, several laws encourage whistleblowing to curb bribery and other corrupt practices. However, the existing legal framework barely meets the need for whistleblower's protection and support. Considering the risks of whistleblowing in a culture that has a high tolerance for corruption, the existing legal framework fails to provide attractive incentives for actual whistleblowing.

Thus, this measure is filed in the hope that it would help in curtailing graft and corruption in government by ensuring the security of whistle blowers who divulge the erring practices of public officials and employees. The passage of this bill could also counter the stigma of ostracism frequently suffered by whistleblowers.

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

  
**MANUEL DG. CABOCHAN III**  
*Representative*  
Magdalo Para sa Pilipino Party-List

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AN ACT  
PROVIDING FOR PROTECTION, SECURITY AND OTHER BENEFITS FOR  
WHISTLEBLOWERS

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

1     **SECTION 1. *Short Title.***— This Act shall be known as the “Whistleblower Protection  
2     Act”.

3  
4     **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** — Public Office is a public trust. It is the policy of the  
5     State to promote and ensure full accountability in the conduct of its officers and employees,  
6     and exact full retribution from those who shall engage in improper conduct. Toward this end,  
7     the State shall:

- 8  
9     A. Maintain honesty and promote high standards of integrity in the public service;  
10  
11    B. Safeguard the national interest through the prosecution of corrupt and erring public  
12    officials and employees; and  
13  
14    C. Encourage and facilitate the disclosure of corrupt conduct and practices in the public  
15    service by providing benefits prescribed under existing laws.  
16

17    **SEC. 3. *Definitions.*** — As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as  
18    follows:

- 19  
20    A. “Employer” shall mean any individual, partnership, association, corporation or entity,  
21    including the government, or any person or group of persons who shall directly or  
22    indirectly for on behalf of said individual, partnership, association, corporation or entity,  
23    employ an employee as defines in this Act.  
24  
25    B. “Employee” shall mean any person who is made to work by, or who renders service for,  
26    an employer. The term shall include public officers and employees as defined in this Act  
27    as well as any person considered an “employee” under the Labor Code.  
28

- 1 C. "Public officer/employee" shall refer to any person holding any office or performing any  
2 function or duty in the Government of the Republic of the Philippines by virtue of an  
3 appointment, election or contract.  
4
- 5 D. "Government" shall include the National Government, and any of its subdivisions,  
6 agencies or instrumentalities, including government-owned and controlled corporations  
7 and their subsidiaries, and Local Government Units.  
8
- 9 E. "Retaliatory action" shall refer to any negative or obstructive response, reaction or  
10 reprisal to a disclosure made under this Act aimed at, pertaining to, or against a  
11 whistleblower or any of the members of his/her family and relatives up to the fourth civil  
12 degree of consanguinity or affinity. Said actions shall include criminal, civil or  
13 administrative proceedings commenced or pursued against said whistleblower or any of  
14 the members of his/her family or relatives up to the fourth civil degree of consanguinity  
15 or affinity as well as any retaliatory action in the workplace.  
16
- 17 F. "Retaliatory action in the workplace" shall mean any discriminatory conduct or policies  
18 which affect promotion or job assignment including undue negative performance  
19 appraisal, close monitoring by supervisors, unwarranted criticisms or avoidance by co-  
20 employees, blacklisting from other job opportunities or prejudicial transfers by reason of  
21 a disclosure made under this Act.  
22
- 23 G. "Acts constituting improper conduct" shall mean any act or omission of a public officer  
24 or employee solely, or in cooperation, conspiracy with, or with the assistance of, private  
25 persons which is covered by or constitute a violation of:  
26
- 27 1. Presidential Decree No. 46 otherwise known as "Making it punishable for Public  
28 Officials and Employees to receive, and for Private persons to give, gifts on any  
29 occasion, including Christmas;"  
30
  - 31 2. Republic Act No. 3019 otherwise known as "Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices  
32 Act;"  
33
  - 34 3. Republic Act No. 6713 otherwise known as "An Act Establishing a Code of  
35 Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees;"  
36
  - 37 4. Republic Act No. 7080 otherwise known as the "Anti-Plunder Law;"  
38
  - 39 5. Title VII of Book Two of the Revised Penal Code on Crimes Committed by  
40 Public Officers; and  
41
  - 42 6. All other laws which penalize or sanction any act or omission of a public officer  
43 or employee.  
44
- 45 H. "Whistleblower" shall refer to any person who has personal knowledge or access to any  
46 data, information, fact or event constituting improper conduct; *Provided*, that such  
47 person must not have any direct participation in such improper conduct, or in cases  
48 where such person participated in any improper conduct, such person is not the most  
49 guilty and shall therefore qualify as a state witness against the persons subject of such  
50 disclosure.

1  
2 I. "Qualified Whistleblower" shall mean a whistleblower qualified and admitted into the  
3 Whistleblower's Program of the Implementing Agency in accordance with this Act and  
4 is implementing rules and regulations.  
5

6 J. "Implementing Agencies or Agency" shall collectively or individually refer to the  
7 Department of Justice (DOJ), the Office of the Ombudsman, the Commission on Human  
8 Rights (CHR), and the Public Attorney's Office (PAO)  
9

10 K. "Whistleblower Council" shall refer to the council defined under Section 31 of this Act.  
11

12 **SEC. 4. Coverage.** – Notwithstanding the provisions of law on prescription of crimes,  
13 this Act shall cover all acts constituting improper conduct irrespective of the time or  
14 commission thereof.  
15

16 **SEC. 5. Admission/Qualification for the Program.** – Whistleblowers, whether from the  
17 public or private sector, shall be entitled to the benefits provided under this Act, *Provided*,  
18 That all the following requisites concur:  
19

20 A. The disclosure is voluntary, in writing and under oath;  
21

22 B. The disclosure relates to acts constituting improper conduct; and  
23

24 C. The information to be disclosed is admissible in evidence.  
25

26 **SEC. 6. Necessity of Testimony.** – The testimony of a qualified whistleblower in court  
27 shall not be necessary for the entitlement or enjoyment of the benefits of this Act. In the  
28 event that the said whistleblower's testimony is required as found by the Implementing  
29 Agency to be necessary and indispensable for a successful prosecution of a case, he/she shall  
30 be entitled to the additional benefits and protection provided under R.A. No. 6891 otherwise  
31 known as the Witness Protection Program, funding for which shall be sourced from the  
32 budget as provided under Section 32 hereof.  
33

34 **SEC. 7. Credibility of a Whistleblower.** – In all cases, the fact of the entitlement of the  
35 qualified whistleblower to the protection and benefits provided in this Act shall not be  
36 admissible in evidence to diminish or affect his credibility.  
37

38 **SEC. 8. Perpetuation of Testimony.** – Once admitted into the program, a whistleblower  
39 may perpetuate his/her testimony pursuant to Rule 134 of the Revised Rules of Court.  
40

41 **SEC. 9. Memorandum of Agreement with the Person to be Protected.** – Before a  
42 person is provided protection and benefits as a whistleblower for the State, he/she shall first  
43 execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the Implementing Agency which shall set forth  
44 his/her responsibilities as follows:  
45

46 A. To provide information to and testify before all branches or agencies of government in an  
47 appropriate proceeding on facts constituting improper conduct;  
48

49 B. To avoid commission of crime;  
50

1 C. To take all necessary precautions to preclude detection by others of the facts concerning  
2 the protection provided him/her under this Act;

3  
4 D. To cooperate with all reasonable requests of officers and employees of the government  
5 who are providing him/her protection under this Act; and

6  
7 E. To regularly inform the Implementing Agency's program official concerned of his/her  
8 current activities and address.

9  
10 **SEC. 10. Breach of the Memorandum of Agreement.**— Substantial breach of the  
11 Memorandum of Agreement, provided in Section 9 hereof shall be sufficient ground for the  
12 termination of the protection and benefits provided under this Act; *Provided*, however, that  
13 before terminating the protection and benefits extended to him/her, the Implementing Agency  
14 shall send notice to the qualified whistleblower concerned, stating therein the reason for such  
15 termination and shall give him/her sufficient opportunity to explain and respond to such  
16 notice.

17  
18 **SEC. 11. Confidentiality.** — Except insofar as allowed by this Act, during and after the  
19 disclosure, and throughout and after any proceedings undertaken thereafter, a whistleblower  
20 is entitled to absolute confidentiality as to:

21  
22 A. His/her identity;

23  
24 B. The subject matter of his/her disclosure; and

25  
26 C. The person to whom such disclosure has been made.

27  
28 There shall be no such confidentiality regarding his/her identity if a whistleblower  
29 makes a public disclosure of acts constituting improper conduct unless, notwithstanding such  
30 public disclosure, he/she has taken means obviously intended to preserve his/her anonymity.

31  
32 **SEC. 12. Confidentiality of Information.** — No person to whom a disclosure has been  
33 made or referred to shall divulge any information that may identify or tend to identify a  
34 whistleblower or reveal the subject matter of such disclosure, except only as to the following  
35 circumstances:

36  
37 A. The whistleblower consents in writing prior to such a disclosure of;

38  
39 B. The disclosure is indispensable and essential as determined by the Implementing Agency,  
40 taking into consideration the necessary proceedings to be had after said disclosure; or

41  
42 C. The disclosure or referral is made pursuant to an obligation under this Act. The  
43 prohibition on disclosure under this Section shall apply to any person who has become  
44 privy to any confidential information, whether officially or otherwise.

45  
46 **SEC. 13. Violation of Confidentiality.**— Any person who shall violate the protection of  
47 confidentiality of a protected disclosure under Sections 11 and 12 of this Act, shall suffer the  
48 penalty of imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year with  
49 the accessory penalty of temporary absolute disqualification for public office, in case of a



1 public officer or employee, and shall be civilly liable to the whistleblower in such amount of  
2 damages as may be awarded and deemed reasonable by the court.

3  
4 The proceedings herein shall be independent of any action that an aggrieved  
5 whistleblower may take before the Civil Service Commission of the Department of Labor and  
6 Employment for unfair or discriminatory practices, back wages, or other labor dispute, or  
7 before other quasi-judicial agencies that may or may not have arisen from a disclosure, or a  
8 believed or suspected disclosure.

9  
10 **SEC. 14. No Breach of Duty of Confidentiality.** – A whistleblower who has made a  
11 disclosure under this Act upon whom a provision of law, regulation, issuance, practice or  
12 other convention, imposes upon him/her the duty to maintain confidentiality with respect to  
13 any information disclosed to him/her shall be considered not to have committed a breach  
14 thereof.

15  
16 **SEC. 15. Defense of Privileged Communication.** – A whistleblower who has made a  
17 disclosure under this Act shall have in any other injury of proceeding the defense of absolute  
18 privileged communication with respect to the subject matter of his/her disclosure or  
19 information given to the proper authorities.

20  
21 **SEC. 16. False and Misleading Disclosures.**– Any person found guilty of deliberately  
22 and voluntarily gives false or misleading information in connection with acts or omissions  
23 constituting improper conduct shall suffer imprisonment for a period of one (1) year and one  
24 (1) day up to two (2) years at the discretion of the court as well as perpetual absolute  
25 disqualification from holding public office, in case of a public officer or employee, without  
26 prejudice to other liabilities under existing laws.

27  
28 **SEC. 17. Protection against Disciplinary Action or Reprisals and Prohibited Acts.** – A  
29 whistleblower who has made or is believed or suspected to have made a disclosure under this  
30 Act shall not be liable to disciplinary action for making said disclosure.

31  
32 Prohibited acts under this section include retaliatory action in a workplace or prejudicial  
33 conduct towards a whistleblower, such as: discriminatory actions, reprimand, punitive  
34 transfers, unwarranted referral to psychiatrist or counselor, and undue or inappropriate poor  
35 or failing performance reviews. Other prejudicial conducts include obstruction of an  
36 investigation, withdrawal of essential resources, alteration of policies and procedures, undue  
37 reports and the attachment of unfair personnel file notes.

38  
39 Any employer who has undertaken reprisals and/or initiated disciplinary actions and/or  
40 imposed sanctions or other forms of retaliatory actions, including but not limited to  
41 workplace ostracism, questions and attacks on motives, accusations of disloyalty and  
42 dysfunction, public humiliation and the denial of work or promotion, or who encourages,  
43 causes or commits, directly or indirectly, retaliatory action or reprisals against a  
44 whistleblower, or anyone believed or suspected to be one, shall be liable for the offense  
45 defined under this Act.

46  
47 Any officer or employee who refuses to follow orders of superior that would cause them  
48 to violate any provision of this Act shall likewise be protected from reprisals and retaliatory  
49 action in the workplace.

1 For purposes of this protection, an applicant for employment shall be deemed an  
2 employee and entitled to such protection.

3  
4 *Provided, however,* That an employer of a whistleblower shall be notified through a  
5 certification issued by the Implementing Agency within a period of thirty (30) days, from the  
6 date when the whistleblower last reported for work. *Provided, further,* That an employer shall  
7 have the option to remove said whistleblower from employment after securing a clearance  
8 from the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Labor and Employment, as may  
9 be appropriate, in case of a prolonged absence due to transfer or permanent relocation under  
10 this Act or R.A. No. 6891.

11  
12 **SEC. 18. Protection against other Actions.** – A whistleblower who has made a  
13 disclosure under this Act shall not be subject to any liability, whether administrative, civil, or  
14 criminal, for making such a disclosure. No action, claim or demand may be taken against a  
15 whistleblower for making such disclosure, not shall any evidence presented be used against  
16 him/her in court.

17  
18 This protection shall also operate as immunity in favor of a whistleblower against any  
19 action or proceeding taken against him/her by reason of his/her disclosure.

20  
21 *Provided, however,* that the whistleblower does not appear to be the most guilty in the  
22 commission of the act or acts constituting improper conduct.

23  
24 **SEC. 19. Discriminatory Hiring.** – Any individual, firm, corporation, office or employer  
25 who shall deny a qualified applicant of employment, or who shall reject his/her application  
26 for employment solely on the ground that the applicant is or will be a whistleblower, shall be  
27 guilty of an offense punishable by not more than six (6) months imprisonment with the  
28 accessory penalty of suspension of the right to hold public office, in case of a public officer  
29 of employee, and shall be civilly liable to indemnify the whistleblower for such damages as  
30 may be awarded by the court.

31  
32 **SEC. 20. Retaliatory Action in the Workplace.** – Any person who shall commit any  
33 retaliatory act in a workplace as defined under this Act, against an employee who is a  
34 whistleblower, or believed or suspected to be one, shall be guilty of an offense and shall  
35 suffer the penalty of not more than six (6) months imprisonment with the accessory penalty  
36 of suspension of the right to hold public office, in case of a public officer or employee, and  
37 shall be civilly liable to indemnify a whistleblower in case damages are incurred and as may  
38 be awarded by the court.

39  
40 The aggrieved whistleblower shall be entitled to the provisional remedy of injunction  
41 against any retaliatory action in the workplace, prejudicial conduct or discriminatory  
42 treatment by reason of the said whistleblower's intended or actual disclosure.

43  
44 The proceedings herein shall be independent of any action that an aggrieved person may  
45 take before the Civil Service Commission of the Department of Labor and Employment for  
46 unfair discriminatory practices, back wages, or other labor dispute, or before other quasi-  
47 judicial agencies that may or may not have arisen from a disclosure, or a believed or  
48 suspected disclosure.

1       **SEC. 21. *Penalty for Retaliatory Acts against a Whistleblower.*** – Any person who  
2 commits any of the retaliatory acts as defined in this Act against a whistleblower and/or who  
3 hinders, delays, prevents or dissuades a whistleblower from:

- 4  
5     A. Attending, assisting or testifying, before any investigating agency and/or judicial or  
6       quasi-judicial body;  
7  
8     B. Reporting to a law enforcement agency, public official and/or the judiciary the  
9       commission or possible commission of an offense or a violation of conditions of  
10      probation, parole, or release pending judicial proceedings;  
11  
12    C. Seeking the arrest of another person in connection with the offense;  
13  
14    D. Causing a criminal prosecution, or a proceeding for the revocation of a parole or  
15      probation; or  
16  
17    E. Performing and enjoying the rights and benefits under this Act, or who attempts to do so  
18      shall be fined not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 100,000.00) and/or  
19      suffer imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than six (6) years or  
20      both at the discretion of a court and shall also suffer the penalty of perpetual  
21      disqualification from holding public office in case of a public officer or employee.  
22

23       **SEC. 22. *Benefits and Security and Protection of a Qualified Whistleblower.*** – A  
24 qualified whistleblower shall be entitled to an allowance sufficient for his/her daily basic  
25 financial requirements considering his personal circumstances, provided he/she requests for  
26 said allowance and the Implementing Agency determines and approves the reasonableness of  
27 such request, in accordance with the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.  
28

29       A qualified whistleblower shall likewise be entitles to housing and personal security  
30 regardless of whether the disclosure is made in confidence or in public. Accordingly, the  
31 Implementing Agency is hereby authorized to allocate funds and resources as provided for in  
32 Section 32 hereof for the full satisfaction of the benefits and security and protection of a  
33 qualified whistleblower, in accordance with the implementing rules and regulations of this  
34 Act.  
35

36       This section is without prejudice to any benefits a qualified whistleblower may be  
37 entitled to under R.A. No. 6891 provided that the necessary amount shall be sourced from the  
38 budget as provided for in Section 32 hereof and that no duplication of benefit shall ensue.  
39

40       **SEC. 23. *Financial Rewards for Whistleblower.***– A qualifies whistleblower shall be  
41 entitled to a monetary reward on a contingency basis, equivalent to at least ten per centum  
42 (10%) of the amount which may be recovered as a result of his disclosure or the amount of  
43 One Million Pesos (Php 1,000,000.00), whichever is lower.  
44

45       **SEC. 24. *Abstract.*** – All government agencies, offices, bureaus and local government  
46 units, including government owned or controlled corporations, whether or not with original  
47 charters, shall conspicuously display an abstract of this Act and the rights and protections of  
48 whistleblowers, including the obligations of employers under this Act. Such abstract shall be  
49 provided in the implementing rules and regulations.  
50



1 All government agencies, offices, bureaus and local government units, including  
2 government owned and controlled corporations, whether or not with original charters, shall  
3 likewise put in place internal procedures for dealing with whistleblowers, consistent with the  
4 provisions of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations. Said internal procedure  
5 shall be widely disseminated to all employees.  
6

7 All other employers, specifically those in the private sector, shall also conspicuously  
8 display notices of their employee's protections and their obligations under this Act and its  
9 implementing rules and regulations.

10 **SEC. 25. Failure of an Employer to Post Abstract.** – The failure to post an Abstract or to  
11 adopt internal procedures as requires under Section 24 of this Act shall constitute an offense  
12 and shall be penalized with a fine in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php  
13 100,000.00) for the first offense. Said amount shall be doubled for every succeeding  
14 offense/s.  
15

16 **SEC. 26. Failure to Act or Report to the Implementing Agency.** – Any person under  
17 obligation to report a disclosure under this Act to the Implementing Agency but who fails to  
18 do so within the period of two (2) months, or who fails to act thereon or cause an  
19 investigation thereof, shall be guilty of an offense and shall suffer the penalty of not more  
20 than six (6) months imprisonment, and/or a fine amounting to not more than Three Hundred  
21 Thousand Pesos (Php 300,000.00) without prejudice to any other liability that may be  
22 imposed upon such person under existing laws.  
23

24 **SEC. 27. Confidentiality of the Proceedings.** – All proceedings involving application  
25 and/or enjoyment of the benefits under this Act, including any action taken thereon, shall be  
26 confidential in nature. No information or documents given or submitted in support thereof  
27 shall be released except upon written order of the Implementing Agency, and provided such  
28 disclosure shall not endanger the life of a qualified whistleblower.  
29

30 **SEC. 28. Powers and Functions of the Implementing Agencies or Agency.** – In addition  
31 to their respective powers and functions under existing laws, the Implementing Agencies  
32 shall:

- 33 A. Supervise, monitor and coordinate all efforts relative to the implementation and  
34 enforcement of the provisions of this Act;  
35
- 36 B. Investigate all disclosures made under this Act, prosecute or recommend prosecution of  
37 the same when warranted;  
38
- 39 C. Evaluate the qualification of whistleblowers for coverage under this Act, and whenever  
40 appropriate, make the appropriate decision on their entitlement to the benefits and  
41 security and protection extended herein;  
42
- 43 D. Undertake, in coordination and cooperation with the private and public sectors, an  
44 information campaign to educate the public on the provisions and benefits of this Act;  
45
- 46 E. Develop plans and implement programs to further encourage whistleblowers with a view  
47 for effective deterrence and/or prosecution of improper conduct as well as acts amounting  
48 to graft and corrupt practices;  
49

1 F. Control and administer, through coordination and consistent with the provisions and  
2 purpose of this Act, the protection and benefits of whistleblowers and the funds necessary  
3 to carry out the provisions of this Act;  
4

5 G. Call upon, or deputize any department, bureau, office or any other government agency or  
6 public official to assist in the effective implementation and enforcement of this Act; and  
7

8 H. Grant immunity in accordance with the provisions of this Act and its implementing rules  
9 and regulation.  
10

11 **SEC. 29. *Implementing Agency, Option of Whistleblower.*** – A whistleblower shall have  
12 the right to indicate his preference as to the Implementing Agency he/she intends to be  
13 admitted and/or qualifies in as a whistleblower. The Implementing Agency so chosen shall  
14 have the primary jurisdiction and authority to exercise the powers and functions provided for  
15 under Section 28 of this Act.

16 **SEC. 30. *Congressional Whistleblower Program.*** – The Senate and the House of  
17 Representatives may have their own Whistleblower's Program for resource persons and/or  
18 whistleblowers appearing before them or their respective committees.  
19

20 The resource person and/or whistleblower, with his/her express consent, may be admitted  
21 into the program upon the recommendation of the legislative committee where his/her  
22 testimony is needed when in its judgment there is pressing necessity therefor: *Provided*, that  
23 such recommendation is approved by the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House,  
24 whichever the case may be.  
25

26 The Senate or the House of Representatives, as the case may be, shall have primary  
27 jurisdiction in the administration and implementation of the program independent from any  
28 other agency of government when the investigation of the safety of the resource person or  
29 whistleblower shall be prejudiced.  
30

31 **SEC. 31. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – There is hereby created a  
32 Whistleblower Council which shall be composed of the Implementing Agencies and headed  
33 by the Office of the Solicitor General.  
34

35 The Council shall be primarily and solely responsible for the drafting and promulgating  
36 of the necessary Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for the effective implementation  
37 of this Act. The Council's submission to Congress of the approved IRR and the causing of its  
38 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation shall render the council  
39 *functus officio*.  
40

41 **SEC. 32. *Funding.*** – The amount One Hundred Million Pesos (Php 100,000,000.00) is  
42 hereby authorized to be appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise  
43 allocated to carry into effect the purpose of this Act.  
44

45 Other funding schemes or sources that may be authorized under existing laws shall be  
46 allowed in furtherance hereof.  
47

1       **SEC. 33. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or  
2       unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provisions not otherwise affected thereby  
3       shall remain valid and subsisting.  
4

5       **SEC. 34. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,  
6       letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with,  
7       the provisions of this Act, is hereby repealed, modifies, or amended accordingly.  
8

9       **SEC. 35. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
10      publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*