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SENATE

S. B. No. 400 RECEIVED 

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" T. GO

**AN ACT
PENALIZING PRANK CALLERS TO EMERGENCY HOTLINES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

To improve public safety and facilitate a prompt deployment of emergency services, President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order (EO) No. 56 in 2018. The EO institutionalized the Emergency 911 Hotline as the nationwide emergency hotline number which acts as a call and dispatch center linking people needing assistance to emergency resources of the government such as the police, firefighters, medical workers and rescue services.

By its very nature and purpose, calls accommodated by the Emergency 911 should only be for legitimate and immediate emergency concerns. There is no room for mischievous or malicious calls as the time spent in answering these prank calls may spell the difference in saving the life of someone in dire need of help.

To discourage such senseless acts, and to ensure proper operation of emergency services, this proposed measure aims to prohibit and penalize prank calling to emergency hotlines.

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


SENATOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" T. GO

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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 "*Anti-Prank Callers Act of 2019.*"

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the general welfare or the people. Towards this end, the State aims to prohibit malicious and improper use of telecommunication devices.

Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act:

a.) *Prank call* refers to a mischievous or malicious telephone call made to trick or fool someone with the intention to annoy, abuse, threaten, harass, or solicit any comment; request, suggestion or sound which is obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy or indecent, or a call intending to make false requests or false alarm of an emergency, knowing the report or information or alarm to be false;

b.) *Emergency* refers to a serious, unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate attention and action; and

c.) *Hotline* refers to a direct telecommunication set up for a specific purpose.

1 **Sec. 4. *Prohibition.*** – Emergency hotlines established for the purpose of
2 responding to emergency situations shall, at all times, be free from receiving
3 unnecessary calls. It shall be prohibited for any individual to make prank calls to any
4 hotline at any time.

5
6 **Sec. 5. *Penalties.*** - Any person who violates this Act shall be penalized
7 with:

8 a.) *Arresto menor* and a fine of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) for the first
9 offense;

10 b.) *Arresto mayor* and a fine of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) for the second
11 offense; and

12 c.) *Prision correccional* and a fine of Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) for
13 the third and succeeding offenses.

14 *Provided,* That the foregoing penalties shall be imposed without prejudice to
15 other liabilities under the Revised Penal Code or any special law arising out of the
16 prohibited act herein.

17
18 **Sec. 6. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is subsequently
19 declared unconstitutional, the validity of the remaining provisions hereof shall
20 remain in full force and effect.

21
22 **Sec. 7. *Repealing Clause.*** – All acts and decrees, executive orders,
23 implementing rules and regulations or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions
24 of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

25
26 **Sec. 8. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) after its
27 complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the
28 Philippines.

Approved,