



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH (19th) CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3544



Introduced by REP. JOSEPH STEPHEN S. PADUANO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Road signs are essential for motorists in navigating and staying safe in driving on our roads and streets. They provide warnings for drivers when to slow down whenever there are road repairs or closures, and other applicable scenarios. Road signs also provide different information, and let drivers know such as where are the essential facilities such as phones, hospital, lay-bays, and other services that often needed in emergency situations, in highways or expressways.

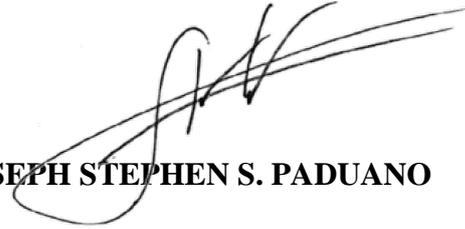
Unfortunately, one common problem in our roads and streets are vandalized or stolen road or traffic signs. Vandalized road signs cause confusion for motorists, with either defaced or torn signage, while stolen road signs will totally leave motorists clueless of where to turn or what is coming ahead.

An article by Rappler in 2017 reported a data from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) that “42,558 have been stolen or vandalized in 2013” that will result to errors of motorists, and even pedestrians due to lack of proper traffic signages or early warning devices. The said public works department attested to this when in 2019, they warned the public of the dangers in vandalizing road signages that causes vehicular accidents. This is in relation to stolen, damaged, or removed road signages installed by contractors working on road projects.

On this note, this Representation wishes to forward this measure that seeks stronger penalties against vandalism and undue damages to traffic and road signs, and will eventually curb such acts, and will further serve as deterrent to this kind of crime.

In the 18th Congress, House Bill (HB) No. 7886, titled “*An Act Imposing Stiffer Penalties for the Offenses of Stealing or Vandalizing of Government Road and Traffic Signs, Warning Devices, Accessories and other Facilities*”, with this Representation included as principal author of the Third Reading Copy, with the main proponents of similar bills that was substituted by the aforementioned measure. It was approved on third and final reading by the members of the 18th Congress after it was deliberated and submitted to the Plenary by the Committees on Revision of Laws. Afterwards it was transmitted to the Senate, however, due to various factors; it was not enacted into law. Also, there were similar bills that were filed in the 16th and 17th Congress that contributes to the length and depth of processes for this proposed measure.

Hence, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



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AN ACT
IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES FOR THE OFFENSES OF STEALING OR
VANDALIZING OF GOVERNMENT ROAD AND TRAFFIC SIGNS, WARNING
DEVICES, ACCESSORIES AND OTHER FACILITIES

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title*** – This Act shall be known as the "Stealing or Vandalizing of
2 Government Road and Traffic Signs and Devices Act".

3
4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy*** – It is the policy of the State to protect the safety of
5 people and their property. In this regard, the State shall endeavor to continually improve the
6 condition of roads and make vehicular traffic as safe as possible by providing motorists with
7 appropriate information through signs and accident-prevention devices. In pursuit of this end,
8 the State shall mandate concerned government agencies and instrumentalities to install, in
9 conspicuous and appropriate places, road and traffic signs and devices, to warn motorists of
10 risks and dangers on the road.

11
12 **SEC. 3. *Theft and Damage of Government Traffic and Road Signs and Devices*** – It
13 shall be unlawful to steal or vandalize government road and traffic signs, warning devices,
14 accessories, and other facilities, installed by national and local governments for the purpose of
15 cautioning motorists of imminent dangers along the road.

1 **SEC. 4. *Government Road and Traffic Signs Warning Devices and Accessories*** – As
2 used in this Act, the term "road and traffic signs, warning devices and accessories, and other
3 facilities" shall mean road or traffic signs exemplified by the signs "Stop", "Yield", "Slippery
4 When Wet". Signs indicating zigzagging sections of roads, railings, and similar devices shall
5 serve to provide road information, notices and warnings to motorists and the public to facilitate
6 vehicular traffic and avoid the occurrence of accidents, loss of life and damage to property. A
7 man-hole cover shall be considered a road accident-prevention accessory.

8
9 The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall provide a list of all
10 lawful road and traffic signs, warning devices and accessories, and other facilities owned by the
11 government. The list shall be updated as the need arises.

12
13 **SEC. 5. *Prohibited Acts*** — It shall be unlawful for any person to commit any of the
14 following acts:

- 15
16 1) Steal government road and traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and other
17 facilities or any parts thereof, installed by national and local governments, listed
18 and duly provided by the DPWH under Section 4 of this Act;
- 19
20 2) Vandalize, damage, destroy, dismantle, or disassemble government road and traffic
21 signs, warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part thereof, installed
22 by national and local governments, listed and duly provided by the DPWH under
23 Section 4 of this Act;
- 24
25 3) Sell or buy stolen road and traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and other
26 facilities or any part thereof, listed and duly provided by the DPWH under Section
27 4 of this Act;
- 28
29 4) Attempt to commit any of the aforementioned prohibited acts; and
- 30
31 5) Benefit from the proceeds or fruits of any of the abovementioned prohibited acts
32 knowing that the same are derived from the commission of a prohibited act.
- 33
34

1 **SEC. 6. Penalties** – The violation of this Act shall be punished with the following
2 penalties:

- 3
- 4 a. The penalty of imprisonment of not less than twelve (12) years but not more than
5 fifteen (15) years or a fine twice (2x) the market value of the government property
6 stolen in Philippine Currency, or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be
7 imposed on any person found guilty of stealing government road and traffic signs,
8 warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part thereof, including man-
9 hole covers as defined in Section of this Act;
- 10
- 11 b. The same penalty provided under paragraph (a) of this Section shall be imposed on
12 any person found guilty of selling or buying government road and traffic signs,
13 other risk reduction or warning devices, accessories, and other facilities or any part
14 thereof as defined in Section 4 of this Act;
- 15
- 16 c. The penalty of imprisonment of not less than six (6) years but not more than ten
17 (10) years or a fine twice (2x) the market value of the government property in
18 Philippine Currency, or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any
19 person found guilty of vandalizing, destroying, damaging, tampering, or
20 disassembling government road and traffic signs, warning devices, accessories, and
21 other facilities or any part thereof, including man-hole covers as defined in Section
22 4 of this Act;
- 23
- 24 d. The penalty of imprisonment of not less than six (6) years but not more than eight
25 (8) years or a fine equivalent to the market value of the government property in
26 Philippine Currency, or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any
27 person who attempts to commit any of the prohibited acts provided Section 4 of this
28 Act;
- 29
- 30 e. The penalty of imprisonment of not less than two (2) years but not more than seven
31 (7) years or a fine twice (2x) the market value of the government property in
32 Philippine Currency, or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be imposed on any
33 person found guilty of unlawfully benefiting from the proceeds or fruits of any of
34 the prohibited acts enumerated in Section 4 of this Act; and

1 f. Government employees found guilty of violation of this Act either as principal or
2 as an accomplice shall be penalized according to the penalties prescribed in Section
3 6 of this Act. In addition, such government employees shall forfeit all their
4 retirement benefits and shall be barred from further employment with the
5 government.

6
7 **SEC. 7. Incentives** — Cash incentives shall be provided to a person or persons who will
8 provide information leading to the apprehension of violators of this Act. The amount of
9 incentives shall be provided for in the rules and regulations to be promulgated to implement
10 this Act.

11
12 **SEC. 8. Non-applicability of Articles 308, 309 and 310 of the Revised Penal Code** –
13 Articles 308, 309, and 310 of the Revised Penal Code shall not be applicable to cases
14 contemplated or enumerated in this Act.

15
16 **SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations** – Within one hundred eighty (180) days
17 from the effectivity of this Act, the DPWH shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for
18 its implementation.

19
20 **SEC. 10. Separability Clause** – Any portion or provision of this Act which may be
21 declared unconstitutional or contrary to any existing law shall not have the effect of
22 nullifying other portions or provisions hereof.

23
24 **SEC. 11. Repealing Clause** - All other laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and other
25 issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified
26 accordingly.

27
28 **SEC. 12. Effectivity** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
29 in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

30
31 *Approved,*