

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 421



Introduced by **HONORABLE ROMERO "MIRO" S. QUIMBO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the early parts of 2016 alone, different institutions and public places in the country were interrupted due to bomb threats. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), in light of the series of bomb threats in malls within Metro Manila, appealed to the public to disregard bomb threat text messages as they were found to be a hoax.¹ The operations of several educational institutions were also interrupted because of bomb threats. Last March 26, students, faculty members and staff of the Ateneo De Manila University (ADMU) vacated the vicinity of the said university due to the alleged implanted bomb in the campus. Meanwhile in Subic, Zambales, classes in two schools were suspended due to a bomb threat sent to the mayor on January 4.²

Bomb threats have also disturbed even governmental institutions. Last April 1, Bacolod City Capitol was alerted with a bomb threat. Employees of the Capitol were immediately evacuated causing interruption in the activities of the said institution.

Moreover, last April 17, the north bound lane of EDSA-Main Avenue in Cubao, Quezon City was temporarily closed to traffic due to a bomb threat.³ The said incident caused heavy traffic along EDSA, and motorists were instructed to take alternate route. Passengers of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) were also affected since MRT operations were halted as a precaution. The said incident occurred during rush hour (around 8:00 in the evening) when thousands of motorists and commuters are crowding along EDSA.

These, and other previous bomb scares that threatened various places around the country, demonstrate the need to address the growing concern on bomb threats. Every false bomb threat which alarms an area leads to unnecessary anxiety for the people, disruption of its regular activities, economic costs from the opportunity lost for productivity due to evacuation activities, waste of law enforcement and

¹ "AFP allays fears of bomb threat in Metro Manila malls." ABS-CBN News website, April 15, 2016 <<http://news.abs-cbn.com/nation/metro-manila/04/14/16/afp-allays-fears-of-bomb-threat-in-metro-manila-malls>, accessed June 17, 2016>.

² "Classes in 2 Subic schools suspended due to bomb threat." Inquirer.net website, January 4, 2016, <<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/752439/classes-in-2-subic-schools-suspended-due-to-bomb-threat>, accessed June 17, 2016>.

³ "Bomb threat forces temporary closure of EDSA-Main Avenue." Rappler website, April 17, 2016 <<http://www.rappler.com/nation/129854-edsa-cubao-bomb-threat-traffic>, accessed June 17, 2016>.

emergency response resources as well as time spent which should have been used for more pressing public concerns, among others.

These pernicious effects are further magnified when the false threat is aimed against high population density or sensitive places like schools, airports, churches and malls, where there is regularity in the flow of activities. In schools for instance, precious instructional time is wasted only to the whim of pranksters who deliberately plant false bomb messages just to disturb the area. More importantly, it puts minors at risk to stampedes and permanent psychological trauma.

In the United States, state laws have been enacted in order to address this problem. In Michigan, making false reports on bombs and knowingly communicating the same to another person is punishable by imprisonment of up to four years and/or fine.⁴ Meanwhile, Massachusetts penalizes anyone who communicates a threat causing the evacuation of high density and sensitive institutions or causes serious public inconvenience or alarm with three to twenty years imprisonment and/or fine.⁵ Countries like Japan and Britain have also expressed their concern through the enactment of laws relating to the same acts.

In the Philippines, Presidential Decree No. 1727 on "Declaring as Unlawful the Malicious Dissemination of False Information of the Willful Making of any Threat Concerning Bombs, Explosives or any Similar Device or Means of Destruction and Imposing Penalties Therefor" was enacted in October 8, 1980. Said law states that any person who communicates, willfully makes any threat or maliciously conveys false information of an attempt to damage or destroy any property by means of explosives, incendiary devices and other destructive forces of similar nature, shall be punished with imprisonment of not more than five years or a fine of not more than forty thousand pesos (Php 40,000) or both at the discretion of the court.⁶

However, with the increase in incidences of false bomb threats, there is a need to enact a law that will supplement P.D. 1727, which will impose stiffer penalties when the act is done in high population density and sensitive areas, in the objective of curbing incidences of false reports which result to the detriment of the victims from losses in productivity and resources.

In view whereof, the expedient approval of this bill is requested.



ROMERO "MIRO" S. QUIMBO
Representative
2nd District, Marikina City

⁴ "Bomb Threat Penalties – S.B. 645 (S-2) : First Analysis." Michigan Legislature website, July 15, 2012. <
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2001-2002/billanalysis/Senate/htm/2001-SFA-0645-E.htm>, accessed February 25, 2014>.

⁵ "General Laws." The 188th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts., no date. <
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartIV/TitleI/Chapter269/Section14>, accessed February 25, 2014>.

⁶ "Presidential Decree No. 1727." Chan Robles website, no date. <
http://www.chanrobles.com/presidentialdecrees/presidentialdecreeno1727.html#Uwzng_ldXvQ, accessed February 25, 2014>.

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Introduced by **HONORABLE ROMERO "MIRO" S. QUIMBO**

1 **AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION ON**
2 **THE PRESENCE OF BOMBS, EXPLOSIVES AND OTHER INCENDIARY DEVICES**
3 **IN HIGH DENSITY OR SENSITIVE PLACES AND PROVIDING PENALTIES**
4 **THEREFOR**

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

7 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*False Bomb Threat*
8 *Prohibition Act of 2016*”.

9
10 **SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
11 undertake all measures to protect all persons, especially its citizens, from being
12 subject to the injurious effects of false information and threats on bombs and
13 explosives, in the objective of upholding their security and safety, especially in high
14 density and sensitive places where the risks are higher.

15
16 As used in this Act, “high density” shall refer to areas which are regularly
17 populated with people, including but not limited to public spaces like national
18 roads, public parks, airports, seaports, hotels and malls, or where people are
19 gathered for an event.

20 “Sensitive areas” shall refer to those which are subject to high risks upon
21 violation of this Act because of the magnitude of resulting possible losses in
22 productivity, resources, and religious value notwithstanding the number of people
23 present therein, including but not limited to educational institutions, offices,
24 government institutions, and churches.

1 **SECTION 3. Prohibition.** No person shall wilfully communicate or cause to be
2 communicated, either directly or indirectly, orally, in writing, by mail, by use of a
3 telephone or telecommunication device including, but not limited to, cellular
4 phones, electronic mail, internet communications and facsimile communications,
5 through an electronic communication device or by any other means, a threat or
6 information involving a bomb, explosive or other incendiary device, when such
7 threat is in fact not present, thereby causing either the evacuation or serious
8 disruption of a school, school related event, school transportation, or a dwelling,
9 building, place of assembly, facility or public transport, or an aircraft, ship or
10 common carrier, or wilfully communicates or causes serious public inconvenience
11 or alarm.

12
13 **SECTION 4. Penalties.** Any person found guilty of violating this Act or any rules
14 and regulations issued pursuant hereto shall, upon conviction, be punished by
15 imprisonment of not less than six (6) years but not more than twelve (12) years or
16 fine of not less than One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00) but not more than Five
17 Million Pesos (P5,000,000.00) or both.

18
19 **SECTION 5. Separability Clause.** - If any part or provision of this Act is
20 declared unconstitutional, other parts or provisions thereof which are not affected
21 thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

22
23 **SECTION 6 Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders and issuances,
24 and rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
25 hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

26
27 **SECTION 7. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
28 publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

29
30
31 Approved,