

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }  
*First Regular Session*

04 JUN 30 P11:06

SENATE

S. No. 796

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INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

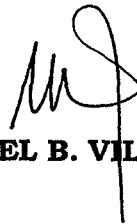
From the old times to this day of free enterprise and competitive businesses, charging of excessive interest for loans and forbearance of money, goods or credit is largely regarded as oppressive.

The country's present law on usury is Republic Act No. 2655, which was amended by several Presidential Decrees. One is PD No. 1684 which authorized the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of the Philippines to fix and prescribe the maximum rate of interest for loans and forbearance in accordance with certain criteria reflecting the prevailing economic and social needs.

This practice of charging excessive interest rates must be stopped by re-imposing the Usury Law. It is hoped that by doing such, the people who, out of desperation agree to pay exorbitant interest to avail of a loan, will be helped. It also discourages and punishes those unscrupulous individuals who take advantage of the misfortune of others.

While this measure seeks to re-impose a ceiling on interest rates, it also recognizes the need to have more flexible interest rates ceiling, responsive to the requirements of the ever-changing economic conditions.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is urgently pressed.



**MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.**

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }  
*First Regular Session*

'04 JUN 30 P11:07

SENATE

796

S. No. \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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**AN ACT  
FIXING THE RATES OF INTEREST UPON LOANS AND FORBEARANCES BY  
AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF ACT NO. TWENTY-SIX FIFTY-FIVE (2655),  
AS AMENDED**

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

SECTION 1. Section 1 of Act Numbered Twenty-Six Fifty-Five (Act No. 2655), as amended, is hereby amended to read, as follows:

"SEC. 1. The rate of interest for the loan or forbearance of any money, goods or credits or charges on credit cards and other cash advance arrangements, and the rate allowed in judgments, in the absence of express contract to such rate of interest, shall be twelve percent (12%) per annum or such rate as may be prescribed by the Monetary Board of the Central Bank of the Philippines for that purpose in accordance with the authority hereby granted: Provided, That said maximum rate shall not be more than three percentage (3%) points above the average interest rate of ninety (90) days government or treasury bills within the quarter preceding the Monetary Board's imposition of said maximum rate."

SECTION 2. Section 1-a of Act No. 2655, as amended, is hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. Section 2 of Act No. 2655, as amended, is hereby amended to read, as follows:

"SEC. 2. No person or corporation shall directly or indirectly take or receive or agree to charge in money or other property, real or personal, or chooses in action, a higher rate of interest or greater sum or value, including commissions, premiums, fines, penalties, charges and other surcharges, for the loan or forbearance of money, goods, credits, or cash advances, or renewal thereof, where such loan or forbearance is secured in whole or in part by a mortgage upon real estate the title to which is duly registered, or by any document conveying such real, estate or an interest therein, or by chattel mortgage, than fifteen percent (15%) per annum or such rate as may be agreed upon by the parties: Provided, That

the maximum rate that the parties may charge or agree to charge shall not be more than three percentage (3%) points above the average interest rate of ninety (90) days government or treasury bills within the preceding quarter: Provided, further, That the rate of interest under this Section or the maximum rate of interest that may be agreed upon by the parties may likewise apply to loans secured by other types of security as may be specified by the Monetary Board."

SECTION 4. Section 3 of Act No. 2655, as amended, is hereby amended to read, as follows:

"SEC. 3. No person or corporation shall directly or indirectly demand, take, receive or agree to charge in money or other property, real or personal, a higher rate or greater sum or value for the loan or forbearance of money, goods, or charge on credits, credit cards and other cash advance arrangements, where such loan or forbearance is not secured as provided in Section Two (2) hereof, than sixteen percent (16%) per annum or as may be agreed upon by the parties: Provided, That the maximum rate that the parties may charge or agree to charge shall not be more than five percentage (5%) points above the average rate of interest of ninety (90) days government or treasury bills within the preceding quarter from the time the loan or renewal thereof is granted."

SECTION 5. Section 4 of Act No. 2655, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 4. No pawnbroker or pawnbroker's agent shall directly or indirectly stipulate, charge, demand, take or receive any higher rate or greater sum or value for any loan or forbearance than three percent (3%) per month if the amount lent is less than Eight hundred pesos (P800.00), five percent (5%) per month when the sum is Eight hundred pesos (P800.00) or more but not exceeding Two thousand five hundred pesos (P2, 500.00); and fifteen percent (15%) per annum when it is more than the amount last mentioned; or as may be agreed upon by the parties: Provided, That the maximum rate that the parties may charge or agree to charge shall not be more than three percentage (3%) points above the average rate of interest of ninety (90) days government or treasury bills within the preceding quarter. A pawnbroker or pawnbroker's agent shall be considered such, for the benefit of this Republic Act, only if he be duly licensed and has an establishment open to the public.

It shall be unlawful for a pawnbroker or pawnbroker's agent to divide the pawn offered by a person into two (2) or more fractions in order to collect a greater interest than that permitted by this Section.

"It shall also be unlawful for pawnbroker or pawnbroker's agent to require the pawner to pay additional charge as insurance premium for the safekeeping and conservation of the article pawned."

SECTION 6. Section 4-a of Act No. 2655, as amended, is hereby repealed.

SECTION 7. Section 4-b of Act No. 2655 as amended, is hereby re-numbered as Section 4-A.

SECTION 8. Section 5 of Act No. 2655, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 5. In computing the interest on any obligation, promissory note or other instrument or contract, compound interest shall not be reckoned, except by agreement: Provided, That whenever compound interest is agreed upon, the effective rate of interest charged by the creditor shall not exceed the equivalent of the maximum rate prescribed by the Monetary Board and allowed herein, or in default thereof, whenever the debt is judicially claimed, in which last case, it shall draw twelve percent (12%) per annum interest or such rate as may be prescribed by the Monetary Board, which rate shall not be more than three percentage (3%) points above the average rate of interest of ninety (90) days government or treasury bills within the preceding quarter. No person or corporation shall require interest to be paid in advance for a period of more than three (3) months: Provided, however, That whenever interest is paid in advance, the effective rate of interest charged by the creditor shall not exceed the equivalent of the maximum allowed by this Republic Act."

SECTION 9. Section 7 of Act No. 2655, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 7. All covenants and stipulation contained in conveyances, mortgages, bonds, bills, notes, and other contracts or evidence of debts, and all deposits of goods, or other things, whereupon or whereby there shall be stipulated, charged, demanded, reserved, secured, taken, or received, directly or indirectly, a higher rate of interest or greater sum or value for the loan or the renewal thereof or forbearance of money, goods, or credits than is hereinbefore allowed, shall be void: Provided, however, That no mere clerical error in the computation of interest, made, without intent to evade any of the provisions of this Act, shall render the stipulation or covenant pertaining to the rate of interest void:

Provided, further, That the rate of interest agreed upon at the time the loan arrangement is entered into, which rate shall not exceed the maximum allowed herein, shall prevail notwithstanding subsequent changes in the maximum rates that may be made by law, unless the parties to the loan agreement, the proceeds of which may be availed of partially or fully at some future time, stipulate otherwise: and Provided, finally, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the purchase by an innocent purchaser of a negotiable mercantile paper, usurious or otherwise, for valuable consideration before maturity, when there has been no intention on the part of said purchaser to evade the provisions of this Act and said purchase was not a part of the original usurious transaction. In any case, however, the maker of said note shall have the right to recover from said original holder the whole interest paid by him thereon and, in case of litigation, also the cost and such attorney's fees as may be allowed by the court."

SECTION 10. Section 9-a of Act No. 2655), as amended, is hereby amended to read apt follows:

"SEC. 9-a. The Monetary Board shall make known to the public, through publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation, the average rate of interest of ninety (90) days government or treasury bills every quarter for the public's information and easy reference, and promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement effectively the provisions of this Act."

SECTION 11. Section 10 of Act No. 2655 as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 10. Without prejudice to the proper civil action violation of this Act and the implementing rules and regulations promulgated by the Monetary Board shall be subject to criminal prosecution and the guilty person shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to a fine of not less than One hundred pesos (P100.00), nor more than Two thousand pesos (P2,000.00), or imprisonment for not less than thirty (30) days nor sore then one (1) yearn or both, in the discretion of the court, and to return the entire sum received as interest from the party aggrieved, and in the case of non-payment, to suffer subsidiary imprisonment at the rate of one (1)day for every Eight pesos (P8.00): Provided, That in case of corporations, associations, societies, or companies, the manager, administrator or "gerente" or the person who has charge of the management or administration of the business shall be criminally responsible for away violation of this Republic Act."

SECTION 12. All laws, acts, decrees or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provision of this Republic Act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 13. This Republic Act shall take effect after the lapse of fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever is earlier.

*Approved,*