

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9262, March 08, 2004]

AN ACT DEFINING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN, PROVIDING FOR PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR VICTIMS, PRESCRIBING PENALTIES THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*— It is hereby declared that the State values the dignity of women and children and guarantees full respect for human rights. The State also recognizes the need to protect the family and its members particularly women and children, from violence and threats to their personal safety and security.

Towards this end, the State shall exert efforts to address violence committed against women and children in keeping with the fundamental freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution and the Provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments of which the Philippines is a party.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*— As used in this Act,

a. "*Violence against women and their children*" refers to any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, or against her child whether legitimate or illegitimate, within or without the family abode, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harrasment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. It includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

A. "*Physical Violence*" refers to acts that include bodily or physical harm;

B. "*Sexual violence*" refers to an act which is sexual in nature, committed against a woman or her child. It includes, but is not limited to:

a. rap, sexual harassment, acts of lasciviousness, treating a woman or her child as a sex object, making demeaning and sexually suggestive remarks, physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim's body, forcing her/him to watch obscene publications and

indecent shows or forcing the woman or her child to do indecent acts and/or make films thereof, forcing the wife and mistress/lover to live in the conjugal home or sleep together in the same room with the abuser;

- b. acts causing or attempting to cause the victim to engage in any sexual activity by force, threat of force, physical or other harm or threat of physical or other harm or coercion;
- c. Prostituting the woman or child.

C. "*Psychological violence*" refers to acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering of the victim such as but not limited to intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, public ridicule or humiliation, repeated verbal abuse and mental infidelity. It includes causing or allowing the victim to witness the physical, sexual or psychological abuse of a member of the family to which the victim belongs, or to witness pornography in any form or to witness abusive injury to pets or to unlawful or unwanted deprivation of the right to custody and/or visitation of common children.

D. "*Economic abuse*" refers to acts that make or attempt to make a woman financially dependent which includes, but is not limited to the following:

- 1. withdrawal of financial support or preventing the victim from engaging in any legitimate profession, occupation, business or activity, except in cases wherein the other spouse/partner objects on valid, serious and moral grounds as defined in Article 73 of the Family Code;
- 2. deprivation or threat of deprivation of financial resources and the right to the use and enjoyment of the conjugal, community or property owned in common;
- 3. destroying household property;
- 4. controlling the victims' own money or properties or solely controlling the conjugal money or properties.

b. "*Battery*" refers to an act of inflicting physical harm upon the woman or her child resulting to the physical and psychological or emotional distress.

c. "*Battered Woman Syndrome*" refers to a scientifically defined pattern of psychological and behavioral symptoms found in women living in battering relationships as a result of cumulative abuse.

d. "*Stalking*" refers to an intentional act committed by a person who, knowingly and without lawful justification follows the woman or her child or places the woman or her child under surveillance directly or indirectly or a combination thereof.

e. "*Dating relationship*" refers to a situation wherein the parties live as husband and wife without the benefit of marriage or are romantically involved over time and on a continuing basis during the course of the relationship. A casual acquaintance or ordinary socialization between two individuals in a business or social context is not a dating relationship.

f. "*Sexual relations*" refers to a single sexual act which may or may not result in the bearing of a common child.

g. "*Safe place or shelter*" refers to any home or institution maintained or managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or by any other agency or voluntary organization accredited by the DSWD for the

purposes of this Act or any other suitable place the resident of which is willing temporarily to receive the victim.

- h. "*Children*" refers to those below eighteen (18) years of age or older but are incapable of taking care of themselves as defined under Republic Act No. 7610. As used in this Act, it includes the biological children of the victim and other children under her care.

SEC. 4. *Construction*.— This Act shall be liberally construed to promote the protection and safety of victims of violence against women and their children.

SEC. 5. *Acts of Violence Against Women and Their Children*.— The crime of violence against women and their children is committed through any of the following acts:

- a. Causing physical harm to the woman or her child;
- b. Threatening to cause the woman or her child physical harm;
- c. Attempting to cause the woman or her child physical harm;
- d. Placing the woman or her child in fear of imminent physical harm;
- e. Attempting to compel or compelling the woman or her child to engage in conduct which the woman or her child has the right to desist from or desist from conduct which the woman or her child has the right to engage in, or attempting to restrict or restricting the woman's or her child's freedom of movement or conduct by force or threat of force, physical or other harm or threat of physical or other harm, or intimidation directed against the woman or child. This shall include, but not limited to, the following acts committed with the purpose or effect of controlling or restricting the woman's or her child's movement or conduct:
 - 1. Threatening to deprive or actually depriving the woman or her child of custody to her/his family;
 - 2. Depriving or threatening to deprive the woman or her children of financial support legally due her or her family, or deliberately providing the woman's children insufficient financial support;
 - 3. Depriving or threatening to deprive the woman or her child of a legal right;
 - 4. Preventing the woman in engaging in any legitimate profession, occupation, business or activity or controlling the victim's own money or properties, or solely controlling the conjugal or common money, or properties;
- f. Inflicting or threatening to inflict physical harm on oneself for the purpose of controlling her actions or decisions;
- g. Causing or attempting to cause the woman or her child to engage in any sexual activity which does not constitute rape, by force or threat of force, physical harm, or through intimidation directed against the woman or her child or her/his immediate family;
- h. Engaging in purposeful, knowing, or reckless conduct, personally or through another, that alarms or causes substantial emotional or psychological distress to the woman or her child. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following acts:
 - 1. Stalking or following the woman or her child in public or private places;

2. Peering in the window or lingering outside the residence of the woman or her child;
 3. Entering or remaining in the dwelling or on the property of the woman or her child against her/his will;
 4. Destroying the property and personal belongingness or inflicting harm to animals or pets of the woman or her child; and
 5. Engaging in any form of harassment or violence;
- i. Causing mental or emotional anguish, public ridicule or humiliation to the woman or her child, including, but not limited to, repeated verbal and emotional abuse, and denial of financial support or custody of minor children of access to the woman's child/children.

SEC. 6. *Penalties.*— The crime of violence against women and their children, under Section 5 hereof shall be punished according to the following rules:

- a. Acts falling under Section 5(a) constituting attempted, frustrated or consummated parricide or murder or homicide shall be punished in accordance with the provisions of the Revised Penal Code. If these acts resulted in mutilation, it shall be punishable in accordance with the Revised Penal Code; those constituting serious physical injuries shall have the penalty of *prison mayor*; those constituting less serious physical injuries shall be punished by *prison correccional*; and those constituting slight physical injuries shall be punished by *arresto mayor*.

Acts falling under Section 5(b) shall be punished by imprisonment of two degrees lower than the prescribed penalty for the consummated crime as specified in the preceding paragraph but shall in no case be lower than *arresto mayor*.

- b. Acts falling under Section 5(c) and 5(d) shall be punished by *arresto mayor*;
- c. Acts falling under Section 5(e) shall be punished by *prison correccional*;
- d. Acts falling under Section 5(f) shall be punished by *arresto mayor*;
- e. Acts falling under Section 5(g) shall be punished by *prison mayor*;
- f. Acts falling under Section 5(h) and Section 5(i) shall be punished by *prison mayor*.

If the acts are committed while the woman or child is pregnant or committed in the presence of her child, the penalty to be applied shall be the maximum period of penalty prescribed in the section.

In addition to imprisonment, the perpetrator shall (a) pay a fine in the amount of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than three hundred thousand pesos (300,000.00); (b) undergo mandatory psychological counseling or psychiatric treatment and shall report compliance to the court.

SEC. 7. *Venue.*— The Regional Trial Court designated as a Family Court shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction over cases of violence against women and their children under this law. In the absence of such court in the place where the offense was committed, the case shall be filed in the Regional Trial Court where the crime or any of its elements was committed at the option of the compliant.

SEC. 8. *Protection Orders.*— A protection order is an order issued under this act for

the purpose of preventing further acts of violence against a woman or her child specified in Section 5 of this Act and granting other necessary relief. The relief granted under a protection order serve the purpose of safeguarding the victim from further harm, minimizing any disruption in the victim's daily life, and facilitating the opportunity and ability of the victim to independently regain control over her life. The provisions of the protection order shall be enforced by law enforcement agencies. The protection orders that may be issued under this Act are the barangay protection order (BPO), temporary protection order (TPO) and permanent protection order (PPO). The protection orders that may be issued under this Act shall include any, some or all of the following reliefs:

- a. Prohibition of the respondent from threatening to commit or committing, personally or through another, any of the acts mentioned in Section 5 of this Act;
- b. Prohibition of the respondent from harassing, annoying, telephoning, contacting or otherwise communicating with the petitioner, directly or indirectly;
- c. Removal and exclusion of the respondent from the residence of the petitioner, regardless of ownership of the residence, either temporarily for the purpose of protecting the petitioner, or permanently where no property rights are violated, and if respondent must remove personal effects from the residence, the court shall direct a law enforcement agent to accompany the respondent has gathered his things and escort respondent from the residence;
- d. Directing the respondent to stay away from petitioner and designated family or household member at a distance specified by the court, and to stay away from the residence, school, place of employment, or any specified place frequented by the petitioner and any designated family or household member;
- e. Directing lawful possession and use by petitioner of an automobile and other essential personal effects, regardless of ownership, and directing the appropriate law enforcement officer to accompany the petitioner to the residence of the parties to ensure that the petitioner is safely restored to the possession of the automobile and other essential personal effects, or to supervise the petitioner's or respondent's removal of personal belongings;
- f. Granting a temporary or permanent custody of a child/children to the petitioner;

Directing the respondent to provide support to the woman and/or her child if entitled to legal support. Notwithstanding other laws to the contrary, the court shall order an appropriate percentage of the income or salary of the respondent to be withheld regularly by the respondent's employer for the same to be automatically remitted directly to the woman. Failure to remit and/or withhold or any delay in the remittance of support to the woman and/or her child without justifiable cause shall render the respondent or his employer liable for indirect contempt of court;

- g. Prohibition of the respondent from any use or possession of any firearm or deadly weapon and order him to surrender the same to the court for appropriate disposition by the court, including revocation of license and disqualification to apply for any license to use or possess a firearm. If the offender is a law enforcement agent, the court shall order the offender to surrender his firearm and shall direct the appropriate authority to investigate on the offender and take appropriate action on matter;