

Destitute Persons Bill

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Bill No: 62/1965

Read the first time: 13th December 1965

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Destitute Persons Bill

Bill No. 62/1965

Read the first time on 13th December 1965.

An Act to provide for the care and rehabilitation of destitute persons and to amend the Vagrancy Ordinance (*Chapter 125 of the Revised Edition*).

Be it enacted by the President with the advice and consent of the Parliament of Singapore, as follows: —

Short title and commencement

1. This Act may be cited as the Destitute Persons Act, 1965, and shall come into operation on such date as the Minister may, by notification in the *Gazette*, appoint.

Interpretation

2.—(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —

“destitute person” means —

- (a) any person found begging in a public place in such a way as to cause or to be likely to cause annoyance to persons frequenting the place or otherwise to create a nuisance; and
- (b) any idle person found in a public place, whether or not he is begging, who has no visible means of subsistence or place of residence or is unable to give a satisfactory account of himself;

“welfare home” means any institution, or part thereof, for the reception, care and rehabilitation of destitute persons established under the provisions of, and for the purposes of, this Act;

“Superintendent” means a person having the management or control of any welfare home established under the provisions of, and for the purpose of, this Act;

“Director” means the Director of Social Welfare, and includes an Assistant Director of Social Welfare.

(2) For the purposes of this Act, “public place” includes any place to which the public is admitted without payment or on payment; and a person begs if his conduct is calculated to induce the giving of alms, whether or not there is any pretence of singing, playing, performing, offering anything for sale or otherwise.

Power to require a destitute person to reside in a welfare home

3.—(1) Any public officer acting under the direction of the Director or any police officer may take in charge any destitute person and deliver him to the custody of the Director.

(2) If the Director has reasonable cause to believe that any person so delivered into his custody has no visible means of subsistence, he may arrange for such person to be temporarily admitted into a welfare home until an inquiry has been held by him.

(3) Every such inquiry shall be completed within a period of one month from the date of such person’s admission into a welfare home.

(4) If after holding such inquiry, the Director is satisfied that such person is a destitute person within the meaning of this Act, he may by warrant under his hand require such person to reside in a welfare home.

Voluntary admission into a welfare home

4. Any destitute person who voluntarily seeks admission into a welfare home shall be required to undertake that, if admitted, he will abide by the conditions of admission imposed under this Act or by any rules made thereunder.

Minister may establish welfare homes

5.—(1) The Minister may, by notification in the *Gazette*, establish welfare homes at such places as he thinks proper within Singapore for the care and rehabilitation of destitute persons in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(2) The Minister may appoint Superintendents and other officers for the management of such welfare homes.

(3) Every such Superintendent or officer shall be deemed to be a public servant within the meaning of the Penal Code (Cap. 119).

Board of Visitors

6.—(1) The Minister may, by notification in the *Gazette*, appoint a Board of Visitors to advise and make recommendations to the Director on such matters as he may refer to it.

(2) A Board of Visitors may be appointed for one or more welfare homes as the Minister thinks fit.

Rules for management of welfare homes

7. The Minister may make rules —

- (a) for prescribing the constitution and functions of the Board of Visitors;
- (b) for regulating the management of welfare homes and the admission of persons thereto; and
- (c) for the care, control and rehabilitation of persons residing in welfare homes.

Discharge from welfare homes

8.—(1) Any person admitted to a welfare home, either on his own application or otherwise, may be discharged by the Superintendent to the care of a relative who satisfies the Superintendent of his ability to support or care for the person to be discharged provided that such person undertakes in writing to inform the said Superintendent within twenty-four hours of the cessation of such support and care.

(2) Any person, having undertaken the support or care of a person discharged from a welfare home, who fails to inform the Superintendent of that home in writing within twenty-four hours of his ceasing to support or care for such discharged person, shall be guilty of an offence under this Act, and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two months.

Superintendent to endeavour to find employment

9. The Superintendent shall use his best endeavours to obtain suitable employment outside the welfare home for persons admitted thereto.

Persons in a welfare home may be required to work

10. Any person residing in a welfare home may be required to engage in any suitable work, for which the medical officer certifies him to be capable, either with a view to fitting him for an employment outside the welfare home or with a view to contributing to his maintenance in the welfare home.

Persons in a welfare home may be sent to hospital

11. Any person residing in a welfare home may, if so directed by the medical officer, be sent to a hospital or other medical institution for treatment, and shall be deemed while receiving such treatment to be a resident of such welfare home.

Director may transfer persons in welfare homes

12. Any person residing in a welfare home may, if so directed by the Director, be removed from such welfare home and admitted to another welfare home.

Penalty for escape from lawful custody or welfare home

13. Any person who —

- (a) escapes from the police while committed to their charge under this Act;
- (b) without permission of the Superintendent leaves a welfare home in which he is required to reside in accordance with the provisions of section 3 or to which he has been admitted on his own application under the provisions of section 4; or
- (c) having with such permission left a welfare home for a limited time or for a specified purpose, fails to return at the expiration of such time or when such purpose has been accomplished or found to be impracticable,

shall be guilty of an offence under this Act and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months.