

Office of Sen. Manny Villar

Rm. 503, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Financial Center, Pasay City
☎ 552-6601 to 80 loc. 6507, 6508 and 6511 • 📠 552-6734 • www.mannyvillar.com.ph

Press Release
August 15, 2010

Pass law to stop identity theft, Villar says

Senator Manny Villar today pushed for the immediate enactment of a law that will address the growing concern over identity theft in the country.

“Identity theft has become a serious concern, especially now that our society is becoming more and more dependent on online transactions,” Villar said.

Villar filed Senate Bill No. 1130 which defines “identity theft” as a crime committed when an individual with fraud, malice, ill will, intent to malign or with perversion, uses another’s relevant and sensitive personal information to take on that person’s identity. The crime of identity theft covers:

- the misuse of one’s personal identification cards including passports, social security, documents relating to tax matters and employment, credit cards and other dossiers that distinguishes a person from another;
- mail fraud;
- stolen personalities in the internet, chatrooms, text messaging system and other advanced technology gadgets or in the mechanisms or modes of information highway; and
- all other forms that tend to establish new identity to defraud the government or further a crime defined in existing laws.

Villar, chairman of the Committee on Trade and Commerce and the Committee on Economic Affairs, said a law to deter identity theft should be a priority in the light of the growing number of identity theft victims.

The country’s pension funds, the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System separately expressed alarm over the problem of identity theft in the country. Credit card companies have likewise noted the substantial increase in cases involving wanton use of fake credit cards.

He added that the anti-identity theft law will also protect the younger sector of the society who uses social media sites such as Friendster, Facebook, Mutiply, etc., against personalities who steal identities over the internet.

“Aside from the financial cost of this crime, we should also stress the emotional cost identity theft is causing the victims, which includes depression,” Villar said.

Citing a newspaper report, a local administrator in Bulacan was a victim of identity theft when someone used her e-mail account to send messages to her family and friends, saying that she badly needed money because she was stranded in West Africa. They were asked to send money through money gram so she could pay for hotel accommodation.

The administrator said she learned about the hoax when she received calls from her contacts in the Philippines and abroad asking about her whereabouts and to verify if she indeed needed financial help.

Another case of identity theft as reported by media, was the case of a woman who applied for a passport at the Department of Foreign Affairs and was denied because another person already owned the identity as shown by the DFA records.

The woman asked the National Bureau of Investigation for help and had to endure the nitty-gritty of reclaiming her identity.

If passed, the law will penalize violator by imprisonment of not less than six years but not more than 20 years, or a of fine of P500,000 to P5,000,000.

The Villar bill also requires that the National Statistics Office, as repository of personal records, in coordination with the Department of Justice and other relevant offices, to establish a framework of nation-wide process to assist victims of identity theft, to facilitate the victim’s correction of false records and assist law enforcement in obtaining evidence to apprehend the identity thieves.

###