

STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION

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Statutory Construction
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1986 Constitution

ARTICLE VI The Legislative Department

SECTION 1. The legislative power shall be vested in the Congress of the Philippines which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives, except to the extent reserved to the people by the provision on initiative and referendum.

SECTION 2. The Senate shall be composed of twenty-four Senators who shall be elected at large by the qualified voters of the Philippines, as may be provided by law.

SECTION 3. No person shall be a Senator unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, and, on the day of the election, is at least thirty-five years of age, able to read and write, a registered voter, and a resident of the Philippines for not less than two years immediately preceding the day of the election.

SECTION 4. The term of office of the Senators shall be six years and shall commence, unless otherwise provided by law, at noon on the thirtieth day of June next following their election.

No Senator shall serve for more than two consecutive terms. Voluntary renunciation of the office for any length of time shall not be considered as an interruption in the continuity of his service for the full term for which he was elected.

SECTION 5. (1) The House of Representatives shall be composed of not more than two hundred and fifty members, unless otherwise fixed by law, who shall be elected from legislative districts apportioned among the provinces, cities, and the Metropolitan Manila area in accordance with the number of their respective inhabitants, and on the basis of a uniform and progressive ratio, and those who, as provided by law, shall be elected through a party-list system of registered national, regional, and sectoral parties or organizations.

(2) The party-list representatives shall constitute twenty per centum of the total number of representatives including those under the party list. For three consecutive terms after the ratification of this Constitution, one-half of the seats allocated to party-list representatives shall be filled, as provided by law, by selection or election from the labor, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth, and such other sectors as may be provided by law, except the religious sector.

(3) Each legislative district shall comprise, as far as practicable, contiguous, compact and adjacent territory. Each city with a population of at least two hundred fifty thousand, or each province, shall have at least one representative.

(4) Within three years following the return of every census, the Congress shall make a reapportionment of legislative districts based on the standards provided in this section.

SECTION 6. No person shall be a Member of the House of Representatives unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines and, on the day of the election, is at least twenty-five years of age, able to read and write, and, except the party-list representatives, a registered voter in the district in which he shall be elected, and a resident thereof for a period of not less than one year immediately preceding the day of the election.

SECTION 7. The Members of the House of Representatives shall be elected for a term of three years which shall begin, unless otherwise provided by law, at noon on the thirtieth day of June next following their election.

No member of the House of Representatives shall serve for more than three consecutive terms. Voluntary renunciation of the office for any length of time shall not be considered as an interruption in the continuity of his service for the full term for which he was elected.

SECTION 8. Unless otherwise provided by law, the regular election of the Senators and the Members of the House of Representatives shall be held on the second Monday of May.

SECTION 9. In case of vacancy in the Senate or in the House of Representatives, a special election may be called to fill such vacancy in the manner prescribed by law, but the Senator or Member of the House of Representatives thus elected shall serve only for the unexpired term.

SECTION 10. The salaries of Senators and Members of the House of Representatives shall be determined by law. No increase in said compensation shall take effect until after the expiration of the full term of all the Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives approving such increase.

SECTION 11. A Senator or Member of the House of Representatives shall, in all offenses punishable by not more than six years imprisonment, be privileged from arrest while the Congress is in session. No Member shall be questioned nor be held liable in any other place for any speech or debate in the Congress or in any committee thereof.

SECTION 12. All Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives shall, upon assumption of office, make a full disclosure of their financial and business interests. They shall notify the House concerned of a potential conflict of interest that may arise from the filing of a proposed legislation of which they are authors.

SECTION 13. No Senator or Member of the House of Representatives may hold any other office or employment in the Government, or any subdivision, agency, or instrumentality thereof, including government-owned or controlled corporations or their subsidiaries, during his term without forfeiting his seat. Neither shall he be appointed to any office which may have been created or the emoluments thereof increased during the term for which he was elected.

SECTION 14. No Senator or Member of the House of Representatives may personally appear as counsel before any court of justice or before the Electoral Tribunals, or quasi-judicial and other administrative bodies. Neither shall he, directly or indirectly, be interested financially in any contract with, or in any franchise or special privilege granted by the Government, or any subdivision, agency, or instrumentality thereof, including any government-owned or controlled corporation, or its subsidiary, during his term of office. He shall not intervene in any matter before any office of the Government for his pecuniary benefit or where he may be called upon to act on account of his office.

SECTION 15. The Congress shall convene once every year on the fourth Monday of July for its regular session, unless a different date is fixed by law, and shall continue to be in session for such number of days as it may determine until thirty days before the opening of its next regular session, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. The President may call a special session at any time.

SECTION 16. (1) The Senate shall elect its President and the House of Representatives its Speaker, by a majority vote of all its respective Members.

Each House shall choose such other officers as it may deem necessary.

(2) A majority of each House shall constitute a quorum to do business, but a smaller number may adjourn from day to day and may compel the attendance of absent Members in such manner, and under such penalties, as such House may provide.

(3) Each House may determine the rules of its proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds of all its Members, suspend or expel a Member. A penalty of suspension, when imposed, shall not exceed sixty days.

(4) Each House shall keep a Journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may, in its judgment, affect national security; and the yeas and nays on any question shall, at the request of one-fifth of the Members present, be entered in the Journal.

Each House shall also keep a Record of its proceedings.

(5) Neither House during the sessions of the Congress shall, without the consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

SECTION 17. The Senate and the House of Representatives shall each have an Electoral Tribunal which shall be the sole judge of all contests relating to the election, returns, and qualifications of their respective Members. Each Electoral Tribunal shall be composed of nine Members, three of whom shall be Justices of the Supreme Court to be designated by the Chief Justice, and the remaining six shall be Members of the Senate or the House of Representatives, as the case may be, who shall be chosen on the basis of proportional representation from the political parties and the parties or organizations registered under the party-list system represented therein. The senior Justice in the Electoral Tribunal shall be its Chairman.

SECTION 18. There shall be a Commission on Appointments consisting of the President of the Senate, as ex officio Chairman, twelve Senators and twelve Members of the House of Representatives, elected by each House on the basis of proportional representation from the political parties and parties or organizations registered under the party-list system represented therein. The Chairman of the Commission shall not vote, except in case of a tie. The Commission shall act on all appointments submitted to it within thirty session days of the Congress from their submission. The Commission shall rule by a majority vote of all the Members.

SECTION 19. The Electoral Tribunals and the Commission on Appointments shall be constituted within thirty days after the Senate and the House of Representatives shall have been organized with the election of the President and the Speaker. The Commission on Appointments shall meet only while the Congress is in session, at the call of its Chairman or a majority of all its Members, to discharge such powers and functions as are herein conferred upon it.

SECTION 20. The records and books of accounts of the Congress shall be preserved and be open to the public in accordance with law, and such books shall be audited by the Commission on Audit which shall publish annually an itemized list of amounts paid to and expenses incurred for each Member.

SECTION 21. The Senate or the House of Representatives or any of its respective committees may conduct inquiries in aid of legislation in accordance with its duly published rules of procedure. The rights of persons appearing in or affected by such inquiries shall be respected.

SECTION 22. The heads of departments may upon their own initiative, with the consent of the President, or upon the request of either House, as the rules of each House shall provide, appear before and be heard by such House on any matter pertaining to their departments. Written questions shall be submitted to the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House

of Representatives at least three days before their scheduled appearance. Interpellations shall not be limited to written questions, but may cover matters related thereto. When the security of the State or the public interest so requires and the President so states in writing, the appearance shall be conducted in executive session.

SECTION 23. (1) The Congress, by a vote of two-thirds of both Houses in joint session assembled, voting separately, shall have the sole power to declare the existence of a state of war.

(2) In times of war or other national emergency, the Congress may, by law, authorize the President, for a limited period and subject to such restrictions as it may prescribe, to exercise powers necessary and proper to carry out a declared national policy. Unless sooner withdrawn by resolution of the Congress, such powers shall cease upon the next adjournment thereof.

SECTION 24. All appropriation, revenue or tariff bills, bills authorizing increase of the public debt, bills of local application, and private bills shall originate exclusively in the House of Representatives, but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments.

SECTION 25. (1) The Congress may not increase the appropriations recommended by the President for the operation of the Government as specified in the budget. The form, content, and manner of preparation of the budget shall be prescribed by law.

(2) No provision or enactment shall be embraced in the general appropriations bill unless it relates specifically to some particular appropriation therein. Any such provision or enactment shall be limited in its operation to the appropriation to which it relates.

(3) The procedure in approving appropriations for the Congress shall strictly follow the procedure for approving appropriations for other departments and agencies.

(4) A special appropriations bill shall specify the purpose for which it is intended, and shall be supported by funds actually available as certified by the National Treasurer, or to be raised by a corresponding revenue proposed therein.

(5) No law shall be passed authorizing any transfer of appropriations; however, the President, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the heads of Constitutional Commissions may, by law, be authorized to augment any item in the general appropriations law for their respective offices from savings in other items of their respective appropriations.

(6) Discretionary funds appropriated for particular officials shall be disbursed only for public purposes to be supported by appropriate vouchers and subject to such guidelines as may be prescribed by law.

(7) If, by the end of any fiscal year, the Congress shall have failed to pass the general appropriations bill for the ensuing fiscal year, the general appropriations law for the preceding fiscal year shall be deemed reenacted and shall remain in force and effect until the general appropriations bill is passed by the Congress.

SECTION 26. (1) Every bill passed by the Congress shall embrace only one subject which shall be expressed in the title thereof.

(2) No bill passed by either House shall become a law unless it has passed three readings on separate days, and printed copies thereof in its final form have been distributed to its Members three days before its passage, except when the President certifies to the necessity of its immediate enactment to meet a public calamity or emergency. Upon the last reading of a bill, no amendment thereto shall be allowed, and the vote thereon shall be taken immediately thereafter, and the yeas and nays entered in the Journal.

SECTION 27. (1) Every bill passed by the Congress shall, before it becomes a law, be presented to the President. If he approves the same, he shall sign it; otherwise, he shall veto it and return the same with his objections to the House where it originated, which shall enter the objections at large in its Journal and proceed to reconsider it. If, after such reconsideration, two-thirds of all the Members of such House shall agree to pass the bill, it shall be sent, together with

the objections, to the other House by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two-thirds of all the Members of that House, it shall become a law. In all such cases, the votes of each House shall be determined by yeas or nays, and the names of the Members voting for or against shall be entered in its Journal. The President shall communicate his veto of any bill to the House where it originated within thirty days after the date of receipt thereof; otherwise, it shall become a law as if he had signed it.

(2) The President shall have the power to veto any particular item or items in an appropriation, revenue, or tariff bill, but the veto shall not affect the item or items to which he does not object.

SECTION 28. (1) The rule of taxation shall be uniform and equitable. The Congress shall evolve a progressive system of taxation.

(2) The Congress may, by law, authorize the President to fix within specified limits, and subject to such limitations and restrictions as it may impose, tariff rates, import and export quotas, tonnage and wharfage dues, and other duties or imposts within the framework of the national development program of the Government.

(3) Charitable institutions, churches and parsonages or convents appurtenant thereto, mosques, non-profit cemeteries, and all lands, buildings, and improvements, actually, directly, and exclusively used for religious, charitable, or educational purposes shall be exempt from taxation.

(4) No law granting any tax exemption shall be passed without the concurrence of a majority of all the Members of the Congress.

SECTION 29. (1) No money shall be paid out of the Treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation made by law.

(2) No public money or property shall be appropriated, applied, paid, or employed, directly or indirectly, for the use, benefit, or support of any sect, church, denomination, sectarian institution, or system of religion, or of any priest, preacher, minister, or other religious teacher, or dignitary as such, except when such priest, preacher, minister, or dignitary is assigned to the armed forces, or to any penal institution, or government orphanage or leprosarium.

(3) All money collected on any tax levied for a special purpose shall be treated as a special fund and paid out for such purpose only. If the purpose for which a special fund was created has been fulfilled or abandoned, the balance, if any, shall be transferred to the general funds of the Government.

SECTION 30. No law shall be passed increasing the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court as provided in this Constitution without its advice and concurrence.

SECTION 31. No law granting a title of royalty or nobility shall be enacted.

SECTION 32. The Congress shall, as early as possible, provide for a system of initiative and referendum, and the exceptions therefrom, whereby the people can directly propose and enact laws or approve or reject any act or law or part thereof passed by the Congress or local legislative body after the registration of a petition therefor signed by at least ten per centum of the total number of registered voters, of which every legislative district must be represented by at least three per centum of the registered voters thereof.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1. Definition

- 1) Statutory Construction
- 2) Constitution
- 3) Statutes
 - a) Permanent

- b) Temporary
- 4) Ordinances
- 5) Resolutions, Executive Orders, Department Circulars
- 6) Supreme Court Decisions
 - *Refer to Art. 1 to 18 of the R.A. No. 386 (New Civil Code)*

2. Distinction between construction & interpretation

- Construction is the drawing of conclusions respecting subjects that lie beyond the direct expressions of the text. It has to go outside of the language of the statute and seek help from intrinsic aids.
- Interpretation is the act of finding the true sense and meaning of words, it does not get outside of the context of the statute.

3. Legal hermeneutics

- A branch of science establishing the principles and rules of interpretation and construction of written laws.

4. Power to construe law. (*essentially judicial*)

- The duty and power to construe does not include the power to modify, amend, remodel or rewrite a statute.
- Neither should the court construe provisions of a statute other than those involved in the case before it. The duty to construe should be exercised
 - *Refer to Article VIII, Sec. 1, 1987 Constitution;*
 - Legislature cannot bind courts to a particular construction of an existing law;
 - 1) *Endencia v. David*, G.R. No. L-6355-56, August 31, 1953; *Forest Hills Golf & Country Club v. Gardpro*, G.R. Nos. 164686, October 22, 2014
 - 2) *Francisco, Jr. v. House of Representatives*, G.R. Nos. 160261, 160362, 160263, 160277, 160292, 160295, 160310, 160318, 160342, 160343, 160360, 160365, 160370, 160376, 160392, 160397, 160403 & 160405, November 10, 2003;
 - 3) *People v. Sereno*, G.R. No. 237428, June 19, 2018.
 - Executive construction of statutes
 - Administrative construction, interpretative regulations by officers, administrative agencies, department heads and others official charged with the duty of administering or enforcing a statute carries great weight in determining its operation.
 - Court should respect the contemporaneous construction of a statute by executive officers.
 - 1) *Nestle Philippines, Inc., v. Court of Appeals*, G.R. No. 86738, November 13, 1991.
 - Construction of statute where part of it is void.
 - 1) *Barrameda v. Moir*, G.R. No. 7927, August 8, 1913;
 - 2) *The Government of the Philippine Islands v. Springer*, G.R. No. 26979, April 1, 1927.

5. Purpose of Construction

- The intention of the legislature must be ascertained and given effect.
 - (1) *People v. Concepcion*, G.R. No. 19192A, February 28, 1923
- The exceptions in the law will not be enlarged beyond the actual signification of the words used or extended beyond the limits which the words themselves actually set.
 - (2) *De Jesus v. City of Manila*, G.R. No. 9337, December 24, 1914.

- Courts should not incorporate matters not provided in the law by judicial ruling.
(3) *Sy Kiong v. Sarmiento*, L-2934, November 29, 1951.
- Where the law does not distinguish, the court should not distinguish.
(4) *Baron v. EPE Transport, Inc.*, G.R. No. 202645, August 5, 2015.

6. Legislative intent

- An interpretation which gives effect to the intent of the law and is keeping with the modern trend of similar statutes should be followed.
(1) *Prasnik v. Republic*, G.R. No. L-8639, March 3, 1956
- Every statute must receive a construction which will harmonize the pre-existing body of laws.
(2) *Commissioner of Customs v. ESSO Standard Eastern, Inc.*, G.R. L-28329, August 7, 1975;
(3) *Commissioner of Internal Revenue v. Philippine Airlines, Inc.*, G.R. No. 180043, July 14, 2009
- A statutory provision is deemed enacted pursuant to the legislative policy embodied in prior statutes relating to the same subject matter.
(4) *Legaspi v. Executive Secretary*, L-36153, November 28, 1975
- Courts must give effect to the general legislative intent that can be discovered from or is unraveled by the four corners of the statute and in order to discover said intent, the whole statute, and not only a particular provision thereof, should be considered.
(5) *Manila Lodge No. 761 v. Court of Appeals*, G.R. No. L-41001, September 30, 1976

7. Legislative intent distinguished from Legislative purpose.

- Legislative intent is to protect the public, legislative purpose is discovered in the meaning or language of the statute.

8. Scope and application of the rules of construction

- Definition of ambiguity
- An ambiguous provision should be strictly construed against the party who cause the same.
1) *Ildefonso v. Sibal*, G.R. No. L-12181, September 30, 1959;
2) *Reyes v. De la Cruz*, G.R. No. L-12729, March 30, 1959.

9. Rules of Construction not mandatory upon the courts.

- The interpretation by the court upon a statute constitutes a part of it as of the date it was originally passed.
1) *Power Generation Employees Association-NPC v. National Power Corporation*, G.R. No. 187420, August 9, 2017.