

Destitute Persons Bill

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Bill No: 6/1989

Read the first time: 16th January 1989

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Destitute Persons Bill

Bill No. 6/1989

Read the first time on 16th January 1989.

An Act to repeal and re-enact with amendments the Destitute Persons Act (Chapter 78 of the 1985 Revised Edition) and to provide for matters connected therewith.

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 1989 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 be likely to cause annoyance to persons frequenting the place or otherwise to create a nuisance; or
- (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;

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

“public place” includes any place to which the public is admitted without payment or on payment;

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

“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.

(2) For the purposes of this Act, a person shall be deemed to be begging 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 his 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 that 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 30 days from the date of that person’s admission into a welfare home or such further period, not exceeding 30 days, as the Minister may approve.

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

Penalty for begging

4.—(1) Any person being a habitual beggar 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 shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$3,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.

(2) In this section, “habitual beggar” means a person who at least on two previous occasions was found begging in a public place in such a way as to cause or be likely to cause annoyance to persons frequenting the place or otherwise to create a nuisance and was in consequence thereof required on those two occasions to reside in a welfare home.

Voluntary admission into a welfare home

5. 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 any rules made thereunder.

Taking of finger impressions and photographs

6.—(1) The Director may authorise the taking of finger impressions and photographs of any destitute person residing in a welfare home.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), after the expiry of two years from the date of discharge of a destitute person from a welfare home, the Director shall, on the application from that person, deliver to him the sheet upon which his finger impressions have been made together with the negatives and copies of photographs taken of him, and if no such application is received after the said period of two years and before the expiry of 3 years from the date of discharge, those records shall be destroyed.

(3) The Director may retain 3 copies of the photographs taken of the destitute person for maintaining a register of destitute persons admitted to and discharged from welfare homes.

Minister may establish welfare homes

7.—(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 superintendent or officer shall be deemed to be a public servant within the meaning of the Penal Code [Cap. 224].