

(S. B. 1559)

(No. 67-2016)

(Approved June 30, 2016)

AN ACT

To amend Section 7 of Act No. 205-2004, as amended, known as the “Department of Justice Organic Act,” in order to eliminate the duty imposed under this Section on the Secretary of Justice of publishing, on printed format and free of charge, the opinions issued thereby related to any matter of public policy and those deemed to be of general interest, and in lieu thereof, to provide for the electronic publication of said opinions.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

The use of electronic media is indubitably part of the daily lives of most human beings around the world. The Internet has become a vital tool used daily in the workplace and at home. It is an essential part of our development as a society and tends to facilitate learning and business growth, and even allows families to keep in contact. There are many professionals and citizens in general who rely on the Internet on a daily basis to fulfill their job and social duties.

The Internet has allowed people to have immediate access to information that is available in the most important libraries of the world. The range of information that may be found and shared through electronic media is basically limitless, from all countries, cultures, societies, and history. This modern tool definitely constitutes a great advantage for all citizens of Puerto Rico and the rest of the world.

The growing reliance on the Internet within the modern business world, governments, and the population prompts this Legislative Assembly to recognize its benefits for our society. Hence, it is critical for our officials to be able to avail themselves of an electronic tool such as the Internet to faithfully comply with the ministerial duties imposed thereon by laws and other rules.

Act No. 205-2004, as amended, known as the “Department of Justice Organic Act,” imposes on the Secretary of the Department of Justice of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico the duty to publish opinions issued annually in connection with matters of public policy and those deemed to be of general interest for the people, and to forward a printed copy thereof free of charge to certain officials and public entities. Through this legislation we seek to temper the publication of these opinions with the technological needs inherent to the 21st Century which, in turn, entails the elimination of an unnecessary expenditure of public funds. Searching for the opinions issued by the Secretary of Justice on the Internet is currently faster and more beneficial. With this initiative, the following two purposes are accomplished: to adjust the administrative processes of the Department to the current modern reality, and to provide for significant savings of thousands of dollars for the treasury, in light of the precarious fiscal situation of our Island.

It is the duty of this Legislative Assembly to strive to optimize the services rendered to the people by keeping abreast of the fundamental changes in the society. Technological advances allow for a faster dissemination of knowledge and events that take place on the island and across the world. In view of these changes, our aim is for Puerto Rico to keep up with the times and even set the bar for innovation to the extent possible. This legislation asserts the commitment of our Government to incentivize the academic development and professional growth of our people by providing them with a mechanism to easily access information regarding matters of general interest, and in turn, reduce the costs of the administrative procedures that are carried out every day by the Department of Justice. It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that public funds are properly invested, and that the purpose for which they were disbursed is ultimately accomplished. The electronic publication of the opinions issued by the Secretary of Justice in connection with any matters of public

policy as well as those deemed to be of general interest is hereby introduced as an alternative to contribute to the objective of being more frugal.

In brief, this Legislative Assembly deems it necessary to amend Section 7 of Act No. 205-2004, as amended, to eliminate the duty imposed on the Secretary of Justice of publishing, on printed format and free of charge, the opinions issued thereby related to any matter of public policy and those deemed to be of general interest, and in lieu thereof, provide for the electronic publication of said opinions.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Section 7 of Act No. 205-2004, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 7.- Publication

The Secretary shall publish on the webpage of the Department a list and the content verbatim of the opinions issued in connection with matters of public policy and those deemed to be of general interest for easy access and use by officials and the public in general.

The Secretary is hereby authorized to print and exchange the opinions so published with the Federal Government and the state governments of the United States, and with foreign governments, as well as with the public or private organizations and institutions that issue publications of general interest. The Secretary may also sell volumes compiling the opinions as prescribed in the rules to be adopted for such purposes. The proceeds of the sale shall be deposited in the Special Fund created by this Act.”

Section 2.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.