

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

'04 JUN 30 P 1:00

SENATE
S. B. No. 99

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator LUISA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 13 provides:

"The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs."

Filipino children under the age of eighteen (18) require mental health services. Unfortunately, counseling professionals are stretched thin, and often students do not get the help they need.

Our public elementary and secondary schools need more mental health professionals, and the flexibility to hire the professionals that will best serve our students. Government's support for this would pay for itself, through reduced incidences of death, violence, and substance abuse, and through improvements in students' academic achievement, graduation rates, college attendance, and employment.

Hence, this bill seeks to recruit, hire, and train additional school-based guidance counselors, psychologists, school social workers and mental health personnel.


LUISA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

'04 JUN 30 P1:00

SENATE
S. B. No. 29

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator LUISA "LOP" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA

**AN ACT
TO RECRUIT, HIRE, AND TRAIN ADDITIONAL SCHOOL-BASED
GUIDANCE COUNSELORS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS
AND MENTAL HEALTH PERSONNEL**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. *Short title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Students' Guidance Counseling Act."

Section 2. *Purposes.* - The purposes of this Act are to:

- (1) help elementary and secondary institutions to recruit, train, and hire additional school-based mental health personnel, counselors, social workers, and school psychologists;
- (2) help adequately address the mental, emotional, and developmental needs of elementary and secondary school students;
- (3) remove the emotional, behavioral, and psycho-social barriers to learning so as to enhance the classroom preparedness and ability to learn of students;
- (4) support school staff and teachers in improving classroom management, conducting behavioral interventions to improve school discipline, and developing the awareness and skills to identify early warning signs of violence and the need for mental health services; and
- (5) support parents in improving the school behavior and academic success of their children.

Section 3. *Definitions.* - For purposes of this Act –

- (1) “MENTAL HEALTH AND STUDENT SERVICE PROVIDER” includes a qualified school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker.
- (2) “MENTAL HEALTH AND STUDENT SERVICES” includes direct, individual, and group services provided to students, parents, and school personnel by mental health and student service providers, or the coordination of prevention strategies in schools or community-based programs.
- (3) “SCHOOL COUNSELOR” means an individual who has documented competence in counseling children and adolescents in a school setting and who-
 - (A) possesses licensure or certification granted by a professional regulatory authority;
 - (B) in the absence of such licensure or certification, possesses national certification in school counseling or a specialty of counseling granted by an independent professional organization; or
 - (C) holds a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling.
- (4) “SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST” means an individual who possesses a minimum of sixty (60) graduate semester hours in school psychology from an institution of higher education and has completed one thousand two hundred (1,200) clock hours in a supervised school psychology internship, of which six hundred (600) hours shall be in the school setting;
- (5) “SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER” means an individual who holds a masters degree in social work..

Section 4. *Hiring of additional school-based counselors, psychologists and social workers.* - The Secretary of Education, shall, subject to existing rules and

regulations of the education department, the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Budget and Management, provide for hiring of additional school based counselors, psychologists and social workers such that each public elementary and secondary school will have at least three (3) counselors, one (1) psychologist, one (1) social worker and other mental health and students service providers when the need arises.

Section 5. *Guidelines.* - The Secretary of Education shall one hundred twenty days (120) days after the enactment of this Act, issue the necessary guidelines in the selection, recruitment and hiring of personnel and the nature and scope of the mental health and services to be offered to students.

Section 6. *Appropriations.* - There shall be appropriated from the National Treasury such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 7. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Section 8. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or mended accordingly.

Section 9. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

GVL/precydisk2/mental health personnel