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SENATE
S. B. No. 3512

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15 provides:

The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

There are several health problems associated with computer use. All of them are avoidable, through the use of ergonomic principles. Ergonomics is the science of fitting the job to the worker, rather than expecting workers to accommodate themselves to uncomfortable equipment, postures, and work organization.

As with any task done repeatedly, working on a computer for long periods of time can cause inflammation of tendons, nerve sheaths and ligaments and damage to soft tissues. Depending on an individual's sensitivity to the repeated movements of keyboarding, the cumulative effect can be disabling. Resulting conditions are called cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs). Different types of forearm and wrist CTDs from computer use are carpal tunnel syndrome, tenosynovitis, epicondylitis, tendinitis, DeQuervain's disease and ganglionic cysts.


Neck and shoulder pain and stiffness can occur from improper placement of the computer monitor, mouse or document you are working from. If these items are not placed correctly, the muscles of the neck and shoulders are constantly working to keep the head and arms in an awkward position. Many people who use computers for prolonged periods of time complain of eyestrain, eye fatigue, eye irritation and blurred vision. This bill seeks to inform employees about the ways to avoid health risks related to computer use and protect them from it.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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AN ACT
CREATING OFFICE ERGONOMIC STANDARDS TO
ADDRESS THE HEALTH RISKS RELATED
TO COMPUTER USE IN THE WORKPLACE

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

5 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Office Computer Ergonomics
6 Act of 2009.”

7 SECTION 2. *Office ergonomic standards.* – The following standards shall be required for
8 employers who have employees who use computers in their workplace:

- 9 (a) Chairs must be adjustable to allow the user to move the seat up and down depending
10 on the height of the user;
- 11 (b) For employees who are required to copy or to type from another document, a
12 document holder must be provided;
- 13 (c) Computer monitors must be positioned to lessen glare coming from external sources;
- 14 (d) The rear of computer monitors should be at least three feet from another employee;
- 15 (e) Defective computer screens that flicker or wave must be repaired as soon as possible
16 and the employee must not be forced to work with a defective computer monitor;
- 17 (f) Employees who regularly work in front of computer monitors must be allowed to rest
18 their eyes on a regular basis;

1 (g) Every company must hold an ergonomic standard seminar where a representative
2 from the Department of Health shall talk about the details of this Act and give other
3 means to lessen the health strain caused by computers in the workplace.

4 SECTION 3. *Duty of the Department of Labor and Employment.* – The Department of
5 Labor and Employment is required to verify the compliance of employers with the provisions of
6 this Act.

7 SECTION 4. *Penalties.* – The Department of Labor and Employment is empowered to
8 establish and assess penalties or fines against any person for violations of this Act or regulations
9 adopted under this Act. In no case shall the fine exceed one hundred thousand pesos
10 (P100,000.00).

11 SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision, or part hereof is held invalid or
12 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
13 valid and subsisting.

14 SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
15 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
16 with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

17 SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
18 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,