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SENATE

S. No. 539

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 17 provides:

The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.

In 1994, the US Congress and the Department of Education collaborated to make a long-term, meaningful and public investment in the principle that high-quality preschool television programming will help children be ready to learn by the time they entered first grade.

The Ready-to-Learn Television Program through the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and local public television stations have proven to be an extremely cost-effective national response to improving early childhood development and helping parents, caregivers, and professional child care providers learn how to use television as a means to help children learn, develop, and play creatively.

Independent research shows that parents who participate in Ready-to-Learn workshops are more critical consumers of television and their children are more active viewers. A University of Alabama study showed that parents who had attended a Ready-to-Learn workshop read more books and stories to their children and read more minutes each time than non-attendees. The parents did more hands-on activities related to reading with their children. The parents engaged in more word activities and for more minutes each time. The parents read less for entertainment and more for education. The parents took their children to libraries and bookstores more than the non-attendees.

Further, six months after participating in Ready-to-Learn workshops, parents who attended generally had set rules for television viewing by their children. These rules related to the amount of time the children were allowed to watch television daily, the hours the children were allowed to watch television, and the tasks or chores the children must have accomplished before the children were allowed to watch television.

Hence, this bill seeks to incorporate Ready-to-Learn television programming in the country by forging partnership between the Department of Education, Culture and Sports and eligible television and broadcasting entities in order to develop, produce, and distribute educational and instructional video programming for preschool and elementary school children and their parents.


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

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SENATE

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INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

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 “Digital Education Act.”

SECTION 2. *Ready-to-learn digital television* –

(a) **IN GENERAL** – The Secretary of Education is authorized to award grants to or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with eligible television and broadcasting entities to develop, produce, and distribute educational and instructional video programming for preschool and elementary school children and their parents, patterned after the Ready-to-learn television program in the United States.

(b) **AVAILABILITY** – In making such grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, the Secretary shall ensure that eligible entities make programming widely available, with support materials as appropriate, to young children, their parents, and childcare workers.

SECTION 3. *Educational programming* –

(a) **AWARDS** – The Secretary shall award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to eligible entities to--

(1) facilitate the development directly, or through contracts with producers of children and family educational television programming, of--

(A) educational programming for preschool and elementary school children; and

(B) accompanying support materials and services that promote the effective use of such programming;

(2) facilitate the development of programming and digital content especially designed for nationwide distribution over public television station's digital broadcasting channels and the Internet, containing Ready to Learn-based children's programming and resources for parents and caregivers; and

(3) enable eligible entities to contract with entities (such as public telecommunications entities) so that programs developed under this section are disseminated and distributed--

(A) to the widest possible audience appropriate to be served by the programming; and

(B) by the most appropriate distribution technologies.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES- To be eligible to receive a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under subsection (a), an entity shall be--

(1) a public telecommunications entity that is able to demonstrate a capacity for the development and national distribution of educational and instructional television programming of high quality for preschool and elementary school children; and

(2) able to demonstrate a capacity to contract with the producers of children's television programming for the purpose of developing educational television programming of high quality for preschool and elementary school children.

(c) CULTURAL EXPERIENCES- Programming developed under this section shall reflect the recognition of diverse cultural experiences and the needs and experiences of both boys and girls in engaging and preparing young children for schooling.

SECTION 4. *Duties of the Secretary* -

The Secretary is authorized--

- (1) to award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to eligible entities, local public television stations, or community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness, for the purpose of--
 - (A) addressing the learning needs of young children in limited English proficient households, and developing appropriate educational and instructional television programming to foster the school readiness of such children;
 - (B) developing programming and support materials to increase family literacy skills among parents to assist parents in teaching their children and utilizing educational television programming to promote school readiness; and
 - (C) identifying, supporting, and enhancing the effective use and outreach of
 - (D) innovative programs that promote school readiness; and
 - (E) developing and disseminating training materials, including--
 - (i) interactive programs and programs adaptable to distance learning technologies that are designed to enhance knowledge of children's social and cognitive skill development and positive adult-child interactions; and
 - (ii) support materials to promote the effective use of materials developed under subparagraph (B) among parents, early childhood development personnel, elementary school teachers, public libraries, and after-school program personnel caring for preschool and elementary school children;
- (2) to establish within the Department a clearinghouse to compile and provide information, referrals, and model program materials and programming obtained or developed under this part to parents, child care providers, and other appropriate individuals or entities to assist such individuals and entities in accessing programs and projects under this part; and

SECTION 5. *Application*- Each entity desiring a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

SECTION 6. *Reports and evaluations* -

- (a) ANNUAL REPORT TO SECRETARY - An eligible entity receiving funds under this Act shall prepare and submit to the Secretary an annual report which contains such information as the Secretary may require. At a minimum, the report shall describe the program activities undertaken with funds received, including--
- (1) the programming that has been developed directly or indirectly by the eligible entity, and the target population of the programs developed;
 - (2) the support materials that have been developed to accompany the programming, and the method by which such materials are distributed to consumers and users of the programming;
 - (3) the means by which programming developed under this section has been distributed, including the distance learning technologies that have been utilized to make programming available and the geographic distribution achieved through such technologies; and
 - (4) the initiatives undertaken by the eligible entity to develop public-private partnerships to secure support for the development, distribution and broadcast of educational and instructional programming.
- (b) REPORT TO CONGRESS - The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the relevant committees of Congress a biannual report which includes--
- (1) a summary of activities assisted; and
 - (2) a description of the training materials made available, the matter in which outreach has been conducted to inform parents and childcare providers of the availability of such materials, and the manner in which such materials have been distributed in accordance with such section.

SECTION 7. *Funding* - There are authorized such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. *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 9. *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 amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.