

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



Senate
Office of the Secretary

'13 SEP -5 P5:36

SENATE
S. No. 1571

RECEIVED BY: *ja*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Eighty percent (80%) of what children learn is acquired through the visual processing of information.

Visual impairment is one of the ten (10) most common causes of disability in the country. In children, visual impairment is associated with developmental delays and the need for special education, vocational, and social services. At least twenty percent (20%) of children with learning disabilities have been found to have prominent visual information processing problems.

This bill aims to provide comprehensive eye examinations for children identified or considered at high risk of vision impairment.*

alt.
Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

* This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, First Regular Session.



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1 AN ACT
2 ESTABLISHING A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE EYE
3 EXAMINATIONS TO CHILDREN

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Children’s Vision
5 Improvement and Learning Readiness Act.”

6 SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

7 (A) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Health; and

8 (B) “Comprehensive eye examination” means an assessment of a patient’s history,
9 general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity, ocular
10 alignment and motility, refraction, and as appropriate, binocular vision or gross visual fields,
11 performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

12 SECTION 3. *Grants Regarding Comprehensive Eye Examinations for Children.* –

13 (A) *In General.* – The Secretary may make grants to cities and municipalities for the
14 purpose of:

15 (1) Providing comprehensive eye examinations for children identified or
16 considered at high risk of vision impairment, with priority given to school-
17 based programs for children who are under the age of nine (9);

18 (2) Providing subsequent treatment or services necessary to correct vision
19 problems; and

1 (3) Developing and disseminating to parents, teachers, health care practitioners,
2 and the public, educational materials on recognizing signs of visual
3 impairment in children, and the State's vision improvement initiatives.

4 (B) *Criteria and Coordination.* – The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate
5 professional and consumer organizations, including individuals with knowledge of age
6 appropriate vision services, shall develop criteria —

7 (i) Governing the operation of the grant program; and

8 (ii) For the collection of data related to vision assessment and the utilization of
9 follow up services.

10 (C) *Application.* – A grant may be made under paragraph (A) only if an application
11 for the grant is submitted to the Secretary and the application is in such form, is made in such
12 manner, and contains such information as the Secretary may require, including –

13 (1) Information on existing government-funded children's vision screening
14 programs;

15 (2) A plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used to
16 complement existing government efforts; and

17 (3) A description of how funds will be used to provide items or services only as
18 a secondary payer to —

19 (i) Any government compensation program, under an insurance policy, or
20 under any government health benefits program; or

21 (ii) By any entity that provides health services on a prepaid basis.

22 (D) *Evaluations.* – A grant may be made under paragraph (A) only if the municipality
23 or city involved agrees that, not later than one (1) year after the date on which amounts under the
24 grant are first received by the municipality or city, and annually thereafter while receiving
25 amounts under the grant, the municipality or city shall submit to the Secretary an evaluation of
26 the operations and activities carried out under the grant, including –

27 (1) An assessment of the utilization of vision services and the status of children
28 receiving these services as a result of the activities carried out under the
29 grant;

- 1 (2) The collection, analysis, and reporting of children's vision data according to
2 guidelines prescribed by the Secretary; and
3 (3) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

4 SECTION 4. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – For the purpose of carrying out this Act,
5 such sums as are appropriate are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National
6 Treasury.

7 SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part thereof is held invalid or
8 unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
9 valid and subsisting.

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

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

Approved,