

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



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
S. No. 2191

RECEIVED BY: *[Signature]*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A HEALTH AND EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM RELATED
TO AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 13, Section 11 provides:

The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the under-privileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.

World Autism Awareness Day is celebrated yearly in the month of April. Based on the 10 April 2014 issue of the *Philippine Star*, the number of people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the Philippines and other countries worldwide has almost doubled in the past six years, and the number is reportedly still rising.

According to Erlinda Borrromeo, Autism Speaks Foundation president, one in 68 children worldwide reportedly has autism. The figure is way above the .5 cases in every 1,000 children in the 1980s and one in 110 children in 2008.

The estimated cases of autism in the Philippines reportedly rose from 500,000 in 2008 to one million people at present.

The prevalence of autism in developing countries is rising rapidly, and health and education systems in these countries, like the Philippines, are particularly ill-equipped to deal with these issues. Many families are not even aware that their children have autism; hence, their children do not get the right treatment and intervention.

Hence, this bill seeks to establish a health and education grant program related to autism spectrum disorders in order to promote awareness, especially in the provinces.¹

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

¹This bill was originally filed by Representatives Christopher Smith and Michael Doyle in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 3054; 113th Congress, First Session).

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

1 AN ACT

2 ESTABLISHING A HEALTH AND EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM RELATED
3 TO AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Global Autism
5 Assistance Act”.

6 SECTION 2. *Autism Defined.* – For purposes of this Act, the term “autism”
7 means all conditions consistent with autism spectrum disorders or the condition of
8 children whose behaviors were consistent with the DSM–IV–TR criteria for Autistic
9 Disorder, Asperger Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise
10 Specified (PDD–NOS).

11 SECTION 3. *Global Autism Assistance Program.* –

12 (a) *Establishment and Purpose.* – The Secretary of Health shall establish and
13 administer a health and education grant program to be known as the “Global Autism
14 Assistance Program” to:

15 (1) support activities under subsection (c)(2) by nongovernmental
16 organizations and other service providers, including advocacy groups, focused on
17 autism in the provinces; and

1 (2) establish a “teach the teachers” program under subsection (d) to train
2 health and education professionals working with children with autism in the
3 provinces.

4 (b) *Designation of Eligible Provinces.* – Not later than 120 days after the date of
5 the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with knowledgeable autism
6 organizations, shall designate not fewer than two provinces in the country that are
7 determined to:

8 (1) require assistance in dealing with autism; and

9 (2) have sufficient familiarity with issues related to autism to make
10 effective use of the Global Autism Assistance Program.

11 (c) *Selection of Implementing NGO.* –

12 (1) *In General.* – Not later than 180 days after the designation of eligible
13 provinces pursuant to subsection (b), the Secretary of Health shall select and
14 award a grant under this section to a nongovernmental organization with
15 experience in autism-related issues to implement the Global Autism Assistance
16 Program through selection and awarding of grants to local service providers and
17 advocacy groups focused on autism.

18 (2) *Activities.* – A local service provider or advocacy group that receives a
19 grant under paragraph (1) may use such grant to carry out any of the following
20 activities (including, as appropriate, the translation into local languages of relevant
21 English-language publications):

22 (A) *Education and Outreach to the Public.* – Use public service
23 announcements and other public media to help the public become more
24 aware of the signs of autism so that children with autism can be diagnosed
25 and treated earlier.

1 (B) *Support to Families.* – Development of resources for families,
2 such as online web resource centers in local languages, dissemination of
3 materials to parents of newly diagnosed children, or other suitable
4 alternatives, and dissemination of educational aids and guides to help
5 parents with their children’s development.

6 (C) *Support to Educational Institutions.* – Funding for schools or
7 other educational institutions, focusing on teachers of the youngest
8 students, and including the distribution of equipment or of the materials
9 referred to in subparagraph (B).

10 (D) *Support to Clinics and Medical Centers.* – Provision of funding
11 to clinics and medical centers with proven records in addressing autism to
12 assist with operating expenses, including personnel, equipment supplies,
13 and facilities, development of assessment testing for autism, and acquisition
14 of specialized equipment, such as augmentative communication devices.

15 (3) *Applications for Grants.*

16 (A) *Submission of Applications.* – To be eligible to receive a grant
17 from the implementing nongovernmental organization, a local service
18 provider or advocacy group shall submit to such implementing
19 nongovernmental organization an application at such time, in such manner,
20 and containing such information as such implementing nongovernmental
21 organization may require.

22 (B) *Establishment of Screening Board.* –

23 (i) *In General.* – The implementing nongovernmental
24 organization responsible for implementing the Global Autism
25 Assistance Program shall establish a screening board to be known as
26 the “Project Advisory Board” to review for content and

1 appropriateness applications from local service providers or
2 advocacy groups submitted in accordance with subparagraph (A).

3 (ii) *Membership.* – The members of the Project Advisory
4 Board shall be appointed by the implementing nongovernmental
5 organization, in consultation with the Secretary of Health, and in
6 accordance with the following provisions:

7 (I) Each member shall serve for a term of one year and
8 each member may serve as many as three consecutive terms.

9 (II) A member of the Project Advisory Board may
10 continue to serve after the expiration of the term of such
11 member until such time as a successor is appointed.

12 (III) Membership of the Project Advisory Board shall
13 include at least seven voting members who are members of
14 autism advocacy groups, professionals working with autism,
15 or otherwise associated with the autism community. Among
16 the voting members of the Board shall be at least two parents
17 from different families of individuals with autism, one
18 medical professional working with autism, one teacher of
19 individuals with autism, and one individual who has autism.
20 Efforts shall be made to include on the Project Advisory
21 Board individuals with experience working in the developing
22 world.

23 (IV) Membership of the Project Advisory Board shall
24 include non-voting members as determined appropriate by the
25 Secretary of Health.

1 (V) Membership of the Project Advisory Board shall
2 be chosen so as to ensure objectivity and balance and to
3 reduce the potential for conflicts of interest.

4 (4) *Support and Assistance.* – The implementing nongovernmental
5 organization shall provide, contract for, and coordinate technical assistance in
6 support of its mission in meeting the goals and purposes of this Act.

7 d) *Teach the Teachers.* – The implementing non-governmental organization,
8 acting on behalf of the Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Project Advisory
9 Board, shall establish a program, to be known as the “Teach the Teachers Program”, to:

10 (1) identify health and education professionals to receive specialized
11 training for teaching and working with youth with autism, including training
12 conducted in two- or three-day workshops at locations within one of the two
13 provinces designated pursuant to subsection (b); and

14 (2) conduct training through two- or three-day biomedical conferences in
15 the two provinces designated pursuant to subsection (b), including bringing
16 medical and psychological specialists to train and educate parents and health
17 professionals who deal with autism, including training related to biomedical
18 interventions that can affect autism, how nutrition and various metabolic issues
19 can impact behavior, the role of applied behavioral analysis, and various
20 occupational and speech therapies in fighting autism.

21 SECTION 4. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – There are authorized to be
22 appropriated to carry out this Act such sums as may be necessary for the implementation
23 of this Act.

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

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

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

Approved,

/fldp10april2014