

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



'14 AUG 27 P3:42

SENATE
S. No. 2376

RECEIVED BY: *J*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO INCLUDE
SWIMMING LESSONS IN THE CURRICULUM OF
ALL ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Sections 13 and 15 provide:

Section 13. 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...

Section 15. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Statistics show that drowning is a leading cause of death for Asian children. According to Alliance for Safe Children, a child drowns every 15 minutes in some parts of Asia. It calls drowning "a silent epidemic" because the deaths are rarely reported to hospitals.¹

Aid agencies say some of the 300 child deaths caused by floods in Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, most from drowning, could have been prevented by raising safety awareness and teaching children to swim.²

Aid workers reportedly say that floodwaters attract children as a place to play, but many do not know about the dangers of currents and water-borne diseases. In addition, children are often left on their own as their parents try to salvage belongings.³

¹ <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/aid-agencies-urge-effort-to-stop-child-deaths-in-asia-floods/>.

² *Id.*

In Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland, swimming lessons are included in the school curriculum for children.

In 2011, a Philippine report presented at the World Conference on Drowning Prevention states that “About eight persons die every day due to drowning and that more were reported to be victims of near drowning (10 cases per day)”. Ms. Lita Orbillo of the Family Health Office, National Center for Disease Prevention and Control, Department of Health (DOH), who made the presentation, said that children were found to be more at risk of drowning.⁴

According to a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) survey, drowning is reportedly the second leading cause of death among Filipino children aged 14 years and below, and the fourth leading cause of death from injury in the Philippines.

The Philippine report also states “the country is often visited by typhoons (average of 20-25 annually) causing floods, flooded areas, flash floods and turbulent seas which undeniably cost the lives of Filipinos.”

Thus, there is a need to include swimming lessons in the curriculum of all elementary and secondary schools in the core academic area of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH).

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

alt.

³ *Id.*

⁴ <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/242680/news/nation/many-drowning-victims-in-the-phl-did-not-know-how-to-swim>.

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Senate
Office of the Secretary

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

1 AN ACT
2 DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO INCLUDE
3 SWIMMING LESSONS IN THE CURRICULUM OF
4 ALL ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

5 SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to reduce the risk of drowning and near-
6 drowning among high risk groups, more particularly children, as a result of aquatic
7 activities such as fishing, recreational swimming, boating; and natural calamities like
8 floods, tsunami and flashfloods.

9 SECTION 2. The Department of Education, in consultation with the National
10 Disaster Risk Reduction & Management Council (NDRRMC), shall include swimming
11 lessons in the curriculum of all private and public elementary and secondary schools in
12 the core academic area of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH).

13 SECTION 3. *Appropriations.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such
14 amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the
15 National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of this
16 program shall be included in the annual appropriation of the Department of Education.

17 SECTION 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be declared
18 unconstitutional, any other provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and
19 effect.

1 SECTION 5. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations,
2 or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

3 SECTION 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
4 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

/fldp20aug2014