

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

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SENATE
S.B. No. 1457

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Policies and Guidelines for Special Education, as contained in DECS Order No. 117, s. 1987, identified persons who have sensory impairment as special education clientele. This bill seeks to concretize the constitutional mandate which provides that the State shall "promote the right of all citizens to quality education ... and to make such education accessible to all."

It should be recognized that deaf-mute and blind children have different needs compared to their physically able peers which merit careful attention. The Congressional Commission on education (EDCOM) in its report prepared in 1991-92 has revealed the inadequacy of programs and the poor access to special education (SPED) brought about by the limited number of special schools and SPED center in the country.

In light of the foregoing, this bill is relevant for it addresses the problem of limited SPED facilities. This bill aims to establish Municipal Special Education Centers for deaf-mute and blind children to ensure accessibility of the latter to such institutions in every municipality. Early passage of this bill is therefore earnestly solicited.

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE CREATION OF MUNICIPAL SPECIAL EDUCATION
CENTERS FOR THE DEAF-MUTE AND BLIND CHILDREN APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR AND OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the state to establish, maintain and support Municipal Special Education Centers (hereafter “Centers”) for deaf-mute and blind children in consonance with the Constitutional mandate for “the State to take appropriate steps to make education accessible to all.”

SECTION 2. *Municipal Special Education Centers; Creation and Purpose.* - There shall be created in every municipality throughout the country Municipal Education Centers which shall assist the Department of Education in:

- (1) Providing deaf-mute and blind children special quality education and related services as well as vocational and transitional services; and
- (2) Providing deaf-mute and blind children currently in school or who recently left school programs and service to assist them in the transition to independent living, vocational training, and competitive employment.

SECTION 3. *Authority of the Secretary of Education, Culture and Sports to Give Grants to, or Enter into Cooperative Arrangements for the Creation of, Municipal Special Education Centers.* – The Secretary of Education, Culture and Sports is hereby authorized to give grants to, or enter into cooperative arrangement or contracts with public or private non-profit agencies, institutions, or organizations for the establishment

or creation of, Municipal Special Education Centers for deaf-mute and blind children and youth; Provided, that a grant made pursuant to this section may be made only for the following or similar programs: (a) technical assistance to Centers providing educational services to deaf-mute and blind children; (b) pre-service or in-service training of professionals or related services personnel preparing to serve or serving deaf-mute and blind children; (c) replication of successful innovative approaches to providing educational or related services to deaf-mute and blind children at risk of being certified deaf-mute and blind; (f) consultative, counselling and training services for the families of deaf-mute and blind children; and (g) familiarization of the municipality to be served by a center with the problems and potentialities of such children.

SECTION 4. *Provision for Continuing Research to Identify Special Needs of Deaf-mute and Blind Children.* – The Special Education Division of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), by itself or in association with such organizations or institutions as are determined by the Secretary of the DECS to be appropriate, shall undertake continuing research to identify and design programs that meet the full range of special needs of deaf-mute and blind children; Provided, that such continuing research shall also be used to develop instructional techniques for use by the Centers that will improve deaf-mute and blind children's acquisition of the skills necessary for transition to independent living, vocational training, or competitive employment; Provided, finally that such continuing research shall further be used to design physical education and therapeutic recreation program for use by the Centers to increase the potential of deaf-mute and blind children for community participation.

SECTION 5. *Provision for Training of Personnel.*– The Department of Education, Culture and Sports shall develop special education courses for adoption and implementation by accredited institutions of higher education and universities; Provided, that such courses shall include subjects on (a) special education, and adaptive physical education; (b) special education supervision and administration; and (c) special education

research; Provided, finally, that the Secretary of the DECS may make grants, which may include scholarships with necessary stipends and allowances, to institutions of higher education and/or universities which already offer such or similar courses.

SECTION 6. *Annual report to the Secretary of Education; Examination of Numbers and Services and Revision of Numbers: Annual Report to Congress; Summary of Data.* - (1) Centers established, created or supported under the Act as well as public or non-profit private agencies or organizations which are recipients of a grants shall report annually to the Secretary of the DECS on: (A) the number of recipients, by age, severity, and nature of deaf-muteness and blindness; (B) the number of professionals and family members directly served by, or serving in, each Center; and (C) the types of services provided; (2) The Secretary of the DECS shall examine the number of deaf-mute and blind children and youth so reported and, together with the Secretary of the Department of Health, shall create and annually revise a Deaf-Mute and Blind Children National Registry; and (3) The Secretary of the DECS shall summarize the date for submission in its annual report to the Congress.

SECTION 7. *Dissemination of Materials and Information Concerning Working Practices with Deaf-mute and Blind Children.* - The Secretary of the DECS, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Secretary of Labor and Employment, shall disseminate materials and information concerning effective practices in working with, training, and educating deaf-mute and blind children.

SECTION 8. *Deaf-mute and Blind Children Defined.* - For purposes of this Act, the term "deaf-mute and blind children" shall include the hearing, speech, and eyesight impaired children from birth to eighteen years of age.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Guidelines for the Establishment of Municipal Education Centers.* - The Department of Education, Culture and Sports, in collaboration

with the Department of Health and the Department of Public Works and Highways, shall promulgate and issue the necessary implementing guidelines for the creation and operation of Municipal Special Education Centers within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Fund for the Establishment and Initial Operation of the Centers.* -

Such sums as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the sums necessary for the continuous operation of the Centers shall be included in the annual appropriations of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

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

SECTION 12. *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 13. *Effectivity Clause* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.