

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

5 FEB -3 11:20

SENATE  
S.B. No. 1900 RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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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 America. 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.

*Miriam Defensor Santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
*MS*

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)  
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5 FEB -3 AM 10:20

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AN ACT  
TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE EYE  
EXAMINATIONS TO CHILDREN

*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 “Children's Vision Improvement and Learning Readiness Act of 2005.”

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

- (1) “Secretary” — refers to the Secretary of Health;
- (2) “Comprehensive eye examination” — refers to an assessment of a patient's history, general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and as appropriate, binocular vision or gross visual fields, performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

SECTION 3. *Grants Regarding Comprehensive Eye Examinations For Children.* —

(a) IN GENERAL. — The Secretary may make grants to cities and municipalities for the purpose of:

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

(ii) providing subsequent treatment or services necessary to correct vision problems; and

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

(b) CRITERIA AND COORDINATION. —

(i) CRITERIA. — The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate professional and consumer organizations including individuals with knowledge of age appropriate vision services, shall develop criteria —

(aa) governing the operation of the grant program; and

(bb) for the collection of data related to vision assessment and the utilization of follow up services.

(c) APPLICATION. — A grant may be made under subsection (a) only if an application for the grant is submitted to the Secretary and the application is in such form, is made in such manner, and contains such information as the Secretary may require, including -

(i) information on existing government-funded children's vision screening programs;

(ii) a plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used to compliment existing country's efforts;

(iii) a plan to determine if a grant eligible child has received an age appropriate vision screening; and

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

(aa) any government compensation program, under an insurance policy, or under any government health benefits program; or

(bb) by any entity that provides health services on a prepaid basis.

(d) EVALUATIONS. — A grant may be made under subsection (a) only if the municipality involved agrees that, not later than one (1) year after the date on which amounts under the grant are first received by the municipality, and annually thereafter while receiving amounts under the grant, the municipality will submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the operations and activities carried out under the grant, including -

(i) an assessment of the utilization of vision services and the status of children receiving these services as a result of the activities carried out under the grant;

(ii) the collection, analysis, and reporting of children's vision data according to guidelines prescribed by the Secretary; and

(iii) such other information as the Secretary may require.

SECTION 4. *Authorization of Appropriations.* — For the purpose of carrying out this Act, such sums as may be deemed appropriate by the Secretary are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

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

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

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

Approved,