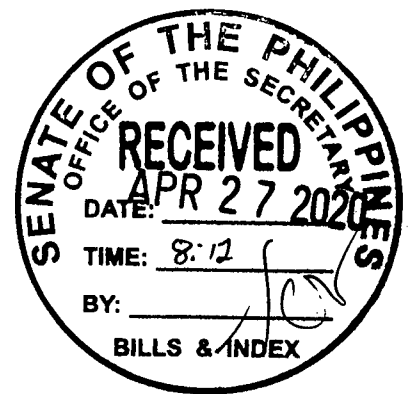


**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)**



SENATE

S. B. NO. 1438

Introduced by **SENATOR VICENTE C. SOTTO III**

**AN ACT
AMENDING SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NUMBER 7977,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT TO LENGTHEN THE SCHOOL
CALENDAR FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) DAYS TO NOT MORE
THAN TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220) CLASS DAYS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19, has been declared by the World Health Organization as Public Health Emergency of International Concern as it continuously hit almost all countries and territories around the world, inflicting millions; thus creating a global health crisis. COVID-19 likewise affects all segments of population - rich and poor, young and old, male and female, and living in urban and rural areas. It has affected our way of life, healthcare system, economy, and even the education system.

As COVID-19 keeps students at home as early as 10 March 2020, a lot of school activities – both curricular and extracurricular – have been put on hold as a result. Other schools opted for online classes or the use of social media to interact with students in order not to hamper the

academic year and to have a semblance of normalcy; while other academic institutions can only do so much.

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution states that:

The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

Thus, on 24 April 2020, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte accepted the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) to move the opening of classes for school year 2020-2021 to September. The said recommendation of the IATF-EID, according to the National Economic and Development Authority Acting Director-General Karl Chua, was based on the health study that children and youth from zero (0) to twenty (20) years of age are possible transmitters of the coronavirus.



However, Republic Act Number 7977, otherwise known as "An Act To Lengthen The School Calendar From Two Hundred (200) Days To Not More Than Two Hundred Twenty (220) Class Days," has specifically provided that "the school year shall start on the first Monday of June but not later than the last day of August." Thus, the approved recommendation of the IATF-EID runs counter to the aforesaid law.

In order to remedy the situation created by the above-mentioned scenario and would, consequently, allow the execution of the IATF-EID

recommendation, this measure is being proposed by this representation. Furthermore, this bill allowing the start of school year to be moved from August to September, or in such other month, as may be determined by the President, would give the Department of Education more time and opportunity to prepare and adopt measures for the "new normal" of the education system while helping the government fight the COVID-19 outbreak.

While no one knows when this pandemic ends and what the future holds for the country and its people thereafter, the National Government is doing its best to "flatten the curve"; and the steps being undertaken by it are based on medical experts' studies and assessments. Since what we have at the moment is a health emergency, there are no other view more important than the ones from the medical experts, particularly on the matter of preventing, fighting and, eventually, putting an end to this virus. Therefore, the recommendation of the IATF-EID to move the school year to September must necessarily be put into effect.

Due to the urgency and importance of this measure, it's immediate passage is earnestly sought.


VICENTE C. SOTTO III 

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

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 3 of RA 7977 is hereby amended to read as
2 follows:

3 SEC. 3. *Start of the School Year.* – The school year shall
4 start on the first Monday of June but not later than the last
5 day of [August] **SEPTEMBER, OR IN SUCH OTHER**
6 **MONTH, AS MAY BE DETERMINED BY THE**
7 **PRESIDENT.**

8 In the implementation of this Act, the Secretary of
9 Education, Culture and Sports shall determine the end of
10 the regular school year, taking into consideration the
11 Christmas and summer vacations, and the peculiar
12 circumstances of each region.

1 In the exercise of this authority, the Secretary of Education,
2 Culture and Sports may authorize the holding of Saturday
3 classes for elementary and secondary levels for public and
4 private schools.

5 **SEC. 2. *Repealing Clause.*** –All laws, acts, presidential decrees,
6 executive orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and
7 regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with
8 the provision of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified
9 accordingly.

10 **SEC. 3. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
11 after publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general
12 circulation.

Approved,