

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



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

SENATE  
S. No. 1458

20 MAY -4 A9:26

RECEIVED

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Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

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**AN ACT  
AUTHORIZING THE SHORTENING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AND THE MASS  
PROMOTION OF STUDENTS IN TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND CALAMITIES,  
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7977 AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV section 2(1) of the Constitution states that "The State shall: Establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society". Our education system must always adjust to the needs of the people. In light of the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic, our people need to be secure and safe more than anything else, especially the children.

Society is currently at a standstill as industries and schools have been put on hold with the implementation of the government's quarantine policies. As the virus continues to spread and there is still no clear end to this pandemic, the continuation of regular classes and the resumption of the school year upon the lifting of the enhanced community quarantine puts at risk the students who will be forced to attend classes considering the absence of online or non-face-to-face learning systems. As the virus cannot yet be completely eradicated from the country, we

should not place our youth in harm's way by resuming classes. The most humane thing for schools to do is to end the school year and provide students with passing marks or mass promotion.

However, the law on the matter, Republic Act No. 7977, does not allow for such humane measure as it provides that the school year shall be not more than 220 days and ending or shortening the school year may be considered a violation. Hence, there is a need to amend the law.

This bill, therefore, seeks to authorize the Secretary of the Department of Education to shorten the school year and mass promote the students in times of emergencies and calamities.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO**

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

1 Section 1. *Amendment* – Section 1 of Republic Act No. 7977, is hereby  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 "SECTION 1. Lengthening of School Calendar. – Any provision of law to the  
4 contrary notwithstanding, the school calendar for each year beginning school  
5 year 1995-1996, shall be lengthened to not more than two hundred twenty  
6 (220) class days, inclusive of class days which may be subsequently suspended  
7 due to natural or man-made calamities. **PROVIDED, THAT IN TIMES OF**  
8 **EMERGENCIES AND CALAMITIES, THE SECRETARY OF THE**  
9 **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS**  
10 **"SECRETARY", MAY SHORTEN THE SCHOOL CALENDAR TO LESS THAN**  
11 **TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220) CLASS DAYS. PROVIDED FURTHER,**  
12 **THAT IN CASE OF A SHORTENED SCHOOL CALENDAR, THE**  
13 **SECRETARY MAY MANDATE THE PROVISION OF PASSING MARKS TO**

1           **ALL STUDENTS AND THEIR PROMOTION TO THE NEXT EDUCATIONAL**  
2           **OR ACADEMIC LEVEL.**

3  
4           The increase in the number of school days during the school year shall not be  
5           considered as a basis for additional pay for teachers who are paid salaries for  
6           the entire twelve (12) months of a school year: Provided, That the preceding  
7           provision shall not apply to those who are paid salaries computed by the  
8           number of hours they actually teach or whose salaries and hours of work are  
9           governed by existing Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs).

10  
11           *Sec. 2. Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared  
12           unconstitutional or invalid, other sections or parts thereof not affected thereby shall  
13           remain in full force and effect.

14           *Sec. 3. Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and  
15           regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby  
16           repealed or modified accordingly.

17           *Sec. 4. Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
18           complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least one (1) newspaper of  
19           general circulation.

          Approved,