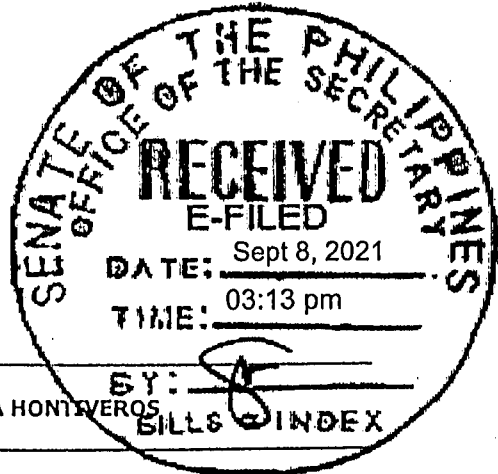


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

SENATE
P.S.R. No. 901



INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

A RESOLUTION URGING THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO DECLARE AN EDUCATIONAL CRISIS AND CALLING ON THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SECTOR LED BY DEPED, CHED, AND TESDA TOGETHER WITH THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, THE PRIVATE EDUCATION SECTOR, AND OTHER IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS TO BAND TOGETHER IN FORMULATING AND IMPLEMENTING A TARGETED EMERGENCY PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION CRISIS, FOCUSING ON THE SAFE AND CAREFUL REOPENING OF SCHOOLS IN SELECTED AREAS, EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATION BUDGET, AND PROVISION OF NECESSARY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND OTHER ACADEMIC SECTORS TO ENSURE THAT NO ONE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND

WHEREAS, approximately 826 million students or half the world's learners do not have access to a household computer while 706 million students worldwide do not have internet at home and 56 million are left without mobile network service¹, making the transition to online or hybrid learning one of the biggest challenges yet for the education sector;

WHEREAS, globally 3 out of 4 students not reached by distance learning policies come from rural areas and the poorest households², something that the Philippines has no lack of;

WHEREAS, the learning losses caused by the learners' disrupted education reduces future opportunities of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and threatens to undo progress made, especially in the efforts to bring girls and young women to school and keep them there;

WHEREAS, not discussed as much are the difficulties faced by the youngest students, who are not as well equipped yet to independently follow directions or navigate online school tasks³ and whose underdeveloped basic educational skills may prove to be a struggle in their future learning years;

WHEREAS, the closure of schools and other educational institutions not only affects the delivery of educational services but also adversely impacts the daily lives and well-being of students and their families: working parents are forced to act as teachers, affecting their ability to earn a living; access to life-saving school nutrition programs are halted; and having children full time at home in abusive households amplifies their risks of violence and abuse online and offline;

WHEREAS, as early as October 2020, deaths of students have been reported as related to the difficulties associated with online and/or distance learning, such as the case of Ricky Benig⁴, a 19 year old student struggling with the financial demands imposed by online learning who took his own life; Kristelyn Villance, who died in an accident while trying to submit her academic requirements⁵; Danz Vistal Jr, who committed suicide after struggling in answering his learning modules; and 17 other students⁶;

WHEREAS, the alarming number of students who have taken their own lives has prompted DEPED to strengthen its psychosocial support program with the Psychological Association of the Philippines⁷;

WHEREAS, in order to address the mental health concerns of students and other academic sectors, the LGUs, NGAs, and other stakeholders must address the root of the problem: the inexcusable conditions and circumstances that have pushed them to their limits, such as the lack of additional support for academically struggling students, the seemingly insurmountable digital divide between the rich and the poor, the haphazard implementation of distance learning, and the heavy financial burden demanded by online learning;

WHEREAS, the education sector is set to receive the highest share of the 2022 Budget at a proposed P773.6 Billion, of which P630.8 Billion will be allocated for the exclusive use of DEPED, P75.4 billion for the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), P52.6 billion for the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and P14.7 billion for the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)^{vi};

WHEREAS, the country is facing a massive catastrophe as a result of the low simmering educational crisis made worse by the pandemic and the resulting prolonged lockdown and school closures;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate urge the Executive Branch to declare an Educational Crisis and call on the Public Education Sector led by DEPED, CHED, and TESDA together with the Local and National Government, the Private Education Sector, and other important stakeholders to band together in formulating and implementing a targeted emergency plan for the education crisis; focusing on the safe and careful reopening of schools in selected areas, effective utilization of the country's education budget and provision of necessary mental health services for students and other academic sectors to ensure that no one will be left behind,

Adopted,


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator

ⁱ <https://en.unesco.org/news/startling-digital-divides-distance-learning-emerge>

ⁱⁱ <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/covid-19/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/04/29/covid-19-the-educational-equity-crisis-and-the-opportunity-ahead/>

^{iv} <https://uplbperspective.org/2020/09/19/three-students-commit-suicide-three-months-into-online-learning/>

^v *ibid*

^{vi} <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/10/28/2052834/group-assails-deped-cites-17-student-suicide-cases>

^{vii} <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1329506/deped-confirms-one-student-died-by-suicide-says-mental-health-a-big-challenge-amid-pandemic>

^{viii} <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/NEP2022/Introduction.pdf>