

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



23 JAN 12 P5:47

**SENATE**  
**S. No. 1669**

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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Introduced by Senator MARK A. VILLAR

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**AN ACT**  
**TO PROVIDE EARLY YOUTH SUICIDE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION**  
**EXPANSION**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Nearly one in five young Filipinos have considered ending their life, according to findings of a nationwide survey released by the University of the Philippines Population Institute<sup>1</sup>. In 2021, studies showed that almost 1.5 million Filipino youth had suicidal attempt or tendencies. The suicidal rate amongst the youth is alarming in the Philippines considering that the percentage had already doubled from 2013 and 2021. This is a serious concern that needs the intervention of the State.

While suicidal tendency is already a known mental health issue, Filipino families had little to no knowledge on the proper intervention that it may undertake in case one of its members succumb to this scenario. Often than not, Filipino families, especially those within below poverty line, tend to treat suicide as a common illness that will be cured by taking medicine or rest. Some take suicide incidence as a degrading experience that may humiliate their family reputation. Thus, leaving suicide attempts as untreated and our young ones suffer for a long period of time.

This bill seeks to institutionalize suicide intervention throughout the country by formulating life planning education for Filipino youths. Once this bill is enacted into law, training will be provided to all concerned stakeholders to increase awareness on how to address suicide cases in the country. This shall also enforce the employment of psychologist in every school in order to provide early intervention to youth with suicidal tendencies. This is consistent to the State's mandate provided

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<sup>1</sup><https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1678021/1-of-5-young-filipinos-have-considered-suicide-up-survey#ixzz7prAo6SuN>

in Section 13 Article II of the Constitution to promote and protect the social well-being of the youth.

For this reason, early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



**MARK A. VILLAR**

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

1           Sec 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Youth Suicide Prevention*  
2 *Act*".

3           Sec 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Under Section 13, Article II of the 1987  
4 Constitution, the State shall promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual,  
5 intellectual and social well-being of the youth. In view of this policy, the State shall  
6 promote youth programs that will shape their values and inculcate in them positive  
7 self-image, self-respect, critical thinking and moral responsibility to enable them to  
8 become principle-centered and values-driven individuals.

9           It is recognized by the State that the youth suicide is a public health tragedy  
10 linked to underlying mental health problems and the youth suicide early intervention  
11 and prevention activities are national priorities.

12           Sec. 3. *Formulation of Life Planning Education.* - The Department of  
13 Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), is  
14 mandated to formulate and include in the elementary and secondary education  
15 curriculum a course of Life Planning. Life Planning Education (LPE) shall require  
16 lectures and discussions on self and identity, family, community values,

1 communication and interrelationship with others, sexuality and gender roles,  
2 community participation, health, psychological thinking and employment, among  
3 others. The DepEd is mandated to ensure that LPE is integrated in all schools.  
4 Training shall be provided to school administrators, teachers, guidance counselors,  
5 and other schools personnel responsible for delivering LPE.

6 The DepEd is likewise mandated to formulate a mechanism for sustaining  
7 peer counselling and peer education programs.

8 *Sec. 4. Implementation of Public Education Campaign.* – The DOH, in  
9 consultation with the DepEd, is mandated to tap doctors, health specialist, medical  
10 experts, hospitals and other medical institutions to conduct a nationwide education  
11 campaign to help the youth, parents of youth, teachers, school personnel and the  
12 general public to:

- 13 a) Become aware of the increasing problem of youth suicide and suicidal  
14 behaviors;
- 15 b) Recognize common warning signs of suicidal thoughts and intents;
- 16 c) Learn how to respond to youth who exhibit such signs; and
- 17 d) Know when and where to go for accurate assessments and professional  
18 help.

19 The DOH shall also develop and implement nationwide youth suicide early  
20 intervention and prevention strategies and education campaigns in schools,  
21 educational institutions, juvenile justice systems, substance abuse programs, mental  
22 health programs, foster care systems, and other child and youth support  
23 organizations.

24 *Sec. 5. Implementation of a Peer Counseling Group Program in Every School.*  
25 – The DepEd is mandated to require all schools to implement a Peer Counseling  
26 Program that will be conducted by the school psychologist or guidance counselor  
27 and shall involve lessons on basic counseling skills and analyses for students. The  
28 school may also tap the help of health specialist through the abovementioned Public  
29 Education Campaign.

30 *Sec. 6. Employment of Psychologist for Monthly School Counseling Alignment*  
31 *Sessions.* – The DepEd, in cooperation with the DOH, is mandated to employ at least  
32 one (1) psychologist in every school. The psychologist shall be employed in a

1 consultancy service position and shall be required to visit school at least once a  
2 month to hold School Counseling Alignment Sessions. The school psychologist must  
3 also prepare a yearly School Counseling Program of Work in order to align the  
4 guidance counselors with the campaigns and programs included in this Act. Said  
5 psychologist must be licensed to practice the profession in accordance with existing  
6 laws, rules, and regulations. The duties and responsibilities of the school  
7 psychologist are, but not limited to, following:

- 8 a) Gain up-to-date scientific knowledge about effective screening and crisis  
9 intervention strategies to identify symptoms of suicidal behavior;
- 10 b) Formulate and implement standardize and reliable screening procedures of  
11 suicidal intent and tendencies;
- 12 c) Provide consultation and assist students in seeking help from their parents,  
13 other adults in social networks, and health care system personnel;
- 14 d) Increase competencies in post suicide intervention to prevent further  
15 suicide;
- 16 e) Offer immediate support, information resources and appropriate services to  
17 families of youth who are at risk for emotional behavioral disorders which  
18 may lead to suicide attempts;
- 19 f) Provide timely referrals for appropriate community-based mental health  
20 care and treatment of youth in all child-serving settings and agencies who  
21 are at risk for suicide;
- 22 g) Work with interested families and advocacy organizations to conduct  
23 annual self-evaluation of outcomes and activities on the national level,  
24 according to established standards;
- 25 h) Other duties and responsibilities which DepEd and DOH may identify as  
26 necessary to fulfil the above mandate.

27 The DOH is hereby mandated to provide technical assistance to schools with  
28 respect to training psychologists in schools. It shall implement the best practice in  
29 the identification and treatment of youth who are at risk for committing suicide.

30 *Sec. 7. Provision of Technical Assistance and Data Management.* – The DOH  
31 is mandated to assist the DepEd in:

- 32 a) Identifying and promoting strategies to prevent suicide among the youth;

1           b) Ensuring the quality of screening and crisis intervention strategies and  
2 procedures; and

3           c) Studying the effectiveness of practices relating to the identification and  
4 treatment of youth who are at risk for committing suicide on the overall wellness  
5 and health promotion strategies related to suicide attempts;

6           The DOH shall conduct research and development programs on the  
7 effectiveness of new and existing youth suicide prevention strategies and related  
8 research aimed at reducing youth suicide and providing support for emotional and  
9 behavioral disorders which may lead to suicide attempts.

10          The DOH is likewise mandated to develop a suicide data collection system to  
11 provide reliable data about attempted suicides in the country. In developing the  
12 system, the DOH shall:

13           a) Include information on the incidence attempt;

14           b) Include demographic information on the persons who attempt suicide; and

15           c) Explore prevention strategies to reduce the number of attempted suicides  
16 and suicides.

17          *Sec. 8. Establishing of Youth Health Centers.* – The DOH may establish  
18 linkages with national government agencies, local government units (LGUs), and  
19 non-governmental institutions to establish a network of health facilities and teen  
20 centers catering especially to young people in order to address their identified youth  
21 issues.

22          These health facilities and teen centers shall provide family services, peer  
23 counseling and other related services and collaborate with parents, schools, religious  
24 groups, and youth-serving organizations to successfully implement youth suicide  
25 prevention strategies.

26          *Sec. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – The DepEd and DOH, in  
27 consultation with the National Center for Mental Health, National Youth Commission,  
28 local and national organizations that serve youth, shall issue the IRR within ninety  
29 (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

30          *Sec. 10. Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions  
31 of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following  
32 its enactment into law and thereafter. An initial amount of Fifty Million Pesos (Php

1 50,000,000.00) shall be allocated for the first year of its implementation. Such sum  
2 shall be included in the special project allocation of the DepEd and DOH.

3       Sec. 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid  
4 or unconstitutional, the other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall  
5 continue to be in full force and effect.

6       Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, letters of  
7 instructions, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with  
8 this Act shall be deemed notified, amended, or repealed accordingly.

9       Sec. 13. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after  
10 its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*