

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

23 DEC -6 P3:50

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

S. No. 2510

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

AN ACT
RENAMING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL TO NATIONAL
LITERACY COUNCIL, STRENGTHENING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,
EXPANDING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7165, AS AMENDED

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The literacy landscape in the Philippines has undergone significant advancements over the years, resulting in commendable achievements in achieving a high literacy rate. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, of the country's total 97.6 million household population, 97 percent, or 94.63 million individuals, were found to be literate. This is a 1.2 percentage point increase compared to the 95.8 percent literacy rate in 2015.

However, recent findings from the World Bank report have brought to light a concerning issue that demands immediate attention. Despite the impressive overall literacy rate, it has been observed that nine out of ten students in the country struggle to read simple texts effectively. In the June 2022 Philippines Learning Poverty Brief, the World Bank found that 91% of children in the Philippines at late primary age today are not proficient in reading. This revelation underscores the need for a comprehensive and strategic approach to address the challenges that persist within the educational system.

In light of the said concern, this bill seeks to convert the existing Literacy Coordinating Council into the National Literacy Council, with an expanded mandate

and enhanced resources to confront the pressing issues facing literacy in the Philippines. The conversion aims to foster a more focused, dynamic, and responsive national body dedicated to promoting literacy and ensuring that every Filipino, irrespective of age or background, possesses the essential reading and comprehension skills vital for personal development and national progress.

High literacy rates are crucial for the holistic development of individuals and the nation as a whole. Literacy is not merely the ability to read and write; it is the foundation upon which critical thinking, problem-solving, and continuous learning are built. The ability to comprehend and analyze information is paramount in today's rapidly evolving global landscape. A well-literate populace is better equipped to navigate the challenges of the modern world, contribute to economic growth, and participate meaningfully in civic activities.

As we position ourselves in the international arena, it is imperative that our citizens are equipped with the skills necessary to continuously acquire information, adapt to new technologies, and engage in lifelong learning. The global competitiveness of a nation is intricately linked to the literacy levels of its population. By investing in the development of high literacy rates, we are investing in the future success and competitiveness of the Philippines on the world stage.

This bill represents a proactive step in addressing the identified challenges and ensuring that our educational system remains responsive to the evolving needs of our society. By prioritizing literacy and committing resources to its advancement, we are not only securing a brighter future for our citizens but also fortifying the foundation upon which the nation's progress and prosperity stand.

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

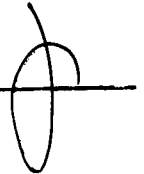

MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator 

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

23 DEC -6 P 3 :50

SENATE
S. No. 2510

RECEIVED BY: _____



Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

1 **AN ACT**
2 **RENAMING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL TO NATIONAL**
3 **LITERACY COUNCIL, STRENGTHENING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,**
4 **EXPANDING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS,**
5 **AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE**
6 **REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7165, AS AMENDED**

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

7 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "National Literacy
8 Council Act'

9 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - Pursuant to Article II, Section 17 of the
10 Constitution, it is the declared policy of the State to give priority to education to foster
11 patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human
12 liberation and development. Article XIV, Section 2(4) of the Constitution likewise
13 mandates the State to encourage non- formal, informal, and indigenous learning
14 systems, as well as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs
15 particularly those that respond to community needs. To this end the State shall give
16 priority to the adoption of measures for the universalization of literacy.

17 **SEC. 3. *Renaming of the Literacy Coordinating Council.*** - The
18 nomenclature of the Literacy Coordinating Council, established pursuant to Republic
19 Act No. 7165, as amended entitled "An Act Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council,
20 Defining Its Powers and Factions Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other

1 Purposes," is hereby changed to National Literacy Council, hereinafter referred to in
2 this Act as the "Council".

3 The Council shall serve as the lead inter-agency coordinating and advisory body
4 to the various agencies of the national government, the local government units
5 (LGUs), and the private sector, on matters pertaining to the formulation of policies
6 and the adoption and implementation of measures for the universalization of literacy.
7 The Council shall be attached solely for budgetary coordination related purposes to
8 the Department of Education (DepEd).

9 **SEC.4. Composition.** - The Council shall be composed of the following
10 members:

- 11 a) Secretary of the DepEd, as Chairperson, who may designate an undersecretary
12 as permanent representative;
- 13 b) Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), as
14 co-Chairperson, who may designate an undersecretary as permanent
15 representative;
- 16 c) Secretary of the National Economic and Development Authority, or a duly
17 designated permanent representative;
- 18 d) Director General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority,
19 or a duly designated permanent representative;
- 20 e) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education, or a duly designated
21 permanent representative;
- 22 f) Director General of the Philippine Information Agency, or a duly designated
23 permanent representative;
- 24 g) President of the Philippine Normal University, or a duly designated permanent
25 representative;

- 1 h) National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippine Statistics
2 Authority (PSA), or a duly designated permanent representative;
- 3 i) Director of Bureau of Alternative Education (BAE) of the DepEd;
- 4 j) A representative from the non-government organizations (NGOs), who is a
5 citizen of the Philippines with a demonstrated personal or professional
6 commitment and advocacy in the propagation of literacy; and
- 7 k) A representative from the associations of private educational institutions, who
8 is a citizen of the Philippines with a demonstrated personal or professional
9 commitment and advocacy in the propagation of literacy.

10 The Council shall approve and confirm the appointment of the representative
11 from the NGOs and the representative from the associations of private educational
12 institutions through the adoption of a resolution. Such representatives shall serve for
13 a term of three (3) years, and may be reappointed only once for another three (3)
14 years on the basis of merit and performance.

15 **SEC. 5. Meetings.** - The Council shall conduct its regular meetings quarterly
16 at any agreed location within the Philippines and may hold special meetings to
17 consider urgent matters upon the call of the chairperson or a majority of its members.
18 A majority of all its incumbent members shall constitute a quorum, the presence of
19 which is necessary to transact business.

20 A meeting may be conducted virtually only in circumstances when meeting in
21 person is impossible or impractical and all the Council members are able to
22 communicate adequately during the meeting.

23 Members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be entitled
24 to 20 appropriate honoraria for attendance in meetings as well as appropriate
25 allowances and reimbursement of expenses related to their participation in the official
26 activities of the Council, in accordance with pertinent laws, rules and regulations.

1 The duly designated representatives to the Council shall be afforded equal
2 opportunity to participate in the meetings of the Council, and shall be allowed to vote
3 on any matter in the agenda of the Council. Likewise, they shall be afforded, whenever
4 necessary, reimbursement of any actual expense incurred during Council-related
5 functions and duties, subject to the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations.

6 **SEC. 6. Powers and Functions.** - The Council shall be vested with the
7 following powers and functions:

- 8 a) Act as the lead advisory and coordinating body of the government and initiate,
9 promote and recommend the adoption of policy and program directions for all
10 literacy endeavors in the country;
- 11 b) Evaluate the literacy situation in the country, propose ways and means for
12 expanding educational opportunities to citizens of varied socio-economic
13 origins, and adopt modern communications and educational technology and
14 other innovative modes of transmitting knowledge to support literacy
15 endeavors at the national and local levels;
- 16 c) Support and assist the BAE on matters concerning community mapping
17 activities for the maintenance of a centralized database for out-of-school
18 children and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and
19 other marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may not have
20 availed of or completed their basic education and who may need intervention
21 and support;
- 22 d) Strengthen support structures identified as literacy advocates of LGUs in the
23 city, municipal, and barangay levels, by adopting strategies that maximize
24 private sector support for, cooperation, and involvement in literacy
25 development programs, projects, and related activities;
- 26 e) Promote and support initiatives for the conduct of research studies and similar
27 undertakings aimed at enhancing and strengthening the crafting of relevant
28 and timely policy recommendations, and for the effective implementation of
29 literacy- related programs, projects, and other activities;

- 1 f) Organize periodic assemblies, such as literacy conferences and giving of awards
2 to increase awareness on and help strengthen good literacy practices, and
3 engage close partnerships with literacy advocates throughout the country;
- 4 g) Establish the organizational structure of the Council secretariat and determine
5 the secretariat's staffing pattern, qualifications, duties and responsibilities, and
6 other administrative policies including, among others, those pertaining to hiring
7 and promotion, subject to the guidelines set forth by the Department of Budget
8 and Management (DBM) and the Civil Service Commission;
- 9 h) Prepare an annual budget proposal and ensure that the allotted annual
10 appropriation shall be spent in accordance with the purposes as specified in the
11 General Appropriations Act;
- 12 i) Formulate necessary guidelines for business continuity, disaster recovery and
13 backup capabilities and facilities to ensure continued operation and delivery of
14 services in times of public health emergency, occurrence of calamity, and any
15 other threat that requires public safety and protection; and
- 16 j) Perform such other functions as may be necessary in furtherance of the
17 purposes of this Act.

18 **SEC. 7. *The Secretariat.*** - The secretariat shall be headed by an Executive
19 Director, who shall assist the Council in the performance of its functions.

20 The salaries of the Executive Director and other officers and employees of the
21 Council secretariat shall be in accordance with the Revised Compensation and Position
22 Classification System and other existing laws.

23 The existing organizational structure and staffing pattern of the secretariat shall
24 be revised so as to integrate appropriately the provisions of this Act subject to the
25 review and approval by the DBM: *Provided*, That no officer or employee of the existing
26 secretariat shall be removed from the service except for a valid cause, in accordance
27 with Republic Act No. 6656, entitled "An Act to Protect the Security of Tenure of Civil

1 Service Officers and Employees in the Implementation of Government
2 Reorganization”.

3 **SEC. 8. Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretariat.** - In the
4 performance of its duties and responsibilities, the Council secretariat shall:

- 5 a) Provide administrative and technical support and assistance to the Council,
6 including the preparation of policy recommendations, plans and programs, and
7 other Council priorities and measures necessary for the advancement of basic
8 and functional literacy, and other basic capabilities of out-of-school children
9 and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other
10 marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may not have availed of
11 or completed their basic education and who may need intervention and
12 support;
- 13 b) Consult and coordinate with national government agencies, LGUs, NGOs,
14 academic institutions, and other stakeholders on matters relating to the
15 functions of the Council and on other matters pertaining to the propagation of
16 literacy endeavors;
- 17 c) Provide technical assistance to the implementers of the programs and projects
18 on literacy;
- 19 d) Initiate, organize, and promote the conduct of research activities, workshops,
20 conferences, national literacy awards and the like, subject to the approval of
21 the Council;
- 22 e) Set up, maintain, and update a management information system on literacy
23 programs and projects, policies, best practices, research studies, statistical data
24 and other relevant information relative to the literacy situation in the country;
- 25 f) Coordinate with the PSA in the conduct of the Functional Literacy, Education
26 and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) for purposes of providing a quantitative
27 framework that shall serve as one of the bases in the formulation of policies

1 and programs on the improvement of literacy and education status in the
2 country;

3 g) Recommend programs, projects, and other activities to be included for finding
4 in the annual budget proposal of the Council, including support services in the
5 preparation of the Council's annual budget proposal; and

6 h) Perform other tasks as may be directed by the Council.

7 **SEC. 9. *Collaboration and Linkages with the BAJIS.*** — The Council shall
8 closely coordinate with the BAE concerning the management of Alternative Learning
9 System (ALS) programs, projects and other activities, especially those that are geared
10 towards the universalization of literacy, particularly among out-of-school children and
11 adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized
12 and vulnerable members of society. It shall also collaborate with the BAE on matters
13 pertaining to literacy concerns for policy formulation, knowledge management,
14 advocacy, social mobilization, and partnerships, among others.

15 **SEC. 10. *Establishment of Local Literacy Councils.*** —The Council shall
16 promote the establishment of Local Literacy Councils (LLCs) as support structures at
17 the city, municipal, and barangay levels, which shall serve as the coordinating and
18 advisory body at the local level on matters pertaining to the adoption and
19 implementation of community-based measures for the propagation of literacy.

20 The LLCs shall work with the LGUs in the implementation of literacy programs
21 and endeavors at the local level, including the identification of priority literacy
22 programs, provision of technical assistance to literacy volunteer workers, program
23 monitoring and evaluation, and coordination with government and non-government
24 partners for program support activities.

25 The LLCs shall closely coordinate, support and assist the BAE to ensure the
26 implementation of community literacy mapping activities within the local level. The
27 Council shall, upon consultation with the DILG and DepEd, issue the general guidelines
28 for the establishment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of LLCs.

1 An LGU may, *motu proprio* or upon the recommendation of the Council,
2 establish its LLC within its jurisdiction in accordance with the guidelines set forth by
3 the Council.

4 **SEC. 11. National Literacy Awards.** - The Council shall organize the
5 National Literacy Awards for the purpose of recognizing, commending, and awarding
6 deserving LGUs and NGOs for implementing outstanding literacy programs in their
7 respective jurisdictions within the country.

8 The National Literacy Awards shall be held once every two (2) years and shall
9 encourage the participation of all literacy advocates and stakeholders nationwide. The
10 event shall serve as the venue to exhibit, discover, share, and help strengthen good
11 literacy practices and thus, engage partnerships with various literacy advocates and
12 stakeholders.

13 The Council shall formulate the guidelines on the conduct of the National
14 Literacy Awards, including the criteria for the creation of a board of judges per
15 category and the selection of winners.

16 The board of judges for each category shall be chosen from a panel of experts
17 in the field of literacy and education.

18 **SEC. 12. Subsidy for Qualified Outstanding Literacy Programs;
19 Outstanding Individual Awards.** - The Council shall award appropriate financial
20 subsidies to the top awardees of the Search for Outstanding Literacy Programs for
21 both LGU and NGO categories to fund their chosen literacy programs in their respective
22 localities: *Provided*, That the NGO awardees are non-stock, non-profit, and established
23 for educational purposes. The Council shall formulate and issue guidelines on the
24 release of this financial subsidy including the amount of the award, period and
25 frequency of release of such amounts to the awardees, and conditions or qualifications
26 for entitlement thereto. The amounts of the financial subsidy to qualified awardees
27 may be subject to periodic adjustments, as deemed necessary by the Council.

28 The Council shall also designate awardees for the Outstanding Individual
29 Literacy Workers and Outstanding ALS Mobile Teachers whose qualifications for

1 entitlement to a financial award and the amount thereof shall be included in the
2 guidelines.

3 **SEC. 13. Assistance from Special Education Fund.** - Notwithstanding the
4 provisions of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the "Local Government Code
5 of 1991", as amended, the LGUs may be authorized to use a portion of the Special
6 Education Fund to augment the funds appropriated by the LGUs for the purpose of
7 implementing literacy-related programs and activities at the local level.

8 **SEC. 14. Annual Report.**—The Council shall submit to the Senate Committee
9 on Basic Education, Arts and Culture and the House of Representatives' Committee on
10 Basic Education and Culture a detailed annual report which shall include its
11 accomplishments, programs and projects, and policy recommendations and, if
12 necessary, propose legislation for the universalization and continuing improvement of
13 literacy rate and numeracy skills of learners.

14 **SEC. 15. Appropriations.** —The initial amount for the implementation of this
15 Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations for the DepEd.
16 Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations
17 Act.

18 **SEC.16. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** — Within one hundred
19 twenty (120) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the Council shall,
20 in consultation with the Council members and other concerned stakeholders,
21 promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

22 **SEC. 17. Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
23 unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

24 **SEC. 18. Repealing Clause.** —Republic Act No. 7165, entitled, "An Act
25 Creating the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions,
26 Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes," as amended by Republic Act
27 No. 10122, entitled, "An Act Strengthening the Literacy Coordinating Council by
28 Amending Republic Act No. 7165, Otherwise Known as 'An Act Creating the Literacy

1 Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions, Appropriating Funds
2 Therefor and for Other Purposes", " is hereby repealed.

3 All other laws, decrees, orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or
4 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended
5 accordingly.

6 **SEC. 19. Effectivity.** — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
7 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

8 *Approved,*