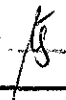


10 JUL -8 P1:30

**SENATE**

S. No. 992

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Section 15, Article II of the 1987 Constitution provides that "the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them."

Acid Attacks or Acid Violence or "vitriolage" is a form of violent assault. Perpetrators throw acid at their victims, usually at their faces, causing burns and damaging skin and sometimes, dissolving the bones. The consequences of these attacks include blindness and permanent scarring of the face and body. The chemical agents most commonly used to commit these attacks are hydrochloric acid and sulphuric acid. Nitric or sulphuric acid has a catastrophic effect on human flesh. It causes the skin tissue to melt, often exposing the bones below the flesh, sometimes even dissolving the bone. When acid attacks the eyes, it damages them permanently. Many acid attacks survivors have lost the use of one or both eyes. A cup of acid, usually sulfuric acid from any car battery or purchased from auto repair shops, costs only a few pesos, and is therefore both a cheap and available weapon.

A decade ago, acid attacks were committed almost exclusively against women, and only as a crime of vengeance. However, there has been a pronounced increase in acid attacks overall and against men in recent years. Various studies indicate that 80% of victims of these acid attack are female and almost 40% are under 18 years of age.

This proposed measure seeks to focus on informing the public of its harmful effects and providing preventive mechanisms to prevent the occurrence of such acts. Moreover, the lack of an official reporting on the incidence of acid attack in the country has let to inconsistent tracking of acid throwing incidents and made it difficult to trace acid violence as a countrywide phenomenon, even though acid burns were on the DOH list of reportable cases. As such, this proposed measure seeks to institutionalize the proper recording and monitoring of acid attacks in the country in order to properly address this devastating health issue.

It is hoped that this proposed measure will mainstream the eradication of acid violence in the country.


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

  
**MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID**  
Senator

10 JUL -8 P1:30

**SENATE**

S. No. 992

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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**AN ACT**

**INSTITUTING A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL PROGRAM AGAINST VITRIOLAGE, COMMONLY KNOWN AS "ACID VIOLENCE" OR "ACID ATTACK", IMPLEMENTING A NATIONWIDE INFORMATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION (IEC) CAMPAIGN AGAINST ACID VIOLENCE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "**Anti-Acid Violence Advocacy Act of 2010**".

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people, including the rights of persons to full, healthy and holistic development and the right to self-determination.

Towards this end, the State commits itself to the establishment of holistic programs to protect persons against acid attacks and acid violence.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- (1) **Acid Attack or Acid Violence** - For purposes of this Act, the term "**Acid Attacks or Acid Violence**" – is a form of violent assault. This is medically known as "vitriolage". Perpetrators of acid attacks throw acid at their victims (usually at their faces), burning them, and damaging skin tissue, often exposing and sometimes dissolving the bones. The consequences of these attacks include blindness and permanent scarring of the face and body. Nitric or sulphuric acid has a catastrophic effect on human flesh. It causes the skin tissue to melt, often exposing the bones below the flesh,

sometimes even dissolving the bone. When acid attacks the eyes, it damages them permanently. Many acid attacks survivors have lost the use of one or both eyes.

- (2) **Department** – refers to the Department of Health (DOH);
- (3) **Secretary** – refers to the Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH);

**SEC. 4. Surveillance Programs to Monitor Acid Violence in the Country.** - The Department of Health (DOH), hereinafter referred to as the Department, is hereby mandated to conduct an annual epidemiological survey program to determine the extent and total incidence and prevalence of acid violence in the country in order for the government to provide the necessary health interventions to address the needs victims of acid violence.

The Department is mandated to strengthen its research focus concerning acid attacks in the country, including a renewed focus on expanded research into the link between environmental factors and the prevalence of acid attacks and violence, and continued investigations into the predisposing factors that affect the increasing incidence of acid attacks in the country.

**SEC. 5. National Program Against Acid Violence.** – The DOH is hereby mandated to implement a comprehensive and nationwide program against acid attacks and violence.

Towards this end, the DOH is hereby mandated to implement the following objectives:

- a) Promote public awareness, education and information on issues concerning acid attacks and violence;
- b) Establish sustainable networks of support group for families of victims of acid attacks and violence;
- c) Provide referral services to victims of acid attacks and identify appropriate medical expertise and facilities suited to the needs of victims of acid attacks;
- d) Undertake research and/or collaborate with other entities on research activities regarding available treatments with respect to acid violence;
- e) Receive donations and grants from local and international donor institutions, foundations, and multilateral and bilateral foreign donor agencies involved in the prevention, cure and rehabilitation of victims of acid attacks;
- f) Provide the avenue for exchange of information, exchange programs and sharing of best practices on issues relating to the cure, treatment and rehabilitation of victims of acid attacks; and

g) Network with other organizations, institutions and professionals working for the promotion of legislation and public programs for afflicted persons.

The DOH shall carry out research to improved the management and handling of patients who are victims of acid attacks. In developing said research agenda, the Department shall recognize and address racial, cultural disparities in the incidences of acid attacks in the country.

**SEC. 6. *Programs and Services for Acid Violence Prevention.*** - The Department, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shall institute a programs for the prevention of acid violence in the country. The programs and services that will be provided by the Department shall include, among others, the following:

- a) Orientation and Counseling Services for families of victims of acid attacks;
- b) Establishment of Family Support Networks for families of victims of acid attacks to seek psycho-social support for the various problems faced by the patients;
- c) Establishment of National and Regional Referral Services where the DOH will update a list of health care institutions concerned with the care and rehabilitation of victims of acid violence;
- d) The conduct of continuing education, information and training programs to empower the health providers in the proper handling of patients who are victims of acid violence;
- e) The establishment of a databank and information and monitoring system on the demographic, socio-economic and incidence and prevalence of acid attacks and violence in the country.

**SEC. 7. *Government Assistance to Victims of Acid Attacks/Violence.*** - The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall establish a program that will provide livelihood assistance to vicitms of acid atttacks in the country. The Secreatry of the DSWD shall accredit non-government organizations (NGOs) and private institutions who are providing holistic assistance programs to persons who are victims of acid attacks and violence.

The Secretary of the DSWD shall provide an accreditation procedure for purposes of screening the NGOs and prospective private health providers who will provide assistance to victims of acid attacks.

Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DSWD shall issue the necessary implementing guidelines for the accreditation of NGOs and health

providers and screening of beneficiaries for the assistance that will be provided by the DSWD, consistent with the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 8. Confidentiality of Medical Information.** - The DOH, in coordination with the DSWD and the Department of Justice (DOJ), shall formulate the pertinent implementing rules and regulations to ensure the confidentiality of the medical records in order to protect the unwarranted intrusion into the privacy of the victims of acid attacks/violence.

**SEC. 9. Reporting Requirement.** – Within two (2) years from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH shall make a report to both Houses of Congress on the results of the programs and studies conducted by the Department, in order to implement the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 10. Appropriation.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

**SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).** - Within six (6) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in consultation with the DWSD and DOJ shall promulgate necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

**SEC. 12. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof not consistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 13. Separability Clause.** - If any provision or part of this Act, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

**SEC. 14. Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

**Approved,**