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SENATE
S. No. **1768**

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 13 states that:

The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.

Section 15 states that:

The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

A child as young as three has the finger strength to pull a trigger. Many parents incorrectly assume that their child is educated about gun safety, can tell the difference between a real gun and a toy gun, and would know not to handle a real gun. A study in the June 2001 issue of *Pediatrics* showed this to not be true.

The 2002 edition of *Injury Facts* from the U.S. National Safety Council reports that in 1999, there were 3,385 kids below the age of twenty who were killed with a gun. This includes homicides, suicides, and unintentional injuries. In 1997, twenty-four percent of firearm-related deaths in children younger than 5 years of age were attributable to unintentional shootings.

In the U.S., because of the number of injuries from guns, programs have been developed to educate parents and children about gun safety. These include such programs as the Eddie Eagle gun safety program from the National Rifle Association and the "Keep Your Family Safe from Firearm Injury" program of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Gun safety is a collection

of rules and recommendations that can be applied when handling firearms. The purpose of gun safety is to eliminate or minimize the risks of unintentional death, injury or damage caused by improper storage and handling of firearms. It emphasizes the danger and possible serious consequences of playing with guns.

The Philippines has no such gun safety program designed for children and their parents. Yet, we are confronted with regular reports of gun-related deaths in the country. In fact, in May 2009, Reuters reported that the Philippines had more gun-related deaths than any other country in Asia relative to its size. Chief Superintendent Reynaldo Rafal told reporters that about 70 percent of small arms are in the hands of civilians and that the number of small arms has grown about 10 percent since 2007, matched by an increase in gun-related violence in the country.

These figures make it incumbent on us to treat this issue as an urgent public health matter. Consequently, this bill proposes a comprehensive program which shall include mandatory gun safety education for all students and their parents, in order to resolve and prevent the problems and dangers relating to the use of guns. Being safe can keep kids and even adults from getting hurt. All kids should know what to do if they find a gun or if they are with someone who finds a gun or what to do if a gun is fired by accident.

It is imperative that we establish such programs if we want to save lives.¹

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MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

¹ This bill was originally filed in the third regular session of the 14th Congress.

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SENATE
S. No. 1768

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

1 AN ACT
2 AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A GUN
3 SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAM AND INCLUDE THIS IN THE CURRICULUM
4 OF ALL ELEMENTATRY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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

5 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Gun Safety Education Act.”

6 SECTION 2. *Definitions.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

- 7 A. “Secretary” - means the Secretary of the Department of Education.
- 8 B. “DepED” - means the Department of Education
- 9 C. “Gun Safety Education Program”- means an age-appropriate, research-based
10 program that educates children and their parents on how to prevent or respond to
11 problems or dangers related to firearms.

12 SECTION 3. *Incorporation of a Gut Safety Education Program in the curriculum of*
13 *Public and Private Secondary Schools.* — A program on Gun Safety Education shall be
14 incorporated in the curriculum of both public and private elementary and secondary schools. In
15 addition, to this, gun safety classes will be offered at times convenient to parents, including
16 evenings and weekends.

17 SECTION 4. *Implementing Agency and its duties.* —

- 18 A. The DepEd shall:
 - 19 (1) identify, develop, and implement gun safety education programs. The
 - 20 Dep Ed shall should consult with a certified firearms instructors, and

1 research on programs in other jurisdictions which have shown to be
2 effective;

3 (2) develop online gun safety programs for children and their parents;

4 (3) develop and implement public education campaigns to promote
5 awareness of online risks to children and Internet safety education;

6 B. The DepEd Secretary shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this
7 Act, promulgate rules and regulations, including those of disciplinary nature, to carry out
8 and enforce the provisions of this Act. Further, the DepEd shall be the lead agency in the
9 carrying out the following: Secretary is hereby authorized and directed to adopt a system
10 to implement and carry out the provisions of this Act.

11 SECTION 5. *Appropriation.* — To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as
12 may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.
13 Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of this program shall be included
14 in the annual appropriation of the DepED.

15 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
16 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
17 valid and subsisting.

18 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
19 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent
20 with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

21 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
22 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,