

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

10 JUL 28 1970

SENATE

S. No. 2179

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article 2, Section 17 of the 1987 Constitution provides that ***"The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development"***. In the same light, Section 1, Article XIV of the same Constitution mandates the State to ***"protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all"***.

Schoolchildren carrying heavy bags become a common phenomenon in many of our country's school setting. Children hoping to be ready at all times during classroom discussion and other school-related activities, bring all their heavy textbooks and other school supplies, to and from school.

At a glimpse, it seems this practice is good to schoolchildren. However, according to many foreign scientific studies conducted on this matter, overloading of school bags can cause side effect to the body of the children if they are exposed to this practice over a long period. Since, spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully developed until after 16 years of life.

An investigation by the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Free State compared postural deviation in children who carry heavy school bags against those who don't.

Three hundred eighty students (380) students in the study spent an average of 30 minutes per day carrying their bags. On average a pre-teen school bag weighed 13.1 pounds compared to a teenager's bag which weighed 14.3 pounds.

The study revealed deviation to the side and/or backwards of children's spines when carrying heavy school bags. The study further revealed that children carry their schoolbags on a daily basis and often between classes as well, and it is the constant additional pressure to the spine that cause long-term damage, which also include failure to maintain proper standing posture. Back pains and spinal complications experienced by growing children are significantly connected to backpack loads. Heavy backpack loads can actually result in changes in lumbar disc height or curvature. As such, young kids who get used to carrying heavy backpacks can grow up with bad posture.

Pediatricians and chiropractors have observed that many grade school and high school students are suffering from back pain due to carrying heavy backpacks.

Overloaded backpacks can be a possible source of "chronic, low-level trauma" that can result to chronic shoulder, neck, and back pain in your children.

Health is the most priority for the children. Education is futile if the frail bodies of children are compromised. Pupils are supposed to listen to their teachers in school, and read their textbooks at home. In the end, having pupils carry heavy load to school will be counterproductive, with many of them physically deformed as adults. Heavy load in school could be one reason why so many now suffer from spinal injuries, including slipped discs.

As such, it is the intent of this proposed measure that school administrators, teachers, parents and schoolchildren be made aware of this issue on overweight bags, and to make necessary proactive measures to avoid this unhealthful practice.

By reducing injuries and pain caused by overweight backpacks, we are helping our school children stay healthier and at their best to learn in the classroom.

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



MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator

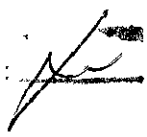
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AN ACT
LIMITING THE AMOUNT OF WEIGHT OF BAGS CARRIED BY CHILDREN
IN SCHOOL AND IMPLEMENTING PROACTIVE MEASURES TO PROTECT
SCHOOLCHILDREN'S HEALTH FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF HEAVY
SCHOOL BAG

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

ARTICLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "**Children's Schoolbag Weight Regulation Act of 2010.**"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policies. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to safeguard the general welfare and interests of children and protect them from elements and conditions that could adversely affect their health, and from other factors that would impinge their capacity to enjoy their precious childhood.

Furthermore, since health and safety is one of the most important priorities for children, the State, through its various entities and agencies, shall undertake concrete measures to achieve the noble intentions of this measure.

SEC. 3. Scope of the Act. - It is the objective of this Act to limit the amount of weight of school bags carried by schoolchildren, both in elementary and secondary levels, in schools, and to implement proactive measures that would prevent overloading of school bags with the end goal of protecting children from the ill effects caused by overweight bags on their health.

ARTICLE II
ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

SEC. 4. Role of Schools. -

A. School Administrators. - It is incumbent for school authorities to implement measures to keep schoolchildren from bringing schoolbags that is overweight. Any bag that weighs more than fifteen percent (15%) of the child's body weight is deemed overweight.

Pertinent on the above, school administrators, shall:

1. Conduct information and education campaign to parents and students to create awareness of the issue.
2. Assess the extent of the problem in the school.
3. Promote home/school cooperation on the issue.
4. Choose appropriate textbooks and other reading materials for the students by taking into account the book's size and weight aside from their teaching and educational value.
5. Review the adequacy of furniture items such as lockers, bookcases and lockers inside the classrooms and make the necessary adjustments.
6. Formulate suitable homework policies which take this issue into account and encourage the development of the pupil's organizational skills to lessen the bulk of school materials which children use to bring in the school.
7. Place weighing scales at conspicuous places inside the school where schoolchildren could check the weight of their bags.

B. Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). – Consistent with the provisions of this Act, Parents and Teachers Associations (PTAs) shall:

1. Assist school administrators in creating awareness of the issue.
2. Help identify the extent of the problem in the school.
3. Initiate projects and activities to promote good studying practices among children that will obviate schoolchildren from bringing all their books and other materials in school, and help facilitate school conferences and meetings in formulating homework policies.
4. Assist school administrators in resource generation in improving school's storage facilities and furniture items.
5. Mobilize parents to help weighing schoolbags to create awareness of the issue.

SEC. 5. Role of the Department of Education (DepEd). – Pursuant to the provisions of this Act, the Department of Education shall:

1. Conduct a nationwide assessment on the issue of overweight schoolbags which children usually bring in the school.
2. Liaise with the various publishers in order to craft and print books that are both textbooks and workbooks at the same time.
3. Regulate textbooks so that book size and weight shall also be put into consideration aside from their teaching and educational value.
4. Draft and issue the appropriate Implementing Rules and Guidelines on how to address the issue.
5. Require the uniform design of school desks that has provisions for book storage underneath its writing table.

SEC. 6. Role of the Department of Health (DOH). – The Department of Health, pursuant to this Act, shall:

1. Assist the Department of Education in the conduct of a nationwide rapid assessment study on the issue concerning overweight schoolbags which children usually bring to the school;
2. Provide printed IEC materials on the issue of overweight schoolbags and disseminate the same to the various schools in the country.

SEC. 7. Role of the Local Government Units (LGUs). – The local government units, through its local Social Welfare and Development Office and the Local School Boards, shall:

1. Assist schools in disseminating related information on the issue.
2. Allocate funds and other resources for the provision of appropriate storage facilities and furniture items to help prevent schoolchildren from bringing all their school books and other school materials to and from school.
3. Organize activities, in coordination with school administrators and PTAs, to develop cooperation among school administrators, teachers and parents on how to deal with the issue effectively.
4. Produce IEC materials on how to educate parents and schoolchildren in choosing the right kind of school bags, the kind of materials schoolbags should be made of, the proper way of backpacking and the avoidance of bringing unnecessary materials in school.

SEC. 8. *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 Education (DepEd) and Department of Health (DOH).

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within ninety (90) days from the date of effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education (DepEd), in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), shall promulgate necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this measure.

SEC. 10. *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. 11. *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. 12. *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,