

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

SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

10 AUG -3 AIG 04

SENATE
S. No. 2299

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Eighty percent (80%) of what children learn is acquired through the visual processing of information.

Visual impairment is one of the ten (10) most common causes of disability in America. In children, visual impairment is associated with developmental delays and the need for special education, vocational, and social services. At least twenty percent (20%) of children with learning disabilities have been found to have prominent visual information processing problems.

This bill aims to provide comprehensive eye examinations for children identified or considered at high risk of vision impairment.*

acr 
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

* This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, First Regular Session.

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1 AN ACT
2 TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE EYE
3 EXAMINATIONS TO CHILDREN

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Children's Vision
5 Improvement and Learning Readiness Act."

6 SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

7 (A) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health;

8 (B) "Comprehensive eye examination" means an assessment of a patient's history,
9 general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual
10 acuity, ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and as appropriate, binocular vision
11 or gross visual fields, performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

12 SECTION 3. *Grants Regarding Comprehensive Eye Examinations for Children.* -

13 (A) *In General.* - The Secretary may make grants to cities and municipalities for the
14 purpose of:

15 (1) Providing comprehensive eye examinations for children identified or
16 considered at high risk of vision impairment, with priority given to school-
17 based programs for children who are under the age of nine (9);

18 (2) Providing subsequent treatment or services necessary to correct vision
19 problems; and

1 (3) Developing and disseminating, to parents, teachers, health care practitioners,
2 and the public, educational materials on recognizing signs of visual
3 impairment in children, and the State's vision improvement initiatives.

4 (B) *Criteria and Coordination.* –

5 (1) *Criteria.* – The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate professional and
6 consumer organizations including individuals with knowledge of age
7 appropriate vision services, shall develop criteria —

8 (a) Governing the operation of the grant program; and

9 (b) For the collection of data related to vision assessment and the
10 utilization of follow up services.

11 (C) *Application.* – A grant may be made under paragraph (A) only if an application for
12 the grant is submitted to the Secretary and the application is in such form, is made in such
13 manner, and contains such information as the Secretary may require, including –

14 (1) Information on existing government-funded children's vision screening
15 programs;

16 (2) A plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used to
17 compliment existing country's efforts;

18 (3) A plan to determine if a grant eligible child has received an age appropriate
19 vision screening; and

20 (4) A description of how funds will be used to provide items or services only as a
21 secondary payer to —

22 (a) Any government compensation program, under an insurance policy, or
23 under any government health benefits program; or

24 (b) By any entity that provides health services on a prepaid basis.

25 (D) *Evaluations.* – A grant may be made under paragraph (A) only if the municipality
26 involved agrees that, not later than one (1) year after the date on which amounts under the grant
27 are first received by the municipality, and annually thereafter while receiving amounts under the

1 grant, the municipality will submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the operations and activities
2 carried out under the grant, including –

- 3 (1) An assessment of the utilization of vision services and the status of children
4 receiving these services as a result of the activities carried out under the grant;
- 5 (2) The collection, analysis, and reporting of children's vision data according to
6 guidelines prescribed by the Secretary; and
- 7 (3) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

8 SECTION 4. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – For the purpose of carrying out this Act,
9 such sums as may be deemed appropriate by the Secretary are hereby authorized to be
10 appropriated from the National Treasury.

11 SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
12 unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
13 valid and subsisting.

14 SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
15 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent
16 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

17 SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
18 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,