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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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SENATE

S. NO. 3037 RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

EXPLANATORY NOTE


Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability. It occurs in all countries, within all socioeconomic classes. In California, the number of children entered into the autism registry increased by 210 percent between 1987 and 1998.

Here in the Philippines, it is estimated that 1 out of every 500 Filipinos are autistic or approximately 176,000 Filipinos of the 88 million total population. In 2007, the Autism Society of Philippines, furthermore, estimated that number of autism incidence in the country has reached 500,000.

With the growing number of autism spectrum disorder cases in the country, individuals affected by the said disorder still remain in the marginalized sectors of the country because of lack of government support. This has prevented their total rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance.

This bill, thus, seeks to create the Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) to advise and make recommendations to the president, legislature, and government agencies on matters relating to autism spectrum disorder. Here, the Commission is mandated to develop a comprehensive nationwide plan for an integrated system of training, treatment, and services for individuals of all ages with ASD.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator

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S. NO. 3037

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AN ACT
CREATING THE PHILIPPINE COMMISSION ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS
AND THE OFFICE OF AUTISM SERVICES

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*Philippine Commission on*
2 *Autism Spectrum Disorders Act.*”

3
4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared policy of the State to protect and
5 promote the right to health, physical, moral, and social well-being of the people. Towards this
6 end, the State shall exert efforts to develop a comprehensive nationwide plan for an integrated
7 system of training, treatment, and services for individuals of all ages with Autism Spectrum
8 Disorder.

9
10 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

11 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder – defined as the standard diagnostic criteria for pervasive
12 developmental disorder, to include autistic disorder; Asperger's syndrome; pervasive
13 developmental disorder, not otherwise specified; childhood disintegrative disorder; and
14 Rett's syndrome.

15 2. Department of Health – herein referred to as the Department.

16
17 **SEC. 4. *Philippine Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders.*** - There is hereby created
18 the “Philippine Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders” under the Department of Health. It

1 shall advise and make recommendations to the president, legislature, and relevant government
2 agencies regarding matters concerning all levels of autism spectrum disorder services, including
3 health care, education, and other adult and adolescent services.

4 The Commission shall meet on at least four occasions annually, including at least two
5 occasions before the end of December of the first year the Commission is fully established. It may
6 hold meetings by telephone or video conference.

7 The Department shall provide technical and administrative support as required by the
8 commission.

9
10 **SEC . 5. *Composition of Members.*** – The Commission shall be composed of nineteen (19)
11 members, consisting of the following:

12 (1) Four members of the legislature, with two members from the Senate and two members
13 from the House of Representatives. The Senate President shall appoint one member from the
14 majority and one member from the minority. Also, the Speaker of the House shall appoint one
15 member from the majority and one member from the minority.

16 (2) The director of the National Center for Mental Health, or his or her designee;

17 (3) The secretary of Health, or his or her designee;

18 (4) The secretary of Education, or his or her designee;

19 (5) The secretary of Social Welfare and Development, or his or her designee;

20 (6) The commissioner of higher education, or his or her designee;

21 (7) An individual employed as a director/principal of special education at a school district
22 located in the country;

23 (8) A speech and language pathologist;

24 (9) A diagnostician;

25 (10) A mental health provider;

26 (11) A primary care physician;

27 (12) Two parents of individuals with autism spectrum disorder, including one parent of an
28 individual under the age of eighteen and one parent of an individual over the age of eighteen;

1 (13) Two individuals with autism spectrum disorder;

2 (14) A representative from an independent private provider or nonprofit provider or
3 organization.

4 The members of the commission, other than the members from the legislature and ex-
5 officio members, shall be appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the senate. The
6 chair of the commission shall be selected by the members of the commission. Of the members first
7 appointed to the commission by the president, half shall serve a term of four years and half shall
8 serve a term of two years, and thereafter, members shall serve a term of four years. Members shall
9 continue to serve until their successor is duly appointed and qualified. Any vacancy on the
10 commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. Members shall serve
11 on the commission without compensation but may be reimbursed for their actual and necessary
12 expenses from moneys appropriated to the department of health.

13 The members of the commission shall consist of a broad representation of Filipino citizens,
14 both urban and rural, who are concerned with the health and quality of life for individuals with
15 autism spectrum disorder.

16

17 **SEC. 6. Duties and Responsibilities.** – The commission shall make recommendations for
18 developing a comprehensive nationwide plan for an integrated system of training, treatment, and
19 services for individuals of all ages with autism spectrum disorder. A year after the approval of this
20 Act, the commission shall issue preliminary findings and recommendations to the legislature.

21 In preparing the national plan, the commission shall specifically perform the following
22 responsibilities and report on them accordingly:

23 (1) Study and report on the means for developing a comprehensive, coordinated system of
24 care delivery across the country to address the increased and increasing presence of autism
25 spectrum disorder and ensure that resources are created, well-utilized, and appropriately spread
26 across the country:

1 (a) Determine the need for the creation of centers for diagnostic excellence in
2 designated sectors of the country, which could provide clinical services, including
3 assessment, diagnoses, and treatment of patients;

4 (b) Plan for effectively evaluating regional service areas throughout the country and
5 their capacity, including outlining personnel and skills that exist within the service area,
6 other capabilities that exist, and resource needs that may be unmet;

7 (c) Assess the need for additional behavioral intervention capabilities and, as
8 necessary, the means for expanding those capabilities in a regional service area;

9 (d) Develop recommendations for expanding these services in conjunction with
10 hospitals after considering the resources that exist in terms of specialty clinics and
11 hospitals, and hospital inpatient care capabilities;

12 (2) Conduct an assessment of the need for coordinated, enhanced and targeted special
13 education capabilities within each region of the country;

14 (3) Develop a recommendation for enlisting appropriate universities and colleges to ensure
15 support and collaboration in developing certification or degree programs for students specializing
16 in autism spectrum disorder intervention. This may include degree programs in education, special
17 education, social work, and psychology; and

18 (4) Other responsibilities may include but not be limited to:

19 (a) Provide recommendations regarding training programs and the content of
20 training programs being developed;

21 (b) Recommend individuals to participate in a committee of major stakeholders
22 charged with developing screening, diagnostic, assessment, and treatment standards;

23 (c) Participate in recommending a panel of qualified professionals and experts to
24 review existing models of evidence-based educational practices for adaptation specific to
25 Filipinos;

26 (d) Examine the barriers to accurate information of the prevalence of individuals
27 with autism spectrum disorder across the country and recommend a process for accurate
28 reporting of demographic data;

1 (e) Explore the need for the creation of interagency councils and evaluation of
2 current councils to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated system of care for all individuals
3 with autism spectrum disorder;

4 (f) Study or explore other developmental delay disorders and genetic conditions
5 known to be associated with autism, including fragile X syndrome; Sotos syndrome;
6 Angelman syndrome; and tuberous sclerosis.

7
8 **SEC. 7. *Appropriation.*** – The amount necessary for the effective implementation
9 of this Act shall be funded out of the appropriations of the Department of Health.
10 Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this
11 Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

12
13 **SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.*** – Any provision or provisions of this Act that may
14 be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other
15 portions or provision hereof as long as such remaining portions can still subsist and be
16 given effect in their entirety.

17
18 **SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, ordinances, rules and regulations, and
19 other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed
20 or modified accordingly.

21
22 **SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from
23 the date of its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,