

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE

S. No. 237

RECEIVED BY: *ja*

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is not uncommon to find school children carrying heavy bags in schools all over the country. Children, hoping to be ready at all times during classroom discussions and other school-related activities, bring all their heavy textbooks and other school supplies to and from school. However, studies have shown that the prolonged practice of overloading of school bags can cause harm to the body. School children are more prone to suffering harm from bag overloading because spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully developed until 16 years of age.

Studies have shown that deviations along the sides and/or down the backs of children's spines are attributable to the carrying of heavy school bags. It is the constant additional pressure on the spine from the daily carrying of overloaded bags that results in a failure to maintain proper posture and further long-term damage, such as chronic neck, shoulder, and back pains, spinal complications, lumbar disc height or curvature, chronic low-level trauma, and the like.

It is the intent of this proposed measure that school administrators, teachers, parents, and schoolchildren be made aware of the dangers in carrying overloaded bags, and to take the necessary proactive measures to avoid this harmful practice.

By reducing injuries, pain, and health complications caused by overloaded backpacks, we are helping our school children remain healthy and at their optimal state to learn inside the classroom.

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

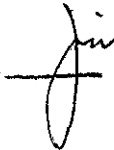
MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator



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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 2013.*"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policies and Scope of the Act. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to safeguard the health and interests of the youth and, pursuant thereto, to protect them from conditions that could adversely affect their health or cause harmful effects to their bodies.

It is the objective of this Act to limit the weight of school bags carried by schoolchildren, both in the elementary and secondary levels, and to implement proactive measures that would prevent overloading of school bags with the end goal of protecting children from any harmful healthful effects resulting from carrying overloaded school bags.

SEC. 3. Maximum Weight of School Bags. - Any bag weighing more than fifteen percent (15%) of a child's body weight is deemed overweight.

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 are overweight.

Pertinent to 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 that children usually bring in the school.
2. Act as a liaison to 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 Regulations 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 school;
2. Provide printed IEC materials on the issue of overweight schoolbags and disseminate the same to schools.

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

- 1 1. Assist schools in disseminating relevant information on the issue.
- 2 2. Allocate funds and other resources for the provision of appropriate storage
- 3 facilities and furniture items to help prevent schoolchildren from bringing
- 4 all their school books and other school materials to and from school.
- 5 3. Organize activities, in coordination with school administrators and PTAs,
- 6 to develop cooperation among school administrators, teachers and
- 7 parents on how to deal with the issue effectively.
- 8 4. Produce IEC materials to educate parents and schoolchildren in choosing
- 9 the right kind of school bags, the kind of materials schoolbags should be
- 10 made of, the proper way of backpacking and the avoidance of bringing
- 11 unnecessary materials in school.
- 12

13 **ARTICLE III**

14 **FINAL PROVISIONS**

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16 **SEC. 8. *Appropriation.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions
17 of this Act shall be included and incorporated in the annual general appropriations of the
18 Department of Education (DepEd) and Department of Health (DOH).

19
20 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).*** - Within ninety (90)
21 days from the date of effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education (DepEd), in
22 consultation with the Department of Health (DOH), shall promulgate the necessary
23 implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this measure.

24
25 **SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
26 regulations, or parts thereof not consistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
27 repealed or modified accordingly.

28
29 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part of this Act is held
30 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions of this Act not affected thereby shall
31 continue to be in full force and effect.

32
33 **SEC. 12. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
34 from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers
35 of general circulation.

Approved,