

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



Senate
Office of the Secretary

13 DEC -3 P2:32

SENATE
S. No. 1995

RECEIVED BY: *ji*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Violence against women has been defined in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women:

“Violence Against Women (VAW) is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

In year 2000, the Department of Social Welfare and Development reported that in the first six months of 2000 there were 4,468 reports of women in “especially difficult circumstances”. Nearly half of the cases are reported to have involved physical abuse, maltreatment and battery while 14 percent reportedly involved sexual abuse.

When crime, drugs, and violence spill over from the streets into the schools, providing a safe learning environment becomes increasingly difficult. Creating such an environment where students can learn depends on a partnership among students, parents, teachers, and other community institutions. School violence can be prevented by taking action to protect students, particularly women students, who can be victims of discrimination and violence.

To help improve safety of women students within educational institutions, it is important that school administrations establish offices that focus on formulating policies and guidelines on how to promote school security and student safety by training school personnel in conflict resolution, problem solving, drug prevention, crisis intervention, cultural sensitivity, classroom management, and counseling skills.

This bill seeks to address violence in educational institutions by mandating the creation of a women’s desk in all such institutions. Its aim shall be to serve women students by protecting them against all forms of violence in a comprehensive and personalized manner which adheres to

the national policies on women's protection. A women's desk will also focus on receiving complains of violence against women and strive to help victims recover.*

ver.
Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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

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SENATE
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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

1 AN ACT
2 INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
3 A WOMEN'S DESK IN ALL INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* -- This Act shall be known as the "Women's Desk Act."

5 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* -- It is the policy of the State to ensure that all
6 women students are protected from all forms of violence. Pursuant to this policy, the State shall
7 mandate the creation of a women's desk in all institutions of higher learning, the aim of which
8 shall be the protection of women against all forms of violence in a comprehensive and
9 personalized manner which adheres to the national policies on women's rights and welfare.

10 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* -- For the purpose of this Act, the term

11 (A) "Women's desk" means an office within an institution of higher learning which
12 focuses on receiving complaints of violence, in any form, against women.

13 (B) "Educational institution" means an institution of higher learning, whether public
14 or private, including state universities with special charters.

15 (C) "Women's desk officer" means any person in charge of managing the women's
16 desk.

17 (D) "Women victims of violence" means women students who are victims of any
18 form of violence, the violence occurring inside or outside the institution of higher learning. This
19 shall also include women employees of the institution.

1 SECTION 4. *Establishment of a Women's Desk in Institutions of Higher Learning;*

2 *Goals.* – A women's desk shall be established in all institutions of higher learning throughout the
3 country.

4 The women's desks shall provide the following services:

5 (A) Support services such as counseling and referrals to other agencies for the
6 provision of other needs such as shelter to the women victims of violence;

7 (B) Coordination with agencies for medical services needed by women victims of
8 violence;

9 (C) Provide basic information on gender sensitivity and violence against women;

10 (D) Development of institutional guidelines to protect women against any form of
11 violence;

12 (E) Provide psychosocial intervention such as individual and group therapy, crisis
13 counseling, and stress management activities;

14 (F) Initiate advocacy efforts such as production of materials for dissemination on
15 issues relevant to abuse of women, personal advocacy for the individual and networking with
16 other concerned agencies; and

17 (G) Conduct research/studies to fully understand the scope of the problem of violence
18 against women.

19 SECTION 5. *Qualifications for Women's Desk Officers.* – Qualifications for women's

20 desk officers shall be formulated by the respective administration in the institution of higher
21 learning, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and
22 the Commission on Higher Education (CHED): *Provided,* that all women's desk officers shall at
23 least be a graduate of any four-year social science course and has basic training in psychology.

24 SECTION 6. *Guidelines for Implementation.* – Within sixty (60) days from the

25 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development and the Commissioners
26 of the Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate and issue the implementing rules and
27 regulations, including the administrative penalties for violations of the provisions of this Act.

1 SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* -- If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
3 valid and subsisting.

4 SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* -- Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
5 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
6 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

7 SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* -- This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,