

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Third Regular Session . )



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

'16 FEB -1 P3:22

SENATE  
S. No. 3202

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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AN ACT  
ESTABLISHING A POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS  
AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15, provides:

The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that develops as a result of a terribly frightening, life-threatening, or otherwise highly unsafe experience. PTSD sufferers reexperience the traumatic event or events in some way; tend to avoid places, people, or other things that remind them of the event; and are especially sensitive to normal life experiences. PTSD has only been recognized as a formal diagnosis since 1980. However, it was called by different names as early as the American Civil War, when combat veterans were referred to as suffering from "soldier's heart." In World War I, symptoms that were generally consistent with this syndrome were referred to as "combat fatigue." PTSD has also been called "battle fatigue" and "shell shock."

Statistics regarding this illness show that about 7%-8% of people in the United States will likely develop PTSD in their lifetime, with the lifetime occurrence in combat veterans and rape victims ranging from 10% to as high as 30%. Somewhat higher rates of this disorder have been found to occur in African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans compared to Caucasians in the United States. Some of that difference is thought to be due to higher rates of dissociation soon before and after the traumatic event,

a tendency for individuals from minority ethnic groups to blame themselves, less social support, and an increased perception of racism for those ethnic groups, as well as differences between how ethnic groups may express distress. In military populations, many of the differences have been found to be the result of increased exposure to combat at younger ages for minority groups.

Almost half of individuals who use outpatient mental-health services have been found to suffer from PTSD. As evidenced by the occurrence of stress in many individuals in the United States in the days following the 2001 terrorist attacks, not being physically present at a traumatic event does not guarantee that one cannot suffer from traumatic stress that can lead to the development of PTSD.

PTSD statistics in children and teens reveal that up to more than 40% have endured at least one traumatic event, resulting in the development of PTSD in up to 15% of girls and 6% of boys. On average, 3%-6% of high school students in the United States and as many as 30%-60% of children who have survived specific disasters have PTSD. Up to 100% of children who have seen a parent killed or endured sexual assault or abuse tend to develop PTSD, and more than one-third of youths who are exposed to community violence (for example, a shooting, stabbing, or other assault) will suffer from the disorder.

In the Philippines, during the aftermath of the devastation brought by Typhoons Ondoy and Sendong, a large number of adults and children affected by these natural disasters were found to be suffering from PTSD. As such, psychiatrists, psychologists, and special education teachers were dispatched by the government and volunteer groups to the affected areas to minister to adults and children suffering from PTSD.

Unfortunately, public awareness on the causes, symptoms, and cure of PTSD remains low in this country. A PTSD awareness and prevention health program is

especially crucial given the recent tide of natural and man-made disasters affecting large populations of people in this country.

This bill seeks to find ways to help victims cope with the detrimental effects of post traumatic stress disorder. By knowing the causes of this disorder and providing awareness and prevention programs, those suffering from PTSD can be reintegrated into mainstream society.<sup>1</sup>

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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<sup>1</sup> This bill was originally filed during the Fifteenth Congress, Second Regular Session.

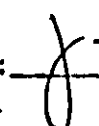
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*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Post Traumatic Stress  
2 Disorder Awareness and Education Act.”

3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and  
4 promote the right to health of the people and instil health consciousness among them. It is  
5 also the policy of the State to promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual,  
6 intellectual, and social well-being of the youth recognizing their vital role in nation-  
7 building.

8 SECTION 3. *Definition.* – As used in this Act, the term “Post Traumatic Stress  
9 Disorder” (PTSD) refers to an emotional illness that that is classified as an anxiety  
10 disorder and that usually develops as a result of a terribly frightening, life-threatening, or  
11 otherwise highly unsafe experience.

12 SECTION 4. *Innovative Assistance for the Identification, Training, and*  
13 *Educational Awareness of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.* – The Department of Health  
14 shall craft programs to improve the identification of patients with PTSD, increase  
15 awareness of such disorders with the public, and train educators (such as teachers, nurses,

1 social workers, coaches, counselors, and school administrators) on effective PTSD  
2 assistance methods.

3       **SECTION 5. *Public Service Announcements.*** – The Secretary of Education, in  
4 consultation with the Secretary of Health, shall carry out a program to develop, distribute,  
5 and promote the broadcasting of public service announcements to improve public  
6 awareness, and to promote the identification and prevention of PTSD.

7       **SECTION 6. *PTSD Research and Report.*** – Not later than 18 months after the date  
8 of the enactment of this Act, the Department of Health shall conduct a study on the  
9 impact PTSD has on educational advancement and achievement. The study shall –

10       (A) determine the prevalence of PTSD among the population and the morbidity  
11 and mortality rates associated with PTSD;

12       (B) report on current national and local programs to educate the public about the  
13 dangers of PTSD, as well as evaluate the value of such programs; and

14       (C) make recommendations on measures that could be undertaken by the  
15 Congress, the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary of Health, to strengthen PTSD  
16 awareness programs.

17       **SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or  
18 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other  
19 provisions hereof.

20       **SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or  
21 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby  
22 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

1 SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after  
2 its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

/s/17Dec2015