



SENATE

*19 NOV 27 P3:32

S. No. 1204

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Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

AN ACT

**UPHOLDING AND PROMOTING CAMPUS JOURNALISM AND CAMPUS PRESS
FREEDOM, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7079,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND
PROMOTION OF CAMPUS JOURNALISM, PENALIZING VIOLATIONS
AGAINST CAMPUS PRESS FREEDOM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the Philippines, freedom of the press is tantamount to the right to self-expression of every Filipino. This gave birth to Republic Act 7079, otherwise known as the Campus Journalism Act of 1991. But long before the law has been passed, the Education Bureau has already been conducting the National Schools Press Conference (NSPC), one of the highest academic competitions in the country which aims to test the communication skills of Filipino campus journalists. Based on records, the first NSPC was held in 1920, making next year the centennial anniversary of Campus Journalism in the Philippines.

With its focus on oral and written communication skills coupled by the principles of truth, fairness and patriotism, Campus Journalism is an integral key in nation-building. The campus press is the concrete manifestation of the students' democratic rights and a tangible expression of press freedom in the campus. The campus press brought about some prominent and notable figures in Philippine politics, media, art, literature who have, in one way or another, have contributed significantly to their

respective fields. The campus press instilled in many of them the higher for truth and social change that served as the first stirrings of their nationalist consciousness.

This proposed measure seeks to repeal RA 7079 and bring to fore a new Campus Journalism Act that promotes Campus Journalism and upholds campus press freedom. This bill seeks to protect student journalists and promote their welfare while pushing forward the interests of their fellow students and other various issues that concerns them.

it is time for us to also build a nation of journalists to fully maximize the ability and ubiquity of our future leaders. In view of the foregoing, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This act shall be known as the “*Campus Press Freedom*
2 *Act.*”

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is declared policy of the State to promote the
4 development and growth of campus journalism as a means of encouraging critical and
5 creative thinking and as a beacon of nationalism and democracy inside and outside
6 the nation’s campuses.

7
8 The State also firmly recognizes the historic role and contribution of the campus
9 press to press freedom in the country, in providing a free and adequate venue for the
10 discussion of student concerns, and in upholding social consciousness and defending
11 the interest and welfare of the Filipino people by tackling both national and sectoral
12 issues in its pages. The State realizes that the campus press, as part of the media, is
13 an important institution in society that promotes and protects this constitutionally-
14 afforded right of press freedom.

15

1 The State thus resolves to undertake various programs and projects aimed at
2 improving the journalistic skills of students concerned, promote responsible and free
3 journalism, re-open all closed student publications, establish student publications ins
4 schools where there are none, and protect and uphold freedom of the press at the
5 campus level and the rights of campus journalists at all times.

6
7 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following are hereby
8 defined as follows:

- 9
10 (a) *School* – an institution for learning in the elementary, secondary or tertiary
11 level composed of the studentry, administration, faculty and non-faculty
12 personnel;
13 (b) *Student* – any person enrolled in elementary, secondary, tertiary, graduate
14 and post graduate levels, including those enrolled in vocational and
15 technical education;
16 (c) *Student Publication* – the issue of any printed and/or online material such
17 as, but not limited to, newspapers, wall news, literary folios, newsletters
18 and other similar forms, independently published by, and which meets the
19 needs and interests of, the students;
20 (d) *Student journalist* – any bona-fide student enrolled for the current semester
21 of term, who has passed or met the qualifications and standards of the
22 editorial board;
23 (e) *Editorial board* – shall be composed of student journalists who have qualified
24 in placement examinations and shall be primarily in-charge of setting the
25 tone of the paper in accordance to the thrust of the publication. The editorial
26 board may include a publication adviser at the option of its members;
27 (f) *Editorial policies* – a set of guidelines by which a student publication is
28 operated and managed, taking into account pertinent laws as well as the
29 school administration’s reasonable policies. The said guidelines, which shall
30 be created and determined by the editorial board, shall determine the
31 frequency of the publication, the manner of selecting articles and features
32 and other similar matters; and

1 (g) *Editor-in-Chief* – shall be the publication’s primary editor chosen through a
2 competitive but fair selection process. The process of selecting the editor-
3 in-chief shall be determined by the student body.
4

5 Sec. 4. *Student Publication* – All educational institutions on the elementary,
6 secondary and tertiary levels, public or private shall be mandated to establish a
7 student publication. Every school have at least one (1) student publication without
8 prejudice to other publications established within the campus. A student publication
9 shall be published by the student bod through an editorial board and publication staff
10 composed of students selected through fair and competitive examinations.
11

12 All student publications whose operations ceased upon the directives of the
13 school administration shall be revived and allowed to operate again.
14

15 Sec. 5. *Operations* – The school administration shall provide the student
16 publication with an office preferably located at the school’s student center and other
17 materials and equipment necessary for its operations.
18

19 Sec. 6. *Independence* – The student publication shall be autonomous from any
20 administrative intervention with regard to the handling of its funds, the content of the
21 articles the editorial board chooses to publish, the selection of its publication staff and
22 members of the editorial board.
23

24 The operations of the student publications shall not be delayed, suspended or
25 closed down in connection with the articles it has published, or on basis of the conduct
26 or performance of its staff without due process/
27

28 Sec. 7. *Special Program For Campus Journalism*. – The Commission on Higher
29 Education, Department of Education or the Technical Education and Skills
30 Development Authority, as the case may be, is hereby mandated to implement a
31 Special Program for Campus Journalism in close coordination with existing campus
32 journalists and publication staff.

1 Sec. 8. *Funding of Student Publications* – Funding for the student publication
2 shall be sourced primarily from the student publication fees collected by the school
3 administration. It shall be mandatory for the school administration to collect student
4 publication/subscription fees during the enrolment period. The members of the
5 student publication can opt to collect the publication funds themselves upon their
6 initiative and under their full discretion and without administrative intervention.
7 Secondary sources of publication funds shall also include the savings of the respective
8 school's appropriations.

9 For this purpose, the number of bona fide students enrolled for the current
10 semester or term shall be used as basis for the amount of publication funds that shall
11 be released by the school administrator who shall issue a list of the students enrolled
12 for the current semester or term to the editorial board.

13
14 Sec. 9. *Transmittal of Funds* – The school administration shall effect the
15 automatic release of the student subscription fees to the student publication within
16 fifteen (15) days after the last day of enrolment. The publication funds shall be
17 deposited through a trust fund or in the account of the student publication in an
18 authorized depository bank.

19 In no instance shall the Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education
20 and Skills Development Authority, and the Department of Education, as the case may
21 be, or the school administration concerned withhold the release of funds intended for
22 the student publication.

23
24 Sec. 10. *Publication Adviser* – The editorial board shall have the discretion
25 whether or not they would appoint a faculty adviser. In case the student publication
26 decides to appoint a faculty adviser, the editorial board shall have the power to choose
27 its faculty adviser, whose functions shall be limited merely to technical assistance.
28 Technical assistance of the faculty adviser shall mean any concern related to the
29 grammatical concerns, proofreading and the like.

30
31 Sec. 11. *Security of Tenure* – A member of the publication staff shall maintain
32 his or her status as student in order to retain membership in the publication staff. The

1 student journalist shall not be suspended, expelled or punished with administrative
2 sanctions solely on the basis of the articles he or she has written except when such
3 articles constitute a violation of law, and the school's valid and reasonable schools and
4 regulations.

5 His or her performance as a student should not be used as basis for his or her
6 dismissal from the student publication.

7
8 *Sec. 12. Press Conferences and Training Seminars* – The Commission on Higher
9 Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the
10 Department of Education, in partnership with media and campus press organizations
11 and alliances, shall sponsor periodic competitions, press conferences and training
12 seminars in which student editors/writers and teacher-adviser of student publications
13 in the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels shall participate. Such competitions,
14 conferences and seminars shall be held at the institutional, divisional, and regional
15 levels, culminating with the holding of the annual national elementary, secondary or
16 tertiary School Press Conference in places of historical and/or cultural interest in the
17 country.

18
19 *Sec. 13. Powers and Functions of the Editorial Board* – The Editorial Board shall
20 have the power to select the staff members of the publication granted that the student
21 journalists the board selected were able to pass a qualifying examination.

22
23 The editorial board shall also be primarily accountable with regard the operation
24 of the student publication and the management of its funds. At the end of each
25 semester or term, as the case may be, the editorial board shall prepare a report on
26 the disbursement of funds subject to accounting and auditing rules. Such report shall
27 be posted at the school's bulletin board or published in the school publication.

28
29 *Sec. 14. Printing of the Student Publication* – The printing of the student
30 publication shall be conducted by the editorial board and the student publication staff
31 through canvass or public bidding. For public schools, the student publication shall be
32 exempted from undergoing formal and bidding process under Republic Act No. 9184

1 also known as the Procurement Reform Act with regard the selection of a printing
2 press and the purchase of equipment and material necessary for its operations. The
3 editorial board shall freely choose the printing press it wants to avail the services of.
4

5 Sec. 15. *Power to Investigate* – The Commission on Higher Education, the
6 Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the Department of
7 Education, as the case may be, shall be granted the power to investigate any violation
8 of this act and its implementing rules and regulations.
9

10 Sec. 16. *Administrative Sanctions* – The Commission on Higher Education, the
11 Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the Department of
12 Education, as the case may be shall impose administrative sanctions for campus press
13 freedom violations, including, but not limited to, interrogation and intimidation of
14 editors and staff members and other forms of harassment by the school
15 administration, faculty members and the military, such as, but not limited to, sending
16 of death threats, filing of libel cases against student journalists, issuance of derogatory
17 and libellous public statements against student journalist; meddling of school
18 administrators with editorial policies; actual censorship of editorial content;
19 withholding and non-collection of publication fees; expulsion and suspension of
20 student editors and writers without due process; stopping or suspending the
21 operations of the school publication such as, but not limited to, the outright closure of
22 the publication, locking of the publication office, cutting the electricity and water
23 supplies and other utilities of the office; non-establishment of at least one (1) campus
24 publication for every school; refusal to reopen closed student publications.
25

26 Sec. 17. *Legal Assistance to Campus Journalists* – The Commission on Higher
27 Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the
28 Department of Education, as the case may be, shall provide legal assistance to student
29 journalists in all cases as herein cited.
30

31 Sec. 18. *Reportorial Requirements* – The Commission on Higher Education, the
32 Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the Department of

1 Education shall submit an annual report to both house of Congress on the status of
2 the implementation of the law including violations thereof and the disposition of
3 pertinent cases.
4

5 Sec. 19. *Penalties* – Any person who shall wilfully interfere with, restrain or
6 coerce any student publication/student journalist in the exercise of its/his/her
7 functions and rights guaranteed by this act or who shall in any other manner commit
8 any act to defeat any provision of this Act shall, upon conviction, be punished by a
9 fine of not less than P100,000.00 but not more than P200,000 or imprisonment of not
10 less than one (1) year but not more than five (5) years, or both at the discretion of
11 the court or both upon conviction.

12 If the offender is an educational institution or a juridical person, the penalty
13 shall be imposed upon the president treasurer or secretary or any officer responsible
14 for the violation.
15

16 Sec. 20. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. – The Commission on Higher
17 Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority and the
18 Department of Education, and in close consultation and coordination with student and
19 campus press organizations and other concerned sectors, shall promulgate within
20 thirty (30) days upon its approval, the rules and regulations necessary for the
21 implementations of this Act.
22

23 Sec. 21. *Separability Clause*. If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
24 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
25 remain valid and subsisting.
26

27 Sec. 22. *Repealing Clause*. – Republic Act No. 7079, entitled AN ACT
28 PROVIDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF CAMPUS JOURNALISM is
29 hereby repealed.
30

1 All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive orders, letter of
2 instructions, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with
3 the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.
4

5 Sec. 23. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
6 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.