

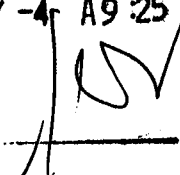
EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

SENATE
S. No. 1457

20 MAY -4 A9:25

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

AN ACT
AUTHORIZING THE DEFERMENT OF THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR IN
TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND CALAMITIES, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7977 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The country is continuously waging war against the COVID-19 pandemic which has claimed lives of more than 500 Filipinos already. Through the implementation of the extended enhanced community quarantine and the improvement of our testing and containment capabilities, the country hopes to control the contagion immediately to allow the society to function once again and give the Filipinos a sense of normalcy as soon as possible.

In a study by the Philippines Institute for Development Studies entitled "Projected Disease Transmission, Health System Requirements, and Macro-economic Impacts of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the Philippines", it revealed that with moderately aggressive efforts of implementing the enhanced community quarantine coupled with better testing, the pandemic in the country would peak on October of 2020 with 5.2 million cases and in the best case scenario that the country with better testing and turnaround time, is able to isolate 70% of symptomatic cases, the significantly lower peak of 900,000 cases would still be on June 2021.

There really still no certainty as to when the country will be able to effectively control this contagion and this will certainly put students at risk of contracting the disease as they attend and congregate in schools in the usual opening of classes in June of 2020.

To prevent this from happening, the Inter Agency Task Force against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has recommended that the opening of classes for school year 2020-2021 should be moved to late September of 2020 which was supported by President Rodrigo Duterte. It would be more prudent to defer the start of classes in order to afford the government and the schools more time to effectively implement safety measures to secure the health of the students attending their classes and to devise possible online learning programs and other non-face-to-face learning systems to enable the students to learn outside the school premises.

However, the law on the matter, Republic Act No. 7977, does not allow for such safety measure as it provides that the start of the school year should not be later than the last day of August. Hence, there is a need to amend the law.

This bill, therefore, seeks to authorize the Secretary of the Department of Education to defer the opening of classes and the start of the school year, in his discretion, to a date later than the last day of August in times of emergencies and calamities prior to the start of a school year.

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



FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
Congress assembled:*

- 1 Section 1. *Amendment* – Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7977, is hereby
2 amended to read as follows:
3 "SEC. 3. Start of the School Year. – The school year shall start on the first
4 Monday of June but not later than the last day of August. **PROVIDED, THAT**
5 **IN TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND CALAMITIES, THE SECRETARY OF**
6 **THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS**
7 **"SECRETARY", MAY DEFER THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR TO A**
8 **DATE LATER THAN THE LAST DAY OF AUGUST. THE SECRETARY MAY**
9 **ALSO DEFER THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR ONLY FOR**
10 **PARTICULAR REGIONS OR SCHOOLS IF THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IS**
11 **NOT AFFECTED BY THE EMERGENCY OR CALAMITY NECESSITATING**
12 **THE DEFERMENT.**
13

1 In the implementation of this Act, the Secretary ~~OF EDUCATION, CULTURE~~
2 ~~AND SPORTS~~ shall determine the end of the regular school year, taking into
3 consideration the Christmas and summer vacations, and the peculiar
4 circumstances of each region.

5
6 In the exercise of this authority, the Secretary ~~OF EDUCATION, CULTURE~~
7 ~~AND SPORTS~~ may authorize the holding of Saturday classes for elementary
8 and secondary levels for public and private schools.”

9
10 Sec. 2. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared
11 unconstitutional or invalid, other sections or parts thereof not affected thereby shall
12 remain in full force and effect.

13 Sec. 3. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
14 regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
15 repealed or modified accordingly.

16 Sec. 4. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
17 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least one (1) newspaper of
18 general circulation.

Approved,