

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
First Regular Session

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Senate  
Office of the Secretary

SENATE

S. B. NO. 1464

20 MAY -4 11:41

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

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**AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7743, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
CONGRESSIONAL, CITY, AND MUNICIPAL LIBRARIES AND  
BARANGAY READING CENTERS THROUGHOUT THE  
PHILIPPINES," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Republic Act No. 7743 was enacted more than two decades and a half ago, "to promote the moral and intellectual well-being of the people: elevate the literacy level of every Filipino to the end that illiteracy is eradicated by the end of the century; and recognize the vital role of knowledge and information in nation-building by establishing public libraries in every congressional district, city and municipality, and reading centers in every barangay throughout the Philippines."

Unfortunately, two and a half decades later and amidst rapid technological advances, the Philippines is even further behind in promoting literacy and e-literacy, especially in terms of adapting to, and adopting, new technologies towards the promotion of literacy. In fact, while it has already been recognized globally that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is essential to improving literacies,<sup>1</sup> our institutions remain to be suspended in time with antiquated materials, equipment and facilities. This, on top of the fact that the noble objectives of Republic Act No. 7743 remain to be fully realized, make the situation worse in terms of promoting the intellectual and well-being of the people thru the provision of libraries and reading centers nationwide.

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<sup>1</sup> A Global measure of digital and ICT literacy skills. Australian Council for Educational Research (2016). Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245577> (date last accessed: May 1, 2020).

For example, the results of the 2018 Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) paint a dismal picture on the state of education and over-all literacy of students in the country. Specifically, out of 79 countries assessed, the Philippines was the lowest in terms of Reading Literacy (79<sup>th</sup>), and second from the bottom for Mathematics and Science Literacy (78<sup>th</sup>), ahead only of the Dominican Republic.

	Reading Literacy	Mathematics Literacy	Science Literacy
Ranking <i>(out of 79 countries)</i>	79 <sup>th</sup>	78 <sup>th</sup>	78 <sup>th</sup>
PH Average Score	340	353	357
OECD Average Score	487	489	489

Meanwhile, the results of pretests administered by the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) between July and August 2019 showed that 70,000 Bicol pupils cannot read.<sup>2</sup>

These are just some of the situations that highlight the need to improve our library and reading center systems to pave the way for the adoption and use of new technologies that would further promote literacy among our citizens. Thus, the early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA** *CLP*

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<sup>2</sup> 2020, February 17. 70,000 Bicol pupils can't read – DepEd. Inquirer. Available at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1229537/70000-bicol-pupils-cant-read-deped> (date last accessed: May 1, 2020).

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PHILIPPINES," AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 2 of Republic Act No. 7743, otherwise known as "An Act  
2 Providing for the Establishment of Congressional, City, and Municipal Libraries and  
3 Barangay Reading Centers Throughout the Philippines," is hereby amended to read  
4 as follows:  
5

6 "Sec. 2. Establishment of Public Libraries and Reading Centers. – The  
7 National Library in coordination with the Department of the Interior and  
8 Local Government (DILG) AND ASSISTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
9 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (DICT),  
10 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED), AND THE COMMISSION  
11 ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED) shall undertake the establishment of  
12 additional public libraries to serve all congressional districts, cities and  
13 municipalities in the Philippines and reading centers in every barangay  
14 except in cities or municipalities where there are existing public libraries  
15 or in barangays where there are already existing public libraries or  
16 reading centers: Provided, That the establishment of such libraries and  
17 reading centers shall be based on the development program of the  
18 National Library, in coordination with the development council of each  
19 city or municipality and in the case of the barangay reading centers, in  
20 coordination with the respective barangay councils; PROVIDED, THAT  
21 THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY  
22 SHALL BE BASED ON THE LATEST COMPUTER AND ELECTRONIC

1 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGIES: Provided, further, That where these public  
2 libraries and reading centers already exist, the National Library shall  
3 continue to upgrade the facilities thereof WITH COMPLETE STANDARD  
4 SETS OF BOOKS, E-BOOKS, ONLINE RESEARCH RESOURCES  
5 AND OTHER MATERIALS, AS WELL AS THE LATEST ELECTRONIC  
6 LIBRARY SYSTEM USING COMPUTERS FOR STORING,  
7 CATALOGING, AND FILING OF DATA AND MATERIALS: PROVIDED,  
8 FINALLY, THAT BY 2022, ALL THE CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES OF  
9 THE PHILIPPINES SHALL HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH  
10 ELECTRONICALLY-OPERATED LIBRARY SYSTEMS.

11  
12 The National library shall continue to coordinate and organize seminars,  
13 workshops and other trainings for the professional benefit of librarians.”  
14

15 **SEC. 2. Role of the Department of Information and Communications Technology**  
16 **(DICT).** – The DICT shall assist the National Library and the DILG in the provision of  
17 cutting-edge computer and electronic library technologies, as well as fast and reliable  
18 internet connections.  
19

20 **SEC. 3. Role of Education Agencies.** – The Department of Education (DepEd) and  
21 the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall assist the National Library and the  
22 DILG in the selection of standard print and non-print library materials.  
23

24 **SEC. 4. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this  
25 Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its  
26 enactment into law, and every year thereafter, to ensure all cities and municipalities in  
27 the Philippines are provided and have access to full electronic library facilities and the  
28 latest library technologies and content and the same are upgraded periodically.  
29

30 The local government units shall continue to undertake the maintenance of public  
31 libraries and reading centers while the National Library shall continue to provide  
32 reading materials and supplies to the said libraries and reading centers.  
33

34 **SEC. 5. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is subsequently  
35 declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected  
36 thereby shall remain in full force and effect.  
37

38 **SEC. 6. Repealing Clause.** – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive  
39 orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof  
40 which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby  
41 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.  
42

43 **SEC. 7. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in  
44 the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.  
45

46 **Approved,**