

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

6 JAN 19 P3:53

SENATE
S.B. No. **2194**

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article XIV, Section 1, provides:

The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

Despite the importance of education, not everyone is fortunate enough to enroll in a school of higher learning, nor complete a degree program.

Health and population statistics show that many students become mothers while still in their teens or early adulthood. In 2002, a study conducted by the Young Adult Fertility Study of the University of the Philippines disclosed that:

- 1 of 3 or 33% of young women aged 20 to 24 have already given birth to their first child before reaching their 21st birthday;
- Only 19% of the youth who are sexually active use contraception.

Likewise, the Population Commission in 2004 found that:

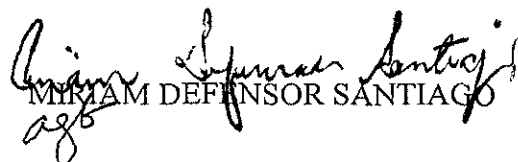
- 10% of all births in the Philippines occur to teenage mothers aged 15 to 29;
- 4 out of 10 abortion complications treated in hospitals occur among young girls.

Childbearing women must overcome physical, financial, and emotional trials, which ordinary students do not experience. Although raising a child must not be the young mother's burden alone, some young fathers refuse to assume the responsibility for their unborn child, leaving the unwed mother to grapple with the difficulties of single parenthood. Thus, some of them are forced to drop out of school temporarily or even permanently. Should this pregnant student quit school, she will be faced with even more difficult challenges: rearing a child by herself and finding a decent job. Fear of these consequences is the primary reason for resorting to abortion.

Those students who do continue with their pregnancy and schooling must overcome the challenges of first time motherhood. The state has a stake in protecting the welfare, health, and safety of this young mother and her child. The Constitution itself, declares that it is a policy of the state to equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. Hence, the state must provide adequate support to mothers, during and immediately after their pregnancy, for these are the times when they are most vulnerable.

This bill seeks to establish a pilot program to provide grants to encourage eligible institutions of higher education to establish and operate pregnant and parenting student services offices for pregnant students, parenting students, and prospective parenting students who are anticipating a birth. The program envisions a young mother's academic community to be supportive of her condition rather than penalize her for her pregnancy. The state must institutionalize a means by which the right of such young women to education can be fulfilled.


Indeed, an educated citizenry creates a formidable resource for nation-building; the physical, intellectual and emotional well-being of this resource must be protected so as to ensure our country's genuine development.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE GRANTS ENCOURAGING
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH AND OPERATE
PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENT SERVICES OFFICES

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

SECTION 1. *Short title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act of 2006".

SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act:

(A) Eligible higher education institution - refers to a public higher education institution that has established and operates, or agrees to establish and operate upon the receipt of a grant under this Act, a pregnant and parenting student services office described in Section 5.

(B) Parent - refers to a parent or legal guardian of a minor.

(C) Secretary - refers to the Secretary of the Department of Education.

SECTION. 3. *Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Pilot Program.* - The Secretary shall establish a pilot program to award grants to eligible institutions of higher education to enable eligible institutions of higher education to establish (or maintain) and operate pregnant and parenting student services offices in accordance with section 5.

SECTION. 4. *Application; Number Of Grants.*-

(A) Application - An eligible institution of higher education that desires to receive a grant under this Act shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(B) Requests for Additional Information - The Secretary may require an eligible institution submitting an application under subsection (A) to provide additional information if the Secretary determines such information is necessary to process the application.

(C) Number of Grants - The Secretary shall award grants under this Act to not more than 200 eligible institutions of higher education, situated in the various regions, commensurate to the distribution of institutions per region.

SECTION 5. *Use of Funds.* -

(A) In General- An eligible institution of higher education which receives a grant under this Act shall use grant funds to establish or maintain and operate a pregnant and parenting student services office, located in the campus of the eligible institution, which carries out the following programs and activities:

(1) Hosts an initial pregnancy and parenting resource forum--

(a) to assess available pregnancy and parenting resources located on the campus or within the local community; and

(b) to set goals for--

(i) improved services for pregnant, parenting, and prospective parenting students; and

(ii) improved access to such services.

(2) Annually assesses the performance of the eligible institution and the office in meeting the following needs of students enrolled in the eligible institution who are pregnant or are parents:

(a) Student health care that includes maternity coverage and makes available coverage for additional family members;

(b) Family housing;

(c) Child care;

(d) Flexible or alternative academic scheduling, such as telecommuting programs;

(e) Education concerning responsible parenting for mothers and fathers, and education supporting healthy marriages;

(f) Resources for pregnant women and children, such as maternity and baby clothing, baby food (including formula), and baby furniture;

(g) Post-partum counseling and support groups.

(3) Identifies public and private service providers, located on the campus of the eligible institution or within the local community, that are qualified to meet the needs described in paragraph (2), and establishes programs with qualified providers to meet such needs.

(4) Assists pregnant and parenting students in locating and obtaining services that meet the needs described in paragraph (2).

(5) If appropriate, provides referrals for prenatal care and delivery, infant or foster care, or adoption, to a student who requests such information. An office shall make such referrals only to service providers that primarily serve the following types of individuals:

(a) Parents.

(b) Prospective parents awaiting adoption.

(c) Women who are pregnant and plan on parenting or placing the child for adoption.

(d) Parenting or prospective parenting couples who are married or who plan on marrying in order to provide a supportive environment for each other and their child.

(B) Expanded Services- In carrying out the programs and activities described in subsection (A), an eligible institution of higher education receiving a grant under this Act may choose to provide access to such programs and activities to a pregnant or parenting employee of the eligible institution.

SECTION. 6. *Reporting.*

(A) Annual Report by Institutions-

(1) In General – For each fiscal year that an eligible institution of higher education receives a grant under this Act, the eligible institution shall prepare and submit to the Secretary, by the date determined by the Secretary, a report that--

(a) itemizes the pregnant and parenting student services office's expenditures for the fiscal year;

(b) contains a review and evaluation of the performance of the office in fulfilling the requirements of this Act, using the specific performance criteria or standards established under paragraph (2); and

(c) describes the achievement of the office in meeting the needs listed in section 5(A)(2) of the students served by the eligible institution, and the frequency of use of the office by such students.

(2) Performance Criteria - Not later than 180 days before the date the annual report described in paragraph (1) is submitted, the Secretary--

(a) shall identify the specific performance criteria or standards that shall be used to prepare the report; and

(b) may establish the form or format of the report.

(3) Additional Information – After reviewing an annual report of an eligible institution of higher education, the Secretary may require that the eligible institution provide additional information if the Secretary determines that such additional information is necessary to evaluate the pilot program.

(B) Report by Secretary - The Secretary shall annually prepare and submit a report on the findings of the pilot program under this Act, including the number of eligible institutions of higher education that were awarded grants and the number of

students served by each pregnant and parenting services office receiving funds under this Act, to the appropriate committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

SECTION. 7. *Appropriations.* - To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of *Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Pilot Program* shall be included in the annual appropriations of the Department of Education.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part thereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,