

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

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SENATE

Senate Bill No. 619



INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The predicament of a the differently-abled in terms of fitting into a society all too often preoccupied with personal matters has been brought to our attention only recently.

As the Fifteenth Congress begins its legislative task, there is a great need to push for more programs and policies for the differently-abled in order to integrate this important sector into the social, political, economic and cultural mainstream of our society.

This bill aims to provide free education for the differently-abled during their formative years. It is vital that the government takes the lead in providing this service for free because the impoverished certainly do not have the means to pay for the specialized education of these children.

By orienting these children at an early age, they shall learn to overcome their "handicap" and thus consider themselves as no different and certainly no less capable than any other member of the society.

The immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.



JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

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10 JUL - 7 2012

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FREE AND SUITABLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to make appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. It shall promote non-formal, informal, indigenous and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to the needs of the community, and of the disabled and the handicapped. Towards this end, the State shall provide free a suitable public education for differently-abled children under a special education program with the end in view of ensuring their survival and advancement and making them productive partners for national development.

SEC. 2. It shall be the purposes of this Act to:

- a) Establish a special education program that shall cater to the needs of the differently-abled and the mentally and physically handicapped children;
- b) Provide full financial and educational assistance to differently-abled children of the country.
- c) Help in the development and rehabilitation of differently-abled children through said special education program.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a) a differently-abled child is one who has not yet reached the age of eighteen (18)
- b) a suitable public education refers to a course, profession, skill or program prescribed by the Department of Education to a differently-abled child taking into consideration the child's aptitude handicap and talents.

SEC. 4. A special education center shall, whenever possible, be established in the provincial, city and municipal levels for this purpose. Said special education center shall, as much as possible provide for elementary levels of education with maximum opportunities for integration with non-handicapped peers.

SEC. 5. The benefits that will be given to qualified differently-abled child shall include tuition fees, textbook allowance, and ambulatory equipment or devices as may be necessary. Special services such as note-takers and readers for the blind, sign interpreters for the deaf and tutorial instruction shall also be offered.

SEC. 6. A Special Education Development Fund is hereby established with an initial capital of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) to be taken from the appropriations for the Department of Education under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its continued operations and maintenance shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. The Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, which are contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, and modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act shall be held to be unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in English or Filipino in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes first.

Approved,