



Implementation *Bulletin*



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RA 11313: SAFE SPACES ACT

This law penalizes gender-based sexual harassment committed in streets and public places (including online). These include catcalling, wolf-whistling, unwanted invitations, slurs (misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and sexist in nature), persistent and uninvited comments or gestures on a person's appearance, relentless requests for personal details, statement of sexual comments and suggestions, public masturbation or flashing of private parts, groping, or any other verbal or physical advances that threaten one's sense of personal space and physical safety. Local government units (LGUs) are primarily responsible for enforcing this law. It requires LGUs to pass an ordinance to localize this law, disseminate or display copies of the law, impose fines, and create an anti-sexual harassment hotline, among others. Meanwhile, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Information and Communications Technology are mandated to oversee the implementation of this act.

The implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this law were signed on October 28, 2019.

Atty. Kristine Rosary E. Yuzon-Chavez, PCW Executive Director, informed the Senate of the following milestones in the implementation of this law:

Crafting the IRR

The IRR was crafted by a technical drafting committee composed of PCW, Commission on Higher Education, Commission on Human Rights, Department of Health, Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Land Transportation Office, Metro Manila Development Authority, Philippine National Police, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Democratic Socialist Women of the Philippines, Sentro ng Alternatibong Lingap



The IRR signing ceremony was held on October 28, 2019 in Quezon City (PCW Photo)



The 18-day campaign to end violence against women (VAW) is an advocacy campaign spearheaded by PCW.

Panlegal, and Women's Legal and Human Rights Bureau. The IRR was approved after 14 meetings and regional consultations in Baguio, Cebu, Davao, Pampanga, Masbate and Metro Manila organized in partnership with Plan International Philippines.

In a press release on the signing of the IRR, PCW noted that the Safe Spaces Act "is an attempt to eradicate gender-based harassment, enclosed under the umbrella of Violence Against Women (VAW), because figures show that, despite the existing laws protecting *Juanas*, VAW still persists, a manifestation of gender inequality."¹

Awareness campaign

Atty. Yuzon-Chavez reported that in January 2020, PCW collaborated with civil society and non-government organizations on the production and dissemination of information, communication, and educational material to create awareness of the law. While PCW and its partners agreed to produce the material, the pandemic forced them to revisit their action plans and timelines.

Coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)

PCW coordinated with CHED to facilitate the amendment of existing sexual harassment policies in line with RA 11313. CHED has created a technical working group to study the matter.

Implementation at the local level

The agency is working with DILG to develop a joint policy to facilitate the localization of the law's provisions at the provincial, city, municipal and barangay level. They will also produce a handbook containing templates for developing ordinances and implementation standards to guide the local government units. PCW hopes to issue the joint circular with DILG by yearend.

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Issues will be compiled in an annual report released every fourth quarter of the year.
Other publications available on www.senate.gov.ph under Executive-Legislative Liaison Service (ELLS)

¹ <https://pcw.gov.ph/safe-spaces-act-irr-signed/> (accessed September 19, 2020)