519

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 519



INTRODUCED BY HONORABLE DARLENE R. ANTONIO-CUSTODIO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide for the establishment of centers for street children in every region of the Philippines.

Increasing poverty in the nation`s urban centers in causing a corresponding rise in the number of street children. This observation is borne out by reports of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, which counted approximately 75,000 street children nationwide in 1998. Estimates from surveys conducted by the Bureau of Women and Young Workers also showed that there are at least 9 million child laborers in the country. A study by the social welfare department lists four factors responsible for the street children phenomenon; poverty and underdevelopment of the country; rapid urbanization; inequitable distribution of the national wealth; and an ailing national economy.

The Department of Social Welfare and development extends assistance to these children through its "Lingap (care) Centers which implement a program aimed at developing the children`s potentials and reviving their hope for a better future. But the assistance is not enough, for the government can only do so much. In this regard, remedial measures must be restored to and legislation can help in that respect. However, whatever measure may be taken, it must be done now for the youth of today who will be the parents and leaders of tomorrow and who, in turn, will inculcate in their young, their own values, which may be different from what we want.

In accordance with the firm commitment of the government of promoting children`s right when it signed two ( 2) international covenants in September, 1990, namely: the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Word Declaration on Children`s Survival, Protection and Development, as well as the participation of both DSWD and Council for the Welfare of Children not to mention the participation of NGOs for the betterment of our children especially the in-and-out-of school youth and in furtherance of our tasks as responsible guardians of the Filipino children`s future, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

DARLENE R. ANTONINO-CUSTODIO

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING CENTERS FOR STREET CHILDREN IN EVERY REGION OF THE **PHILIPPINES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. It is the policy of the State to:

(a) Prevent the exploitation of infants and children through mendicancy and provide rehabilitative service for those already exploited or in immediate danger of exploitation.
(b) Promote the rehabilitation of minors by providing an integrated development package of preventive, interceptive, and/or remedial services.

SEC. 2. Pursuant to the above-stated policy, there shall be established in every region in the Philippines, centers for street children which shall extend to all exploited infants and children, mendicant children, dependent, abandoned, vagrant and neglected children, and youth offenders covered by Presidential Decree Numbered Six hundred and Three, as amended The Center shall be under the directed supervision of the Department of Social Welfare and development.

SEC. 3. The center shall have the following duties and functions:

(a) Promptly locate destitute children, either by correspondence or other means in order that the rehabilitation may begin before he is unduly subjected to the disintegrating effects of idleness and mendicancy.
(b) Subject each individual to medical examinations, personal interviews and test of aptitude and interests with a view to meeting his problem and needs, and determining the type of education, training or work he might best perform. These Medical examinations may include not only general examination but also specialist and other allied government agencies according to the requirements of each individual case;
(c) Assign a counselor who shall give advice and understand the cause of the problems of each individual and the steps necessary to correct these difficulties so as to enable him to improve;

(d) Furnish the necessary training And education geared towards the attainment of the specific goals recommended by the counselor for each individual:
(e) Secure for each individual a foster home or employment best suited to his capacity, personality and training;
(f) Conduct and follow-up on the progress of each individual, after a reasonable time, to make whatever adjustments may be necessary, or to provide further medical or psychiatric care, or to supplement training, if required.

SEC. 4. Each center shall be headed by a superintendent who shall be appointed by and be placed under the administrative and technical supervision of the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development. The Superintendent is hereby empowered to appoint, subject to civil service law, rules and regulations, such staff members as may be necessary and proper to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. The Department of Social Welfare and development shall establish a comprehensive operational network under its administrative machinery and a unified system which will not only ensure the child and youth service delivery system under Presidential Decree Number Six Hundred and Three (PD 603), as amended, but also foster coordination and collaboration among agencies as soon as possible for the proper delivery of services at all levels.

SEC. 6. The Secretary of Social Welfare and Development shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the Appropriations of the Department of Social Welfare and Development under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the operation and maintenance of the centers shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,