

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1183

Introduced by HONORABLE LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is crucial to a city or municipality's prosperity to maintain and improve the literacy of the people. We owe it to ourselves and to the future generations to serve others by keeping learning and literacy alive. The future of our country depends on a literate population. Attaining that goal involves giving our young people a good education, an education rich in literature, science, mathematics, history, fine arts, crafts, sports, music, etc., an education with no shortage of teachers and a full supply of the world's best books. This goal involves not only continuing and full support for our schools and universities but also for *public libraries*. We must not neglect any of the institutions for the sake of another.

This bill proposes as a national goal to establish at least one (1) public library in every province, city and municipality. This project may be a cooperative undertaking among the local stakeholders, i.e. LGUs, DepEd, PTAs, and civic groups. Local governments, in particular should be proactive in identifying ways in which public libraries can complement local development plans.

This bill makes it mandatory for every province, city and municipality to provide in a gradual manner according to their respective classifications the establishment of a public library.

Communities with public libraries send a powerful message to children, parents and the entire community that reading and learning are important and valued.

Studies show that increasing a child's reading time by 37 minutes a day outside his/her school will increase the child's reading ability tremendously. A public library offering a wide variety of books and reference materials will help children develop a love for reading.

The ability to foster confidence in a student or individual to research or study any topic he or she wants to learn is a unique gift. A child or

individual who understands and is comfortable with information technology is a child or individual who will grow with the ability to learn throughout his or her lifetime. 19th century British Prime Minister *Benjamin Disraeli* states: *"As a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information"*.

It is well documented that the ability to read empowers an individual to learn and develop increased job skills.

A *Simmons College* (Boston, Massachusetts) study released in October 2000 found a strong link between school libraries and student achievement. The study showed that students typically score highest in schools where there is a higher per pupil book count.

Massachusetts *Education Commissioner David P. Driscoll* agreed with the results of a study that found a link between the amount of time both poor and well to do students spend in libraries and how well they read.

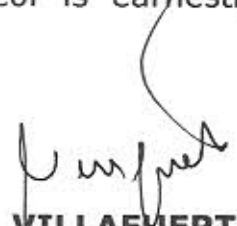
Mayor Daley of Chicago uses *public libraries* as the anchors for neighborhood redevelopment. *Mayor Daley* refers to the neighborhood library as the *"heartbeat of the community"*.

Arts and Culture *Minister Edwin Poots* of Northern Ireland states: *"Libraries are vital to raising literacy levels in communities. This improves people's employability and obviously helps to sustain a healthy economy"*.

Libraries provide students, entrepreneurs, businessmen and organizations with access to trusted source of information and knowledge to gain a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

Public libraries deserve excellent support because they are libraries. Libraries advance literacy and preserve intellectual culture. Libraries address the life of the mind.

Considering the merits of this bill, approval hereof is earnestly requested.



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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC LIBRARY IN EVERY PROVINCE,
CITY AND MUNICIPALITY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title** – This Act shall be known as “The Public Library
2 Act”.

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy** – The State recognizes the need to
4 establish a *Public Library* in every Province, City and Municipality in the
5 Philippines. Public libraries exist around the world and are often considered
6 an essential part of having an educated and literate population;

7 The State in establishing public libraries will be providing its citizens
8 of all ages and stages with books, information and intellectual resources
9 that they need to thrive in each community and in this country. Libraries
10 are essential institutions in a democratic society because they play a non-
11 partisan role in providing the information that allows citizens to make
12 informed decisions;

13 Libraries are essential to the educational process because they
14 support curricula, preserve intellectual culture, teach and advance

1 information literacy, foster critical thinking skills, and promote community
2 cohesion;

3 Libraries are essential partners in creating educated communities
4 because they provide opportunities for self-education, life-long learning and
5 self-improvement. Libraries have a critical role in helping a city and nation
6 to become a knowledge and innovation driven society;

7 Libraries are essential places of opportunity because they level the
8 playing field making the world of information available to anyone seeking it.
9 Books are expensive these days and public libraries have become even
10 more important to ensure that reading does not become a hobby available
11 only for the rich and those that can afford. Public libraries makes all kinds
12 of resources available to everyone – from the richest to the poorest, from
13 the best educated to the illiterate;

14 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms** – For purposes of this Act:

15 **A *Public Library*** shall be defined as:

16 *A public library* is a library which is accessible by the
17 public and is generally funded from public sources .Private
18 donors or organizations may donate materials or cash for the
19 public library. Public libraries are distinct from *research*
20 *libraries, school libraries* or other *special libraries* in that their
21 mandate is generally to serve a public's information needs
22 rather than to serve a particular school or institution or
23 research population.

1 Public libraries focus on a wide array of reading materials which are
2 of interest to the general public. Internet access is also offered as well as
3 a wide array of magazines, periodicals, softwares, DVD's (audio and
4 video) as well as digital books.

5 Public libraries may also provide other services such as community
6 meeting rooms and seminar rooms offering reading programs for children,
7 continuing adult education, after-school programs and other educational
8 activities.

9 **SEC. 4. *Effectivity Clause.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
10 days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national
11 newspapers with general circulation

Approved.