

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1828

Introduced by Honorable CARMELO F. LAZATIN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Schoolchildren carrying heavy bags become a common phenomenon in many of our country's schools. Children hoping to be ready at all times during classroom discussion and other school related-activities, bring all their textbooks and other school supplies, to and from school.

At short-sight, it seems this practice is good to schoolchildren. However, according to many foreign scientific studies conducted on this matter, overloading of school bags can caused side effect to the body of children if they are exposed to this practice over a long period. Since, spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully developed until after 16 years of life.

An investigation by the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Free State, South Africa compared postural deviation in children who carry heavy school bags against those who don't. The study was reported in South Africa's Mail and Guardian newspaper.

Three hundred eighty students (380) students in the study spent an average of 30 minutes per day carrying their bags. On average a pre-teen school bag weighed 13.1 pounds compared to a teenager's bag which weighed 14.3 pounds.

The study revealed deviation to the side and/or backwards of children's spines when carrying heavy school bags. The study further revealed that children carry their

schoolbags on a daily basis and often between classes as well, and it is the constant additional pressure to the spine that cause long-term damage, which also include failure to maintain proper standing posture.

Health is the most priority for the children. Education is nil if the frail bodies of children are compromised. Therefore, it is the intent of this Act that school administrators, teachers, parents and schoolchildren are made aware of this issue on overweight bags, and to make necessary measures to avoid this unhealthful practice.

With the above objective, the author of this Act is praying for a collective approval from this 15th Congress to save our young children from the adverse health effect of overweight schoolbags.


CARMELO F. LAZATIN
First District, Pampanga

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. 1828

Introduced by **Honorable Carmelo F. Lazatin**

**AN ACT LIMITING THE AMOUNT OF WEIGHT OF BAGS CARRIED BY
CHILDREN IN SCHOOL AND IMPLEMENTING MEASURES TO PROTECT
SCHOOLCHILDREN'S HEALTH FROM THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF HEAVY
SCHOOL BAG.**

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

**ARTICLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

SECTION 1. Title of the Act.- This Act shall be known as "Schoolbag Weight Limitation Act of 2010."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policies.- It is the policy of the State to safeguard the general welfare and interests of children and to protect them from elements and conditions that could adversely affect their health, and from other factors that would impinge their capacity to enjoy their childhood.

Further, since health and safety is one of the most important priorities for children, the State, through its various entities and agencies, should undertake concrete measures on how to achieve this goal.

SECTION 3. Scope of the Act.- It is the objective of this Act to limit the amount of weight of bags carried by schoolchildren, both in the elementary and secondary levels, in schools; implement measures to obviate overloading of school bags with the end goal of protecting children from the ill effects caused by overweight bags on their health.

ARTICLE II ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS

SECTION 4. Role of Schools.

a. School Administrators- It is incumbent for school authorities to implement measures to keep schoolchildren from bringing schoolbag that is over-weight. Any bag that weighs more than fifteen percent (15%) of a child's body weight is deemed overweight.

Pertinent on the above, school administrators shall:

1. Conduct information and education campaign to parents and students to create awareness of the issue.
2. Assess the extent of the problem in the school.
3. Promote home/school cooperation on the issue.
4. Choose appropriate textbooks and other reading materials for the students by taking into account book's size and weight aside from their teaching and educational value.
5. Review the adequacy of furniture items such as lockers, bookcases and lockers inside classrooms and make necessary adjustments.
6. Formulate suitable homework policies which take this issue into account and encourage the development of pupils' organizational skills to lessen the bulk of school materials which children use to bring in the school.
7. Place weighing scales at conspicuous places inside the school where schoolchildren could check the weight of their bags.

b. Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). Parents and Teachers Associations or PTAs shall:

1. Assists school administrators in creating awareness of the issue.
2. Help identify the extent of the problem in the school.

3. Initiate projects and activities to promote good studying practices among children that will obviate schoolchildren from bringing all their books and other materials in school, and help facilitate school conferences and meetings in formulating homework policies.
4. Assist school administrators in resource generation in improving school's storage facilities and furniture items.
5. Mobilize parents to help weighing schoolbags to arouse awareness of the issue.

SECTION 5. Role of DepED.- Pursuant to the intent of this Act, the Department of Education shall:

1. Conduct a nationwide assessment about the issue of overweight schoolbags which children usually bring in the school.
2. Liaise with publishers to craft and print books that are both textbook and workbook at the same time.
3. Regulate textbooks so that book size and weight shall also be put into consideration aside for their teaching and educational value.
3. Provide an appropriate Implementing Rules and Guidelines on how to address the issue.
4. Require uniform design of school desk that has provision for book storage underneath its writing table.

SECTION 6. Role of Department of Health.- The Department of Health (DOH), pursuant to this Act, shall:

1. Assist the Department of Education in the conduct of a nationwide assessment about the issue of overweight schoolbags which children usually bring in the school;
2. Provide printed IEC materials about the issue and disseminate these to various schools in the country.

SECTION 7. Role of LGUs- Local government units through its local Social Welfare and Development Office and the Local School Board shall:

1. Assists schools in disseminating information of the issue.
2. Allot funds and other resources for the provision of appropriate storage facilities and furniture items to negate schoolchildren from bringing all their school books and other school materials to and from school.

3. Organize activities, in coordination with school administrators and PTAs, to develop cooperation among school administrators, teachers and parents on how to deal with the issue effectively.
4. Produce IEC materials on how to educate parents and schoolchildren in choosing the right kind of school bags, the kind of materials bags should be made of, proper way of backpacking and the avoidance of bringing unnecessary materials in school.

Section 8. *Seperability Clause.*- If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 9. *Repealing Clause.*- All laws, executive orders or issuances, or any parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Section 10. *Effectivity Clause.*- This Act shall take effect upon its publication in at least two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,