

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 443



Introduced by
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative Antonio L. Tinio

EXPLANATORY NOTE

One of the most deplorable consequences of the government policy of prioritizing debt payments is the reduction in public spending on education. Because of the so-called debt burden, which takes up around 30% of the national budget annually for the past two decades, our public schools have been receiving a declining share in government spending. This has led to a worsening shortage of teachers and classrooms. Based on data culled from the Department of Education, public schools will face a shortage of 46,567 teachers and 32,844 classrooms in School Year 2013-2014.

In order to accommodate a growing school-age population, the Department of Education has coped with these shortages by allowing extremely large class sizes. In the urban centers, it is no longer uncommon to see teachers handling classes with 60 to 80 students. According to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, classrooms in the Philippines are among the most crowded in Asia. The country's public elementary schools' average class size of 43.9 is far bigger than Malaysia's 31.7, Thailand's 22.9, Japan's 28.6 and India's 40. In public high schools, the country registered an average size of 56.1, higher than Malaysia's 34, Thailand's 41.5, Japan's 33.9 and India's 39.

The Senate Economic Planning Office, for its part, found that "Pupil-input ratios reflect the extent of shortages, especially when disaggregated on regional levels. While the national average is 38.9 for pupil-classroom ratio, it could go to as high as 77 students in one classroom in the National Capital Region." (*Policy Brief-11-02*, June 2011)

The proliferation of grossly oversized classes is one of the main causes of the marked decline in the quality of education provided by our public schools. No matter how competent a teacher may be, the teaching and learning experience is adversely affected when there are simply too many students in a class. On the other hand, smaller classes allow teachers to spend more time on actual instruction and less on classroom management, and enable greater individual interactions between student and teacher.

Therefore, the oversized classes found in public school classrooms today violate the Constitutionally-guaranteed right of Filipino schoolchildren to quality education.

Oversized classes also violate the right of teachers to just compensation and humane working conditions. In the current system, a teacher handling a class of 70 students is in fact taking on the workload of two teachers, but without receiving any additional compensation. This practice of assigning oversized classes to teachers without extra pay is one of the main mechanisms by which they are “overworked, yet underpaid.”

This bill seeks to address these concerns by mandating the regulation of class size in public schools and prescribing additional compensation for teachers handling large classes.

Approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



ANTONIO L. TINIO

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AN ACT
REGULATING CLASS SIZE IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND APPOINTING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Title. This Act shall be known as *“The Public School Class Size Law of 2013.”*

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education. It is likewise declared that the State shall provide just compensation and humane working conditions for public school teachers.

Oversized classes in the country’s public schools adversely affect the learning experience provided to Filipino schoolchildren. To ensure access to quality education, it is necessary to establish standards for class size.

For their part, teachers are entitled to protection from unregulated increases in class size as well as to compensation commensurate to their actual workload.

SECTION 3. Coverage. This Act shall apply to all classes in all public schools of the Department of Education, and to all classroom teachers therein, whether paid by the national or local government.

SECTION 4. Standard Class Size. Each class to be handled by a single teacher shall have a standard size of 35 students. For purposes of this Act, any class with not more than 35 students shall be considered a standard class.

SECTION 5. Large Class Size. Any class exceeding 35 students up to a maximum of 50 students shall be considered a large class. In no case shall a class size in excess of 50 students be permitted.

SECTION 6. *Large Class Honorarium.* A teacher handling a large class shall be entitled to a large class honorarium equivalent to one percent (1.0 %) of her daily rate for every student in excess of the standard class size of 35.

This formula shall apply to all classes assigned to the teacher during the school year.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Department of Education shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this Act within a period of thirty (30) days after its effectivity.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* The amount of Five Billion Pesos (P 5,000,000,000) is hereby appropriated for the initial implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the appropriations for the Department of Education in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional, all other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, rules and regulations, and other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,