

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 554



Introduced by **HONORABLE LANI MERCADO-REVILLA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The predicament of the differently-abled in terms of fitting into a society all too often preoccupied with personal matters has been brought to our attention only recently.

As the Sixteenth Congress begins its legislative task, there is a great need to push for more programs and policies for the differently-abled in order to integrate this important sector into the social, political, economic and cultural mainstream of our society.

This bill aims to provide free education for the differently-abled during their formative years. It is vital that the government takes the lead in providing this service for free because the impoverished certainly do not have the means to pay for the specialized education of these children.

By orienting these children at an early age, they shall learn to overcome their "handicap" and thus consider themselves as no different and certainly no less capable than any other member of the society.

The immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.


REP. LANI MERCADO- REVILLA
2nd District, Cavite

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HOUSE BILL NO. 554

Introduced by **HONORABLE LANI MERCADO-REVILLA**

**AN ACT PROVIDING FREE AND SUITABLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR
DIFFERENTLY-ABLED CHILDREN AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to make appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. It shall promote non-formal, informal, indigenous and out-of-school study programs particularly those that respond to the needs of the community, and of the disabled and the handicapped. Towards this end, the State shall provide free a suitable public education for differently-abled children under a special education program with the end in view of ensuring their survival and advancement and making them productive partners for national development.

SECTION 2. It shall be the purposes of this Act to:

- a) Establish a special education program that shall cater to the needs of the differently-abled and the mentally and physically handicapped children.
- b) Provide full financial and educational assistance to differently-abled children of the country.
- c) Help in the development and rehabilitation of differently-abled children through special education program.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms – For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a) A **differently-abled child** is one who has not yet reached the age of eighteen (18) years old;
- b) A **suitable public education** refers to a course, profession, skill or program prescribed by the Department of Education to a differently-abled child taking into consideration the child's aptitude handicap and talents.

SECTION 4. A special education center shall, whenever possible, be established in the provincial, city and municipal levels for this purpose. Said special education center shall, as much as possible provide for elementary levels of education with maximum opportunities for integration with non-handicapped peers.

SECTION 5. The benefits that will be given to qualified differently-abled shall include tuition fees, textbook allowance, and ambulatory equipment or devices that may be necessary. Special services such as note-takers and readers for the blind, sign interpreters for the deaf and tutorial institution shall also be offered.

SECTION 6. A Special Education Development Fund is hereby established with an initial capital of Fifty Million Pesos (**P50,000,000.00**) to be taken from the appropriations for the Department of Education under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for this continued operations and maintenance shall be included in the annual General Appropriation Act.

SECTION 7. The Department of the Education, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, ordinances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If, for any reason, any provision of this Act or part thereof is declared unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the other provisions or parts hereof not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,