

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5533**



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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill proposes to lower the optional retirement age for public school teachers from 60 to 55 years old.

Earlier retirement is one of the demands resoundingly voiced during formal and informal consultations with public school teachers conducted by this Representation. Teachers protest that, with the hazards and level of stress accompanying their duties, compulsory retirement at the late stage of 65 years old will not allow them to fully enjoy their retirement years. Teachers usually leave the profession not with satisfied smiles but assaulted by various illnesses; whatever retirement benefits they receive will be spent not for their rest or their own businesses but solely for medical bills.

Teaching in our country's public schools is indeed a challenging occupation, with duties claiming much from teachers not just physically, but emotionally and psychologically as well. The Philippines ranks among the countries with the most dismal statistics descriptive of teachers' working conditions, with average pupil-teacher ratios from 31 students (primary level) to 39 students to each teacher (secondary level), and average class sizes of 42.4 (primary) and 43.7 (secondary). (UNESCO, 2012) Officially, instruction time is six hours each day, but actually goes up to more than eight including advisory loads. Teachers work in 40 out 54 weeks per year, but they have duties during vacation months, and beyond the classroom and even the school premises.

Indeed, when compared to figures worldwide, it is harder to be a public school teacher in the Philippines than in most countries. However, teachers retire five years later in the Philippines than in most countries. Retirement age is 60 in most North American, European, and Asian countries.

Respect and humane consideration demand that a person of 55 years—a few years shy of being a senior citizen—should not be required to perform the arduous functions expected of a public school teacher in the Philippines. At such stage of their lives, public school teachers should at least be given the choice if they wish to rest from the profession and enjoy more good and healthy years ahead.

Approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

ANTONIO L. TINIO

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AN ACT
LOWERING THE OPTIONAL RETIREMENT AGE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS FROM SIXTY (60) YEARS OLD TO FIFTY-FIVE (55) YEARS OLD, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13-A OF REPUBLIC ACT 8291, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997

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

SECTION 1. Section 13-A of Republic Act 8291, or the *Revised Government Service Insurance System Act of 1997*, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 13-A. Conditions for Entitlement. x x x A member who retires from the service shall be entitled to the retirement benefits in paragraph (a) of Section 13 hereof: Provided, That:

“(1) he OR SHE has rendered at least fifteen (15) years of service;

“(2) he OR SHE is at least sixty (60) years of age at the time of retirement, OR AT LEAST FIFTY-FIVE (55) YEARS OF AGE IN THE CASE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS; and

“(3) he OR SHE is not receiving a monthly pension benefit from permanent total disability.”

SECTION 2. The provisions in pertinent implementing rules and regulations and other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,