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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE

H.B. No. 6379

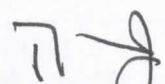
Introduced by **Representative TEODORICO T. HARESCO, JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 13 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that “the State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social wellbeing. It shall include in the youth patriotism and nationalism and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.”

During the World Population Day Forum held in Quezon City last July 2019, the Commission on Population (Popcom) raised concerns about early and unplanned pregnancies by citing that around 500 teenage girls have given birth in the country every day as more adolescents engage in premarital sex. Popcom said some 196,000 Filipinos between the ages of 15 and 19 years old get pregnant each year.¹ Further, according to POPCOM Executive Director Juan Antonio Perez, although teenage pregnancy rate in the country declined to 8.7 percent in 2017 from 10.2 percent in 2016, the number still remains high.²

Adolescent pregnancy has serious consequences for young women, their children, and communities as a whole. The rising teenage pregnancy rate in the Philippines has contributed to the country’s population crisis. Further, it perpetuates the cycle of poverty and inequality because most pregnant teenagers have no source of income and face greater financial struggle. It is also important to note that teenage mothers face critical health risks, including inadequate nutrition during pregnancy due to poor eating habits, dangers associated with the reproductive organs not ready for birth, and maternal death due to higher risk of eclampsia, among others. In view of the foregoing circumstances, there is a need to establish a national policy in preventing teenage pregnancies and institutionalize social protection for teenage parents.


TEODORICO T. HARESCO, JR.

¹ <https://pia.gov.ph/features/articles/1026925>

² <https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/07/11/19/nearly-200000-filipino-teens-get-pregnant-annually-popcom>

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H.B. No. 6379

Introduced by Representative TEODORICO T. HARESCO, JR.

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL POLICY IN PREVENTING ADOLESCENT
PREGNANCIES, INSTITUTIONALIZING SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ADOLESCENT
PARENTS, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 Section 1, Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Prevention of Adolescent
2 Pregnancy Act."

3
4 Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to recognize, promote, and
5 strengthen the role of adolescents and young people in the overall human and socio-
6 economic development of the country not only in the future but also in the present. It
7 shall also recognize and promote the responsibility of the State to create and sustain an
8 enabling environment for adolescents to enable them to achieve their development
9 aspirations and potentials as well as mobilize them to positively contribute to the
10 development of the nation.

11
12 Towards this end, the State shall pursue sustainable and genuine human development
13 that values the dignity of the total human person and affords full protection to people's
14 rights, especially of adolescent girls and boys and their families. It shall promote and
15 protect the human rights of all individuals including adolescents, particularly in their
16 exercise of their rights to sexual and reproductive health, equality and equity before the
17 law, the right to development, the right to education, freedom of expression, the right to
18 participate in decision-making, and the right to choose and make responsible decisions
19 for themselves

20
21 Sec. 3. Development of National Program of Action and Investment Plan for the
22 Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy. - The Council, in collaboration with other relevant
23 national agencies and civil society organizations, shall develop an evidence-based
24 National Medium-Term Plan for the Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy, which shall serve
25 as the national framework for inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration at all levels
26 to address the various health, cultural, socio-economic and institutional determinants of
27 teenage pregnancy.
28

1 Based on the Medium-Term National Plan, a National Program on the Prevention of
2 Teenage Pregnancy (NPPTP) shall be developed and funded at all levels and shall become
3 a priority program of the Philippine Population Management Program of the Population
4 Commission (POPCOM), spearheaded and coordinated by the Teenage Pregnancy
5 Prevention Council, created under Section 10 of this Act.

6
7 The NPPTP shall be based on the inter-agency program of action involving all relevant
8 government agencies and shall be considered as a program that is eligible for multiyear
9 funding and inter-agency obligational authority to ensure the allocation for the key
10 strategies in all concerned government agencies.

11
12 NPPTP shall be formulated with clear and prescriptive guidance for better
13 implementation at the local level.

14
15 In order to ensure the full participation of the stakeholders, consultations with
16 children, adolescents, and youth-oriented groups shall be held with the Council's youth
17 representatives. The results of the stakeholders' consultation that will be presented by
18 the youth representatives shall be integrated into the formulation, implementation,
19 operation, measurement, and evaluation of the NPPTP. If necessary, additional
20 consultations with the stakeholders shall be conducted at various levels of the program
21 to guarantee that the NPPTP remain youth focused and oriented.

22
23 Sec. 4. Organization and Mobilization of Regional and Local Information and
24 Service Delivery Network for Adolescent Health and Development (ISDN for AHD). - All
25 provinces and chartered cities shall organize and operationalize an ISDN for AHD
26 consisting of different government and non-government organizations, institutions, and
27 facilities disseminating information and services to adolescents within their locality. In
28 cases of provinces and cities with existing ISDNs, they shall now harmonize new and
29 existing efforts and programs for AHD. The ISDN may be organized by district in each
30 province or by municipality/city. An effective collaborative and referral system among
31 the members of the ISDN for AHD shall be established and implemented within a
32 catchment area.

33
34 The ISDN for AHD will provide health services that are sensitive to the particular
35 needs and human rights of all adolescents, paying attention to the following
36 characteristics:

- 37 a) Availability - Primary health care should include services sensitive to the
38 needs of adolescents, with special attention given to sexual and reproductive
39 health and mental health;
40 b) Accessibility - Health facilities, goods, and services should be known and easily
41 accessible (economically, physically, and socially) to all adolescents, without
42 discrimination. Confidentiality must be guaranteed and maintained at all
43 times;
44 c) Acceptability - Health facilities, goods, and services should respect cultural
45 values, be gender sensitive, be respectful of medical ethics, and be acceptable
46 to both adolescents and the communities in which they live;
47 d) Quality - Health services and goods should be scientifically and medically
48 appropriate, which requires personnel trained to care for adolescents, and
49 provide adequate facilities, and scientifically accepted methods.

1 The ISDN for AHD shall perform the following tasks and functions:

- 2 a) Map and analyze the various factors contributing to pregnancies among
- 3 adolescents at the regional and local levels;
- 4 b) Identify, harmonize, coordinate, and implement inter-agency interventions to
- 5 address the various issues related to teenage pregnancies in the region and at
- 6 the local level;
- 7 c) Capacitate ISDN for AHD agency-members in collaboration with relevant
- 8 regional government agencies to ensure quality information and services to
- 9 adolescents;
- 10 d) Provide, in collaboration with concerned LCDs, needed information and
- 11 services for adolescent development;
- 12 e) Generate or share resources in the implementation of the joint strategic plan
- 13 of the ISDN for AHD; and
- 14 f) Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of coordinative and referral systems and
- 15 other interagency interventions jointly implemented by the ISDN.
- 16

17 Sec. 5. Age and Development-Appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education. –

18 The Department of Education, with assistance from the Council and in collaboration with
19 other relevant agencies, shall develop and promote educational standards, modules and
20 materials to promote comprehensive responsible sexuality education in schools,
21 communities, and other youth institutions. The comprehensive sexuality education (CSE)
22 shall be a compulsory part of education, integrated at all levels with the end goal of
23 normalizing discussions about adolescent sexuality and reproductive health and to
24 remove stigma from all levels. The Council shall ensure that the CSE is medically accurate,
25 rights based, and inclusive and non-discriminatory towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals,
26 transgenders, intersex, or queers (LGBTQs) adolescents.

27
28 The CSE shall include age and development-appropriate topics such as, but not
29 limited to: human sexuality, consent, adolescent reproductive health, effective
30 contraceptive use, disease prevention, HIV/AIDS and the more common Sexually
31 Transmitted Infections (STIs), hygiene, health and nutrition, healthy lifestyles, gender-
32 sensitivity, gender equality and equity, teen dating, prevention of gender and sexual
33 violence, digital citizenship and issues like pornography, and life-skills.

34
35 The purpose is to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and values to make
36 informed and responsible choices about their sexual and social relationships.

37
38 The CSE shall be standardized and implemented in all public and private basic
39 education institutions. CSE delivery shall not be dependent upon the discretion of the
40 school administration or on its teachers. It shall be integrated in the school curriculum,
41 guided by international standards. In order to ensure proper compliance, the provision
42 and delivery of CSE in public and private basic education institutions shall be listed as
43 one of the criteria and an accreditation requirement of DEPED's Philippine Accreditation
44 System for Basic Education (PASBE). Schools refusing to implement CSE shall have their
45 accreditation reviewed by the PASBE board.

46
47 The Council shall undertake annual reviews to determine the effectiveness of the
48 curriculum and to make revisions as necessary to enhance implementation of the
49 program. In addition, the Council shall formulate a guide for CSE delivery for schools.

1 Sec. 6. Training of Teachers, Guidance Counselors, and School Supervisors on CSE
2 - The Council, with the DepED and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), shall
3 ensure that all teachers, guidance counselors, instructors, and other school officials
4 entrusted with the duty to educate adolescents on CSE shall be properly trained on
5 adolescent health and development and gender sensitivity to effectively educate or guide
6 adolescents in dealing with their sexuality-related concerns. The training activities shall
7 include the legal and human rights instruments applicable to the sexual and reproductive
8 health of adolescents, especially in cases of unintended pregnancies as a result of sexual
9 violence. Funding for the training shall be allotted in the concerned government agencies'
10 annual allocation to be approved by Congress.

11
12 As a result of the training, schools shall institute policies to support teenage
13 mothers in ensuring that they stay in school and complete their education.

14
15 The CHED shall ensure that CSE standards are integrated in the curriculum and
16 across specializations in the professional preparation and training for would-be teachers
17 in normal schools or teacher education institutions in the country.

18
19 Sec. 7. CSE for Out-of-School Adolescents and those with Special Concerns. - The
20 Council, the Local ISDN, and the Local Government Units (LGUs) shall collaborate to
21 intensify and institutionalize interactive learning methodologies for CSE among out-of-
22 school adolescents in the communities and workplaces as well as unsuitably housed
23 youth. Provided, that the needs of indigenous, working persons-with-disabilities, and
24 adolescents in social institutions are considered in the design and promotion of sexuality
25 education among adolescents.

26
27 Delivery of CSE in a non-formal education setting shall be ensured by DepEd
28 through their Alternative Learning System. Community youth leaders, through the
29 Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), Task Force on Youth Development (TFYD), or Local Youth
30 Development Council (LYDC) shall invest in a concentrated effort in reaching these
31 groups and encourage peer to peer counseling. Volunteer groups and interested civil
32 society organizations (CSOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) shall be
33 recognized for supplemental support to local ISDNs.

34
35 DEPED, along with other relevant government agencies, shall be tasked to
36 integrate a CSE syllabus that is culturally sensitive into the existing Madrasah curriculum.

37
38 Sec. 8. CSE for Parents and Guardians with Adolescent Children. - A community-
39 based program for education and awareness of parents and guardians about teen
40 sexuality shall be developed and implemented with the main objective of capacitating
41 them to effectively guide, counsel, and provide support to their adolescent children in
42 concerns and decisions related to their sexual health. The CSE specifically designed for
43 parents and guardians should include discussions on how to address the familial and
44 societal norms that encourages risk behaviors and perpetuates ignorance of adolescent
45 sexual and reproductive health. Furthermore, this parent and guardian oriented CSE shall
46 capacitate and encourage them to continue their sexual education with their children and
47 wards in their households.

1 The module for this CSE program shall be developed by the council. The topics to
2 be included shall include but are not limited to: positive discipline, responsible
3 parenthood, violence against women and children, and dealing with bullying and the
4 possible stigma of being a teen parent.

5
6 These classes shall be conducted by trained Municipal/City Social Welfare and
7 Development Officers. Several avenues that can be pursued are Family Development
8 Sessions (FDS) of the DSWD and PTA meetings. The M/CSWDOs shall endeavor to reach
9 out to parent organizations in schools and communities to promote such program.

10
11 Sec. 9. Participation of the Private Sector in the Promotion of CSE. - The
12 government may enter into public-private partnership agreement in mobilizing private
13 communication networks and companies in promoting CSE through text or short
14 message service (SMS) or media messages. An incentive mechanism for
15 telecommunication companies shall be developed and implemented by concerned
16 agencies to recognize private participation in promoting CSEs and adolescent youth
17 health-seeking behavior, positive attitude towards sex, sexual relations and sexuality, etc.

18
19 The Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) shall review
20 their existing guidelines to ensure that no movie and television programs portray, depict,
21 promote, and encourage unsafe sexual activities among adolescents as a normative
22 behavior in the society. An incentive scheme for adolescent-friendly television programs
23 shall likewise be developed and implemented to encourage movie and television
24 networks to produce materials and programs that promote responsible sexuality among
25 adolescents.

26
27 Other private companies may be engaged to partner with the government
28 agencies in designing and implementing innovative programs to prevent adolescent
29 pregnancy.

30
31 Sec. 10. Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Council. - It shall be established to be
32 composed of the following:

- 33 a) The Department of Health (DOH) Secretary as the Chairperson;
- 34 b) The POPCOM Board of Commissioners Chair as Co-Chairperson;
- 35 c) Senior officials (at least Undersecretary level) of the National Youth Commission
36 (NYC), DEPED, DSWD, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG),
37 CHED, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) as ex-
38 officio members;
- 39 d) Five members appointed by the Chairperson who are persons with knowledge,
40 expertise, accomplishment, and with no less than five-year experience in the fields
41 of public health, adolescent rights and social protection, education, psychology,
42 and social welfare, provided that one qualified member is appointed in each field;
43 Provided further, That majority of these appointed members are female; and
- 44 e) Two representatives of children and youth appointed by the Council Chairperson
45 from various nationally represented youth organizations, provided that one is
46 male and one is female.

1 Sec. 11. Powers and Duties of the Council. The Council shall have the powers as
2 follows:

- 3 a) To propose legislative and administrative policies on the prevention of adolescent
4 pregnancy;
5 b) To develop operational guidelines for government agencies and private
6 organizations in the development and implementation of comprehensive
7 strategies and programs for prevention of adolescent pregnancy, including sexual
8 violence;
9 c) To monitor implementation of the provision of the law;
10 d) To conduct research and generate evidence on the drivers of teenage pregnancy
11 to inform programs and policies; and
12 e) To provide relevant agencies and private organizations with recommendations
13 and solutions to challenges and gaps in the course of implementing the program.
14

15 Sec. 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the
16 approval of this Act, the Council shall be organized to formulate the Implementing Rules
17 and Regulations of this Act.
18

19 Sec. 13. Separability Clause. - If any part, section or provision of this Act is declared
20 invalid or unconstitutional, the other parts thereof not affected thereby shall remain in
21 full force and effect.
22

23 Sec. 14. Repeating Clause. - All laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders,
24 administrative orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with or
25 contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified or repealed
26 accordingly.
27

28 Sec. 15. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
29 the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
30

31 *Approved,*