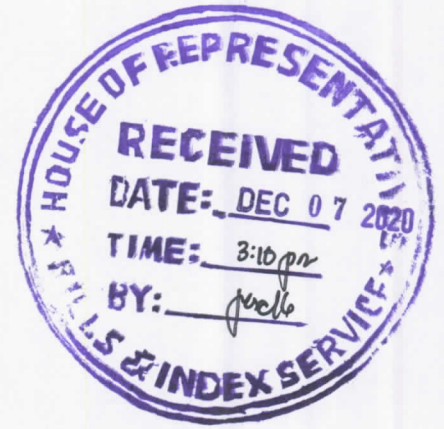


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 8157



Introduced by Representative Camille A. Villar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Merriam-Webster define ‘special needs’ as “various difficulties (such as a physical, emotional, behavioral, or learning disability or impairment) that causes an individual to require additional or specialized services or accommodations (such as in education or recreation).”

In the Philippines, consider the following¹:

- PhilHealth estimates that one out of seven or around 5.1 million Filipino children are living with disabilities. Yet there is little information on the prevalence of disabilities among Filipino children.
- that children with disabilities continue to experience barriers to access basic social services. This is compounded by poverty, lack of data, weak governance and discriminatory attitudes related to disability in general.
- Children with disabilities are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard in society. Their disabilities also place them at a higher risk of physical abuse and discrimination, and often exclude them from receiving proper nutrition or humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

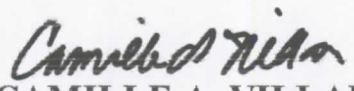
Through this legislation, a framework is being envisioned and that society must adapt its structures and mechanisms to ensure children irrespective of age, gender and disability must enjoy the human rights that are inherent in their human

¹ Data culled from Philippine Policy Report No.6, Children with Disabilities: Finding the Way to an Inclusive Service Framework. July 2018. study funded by the Australian Embassy in Manila UNICEF, DSWD and the Development

dignity. Disability cannot be considered in isolation, having special needs should not be a badge for discrimination.

In the country, a pioneering effort worthy of emulation is the recent passage of an ordinance by the City Council of Davao City on the establishment of a center dedicated to kids with special needs. Accordingly, the center will rise in Davao City in 2021 and has been named Davao City Special Needs Intervention Center for Children will be offering early intervention and transition programs, as well as allied medical services including occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy to children ages 0 to 6 years old. The same center also addresses “concerns and skills deficit brought about by intellectual disability, global development delay, autism spectrum disorder, communication disorder, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, specific learning disorders, motor disorders, visual and hearing impairment, other neurodevelopmental disorders and related behavioral, sensory, and cognitive delays.”²

The proposed legislation aims to put in place a comprehensive and coordinated health policy on children with special needs that would provide the directions and interventions that must be undertaken by and among concerned agencies in an effective and timely manner. We must be receptive to and supportive of children with special needs.


CAMILLE A. VILLAR

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ACCESSIBLE AND
AFFORDABLE EARLY DETECTION AND TIMELY INTERVENTION
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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

Section 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Early Detection and
Intervention Services for Children with Mental Illness Act.”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to adopt an
integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor
to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people
at affordable cost.

Section 3. Definition of Terms. The following terms shall mean:

- a. **Special Needs** shall mean a variety of conditions, difficulties and
impairments including but not limited to chronic and terminal illnesses,
physical impairments, and behavioral, cognitive or psychiatric issues and
learning disability that causes an individual to require additional or
specialized services or accommodations such as education or recreation.
A special needs child may have a life-threatening condition or they may
have severe learning disabilities.
- b. **Intervention** shall mean educational methods and positive behavioral
support strategies designed to improve the condition of a child suffering
from mental disorder.

Section 4. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of
Health (DOH) shall undertake to develop a program providing for comprehensive
accessible and affordable early detection and timely intervention services for

children with special needs. The objectives of this program includes but not limited to the following:

- a. To increase awareness, reduce barriers to screening and diagnosis, promote evidence-based interventions for children with special needs or other developmental disabilities.
- b. To build a qualified and adequately trained workforce prepared to provide special needs services for children and their families.
- c. To conduct a comprehensive, multi-faceted public awareness campaign to educate families, the general public, and other key audiences about the benefits of children's social and emotional development, and how to access services.
- d. To create a quality-driven children's special needs system with shared accountability among agencies and programs that conducts ongoing needs assessments, uses outcome indicators and benchmarks to measure progress, and implements quality data tracking and reporting system.

Section 5. All local government units shall endeavor to establish special needs center offering early intervention and transition programs and shall provide programs and services that will prepare special needs children on activities in mainstream society.

Section 6. The DepEd and DOH in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government and in consultation with relevant private sector practitioners and representatives of the academic community shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Section 7. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

Section 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,