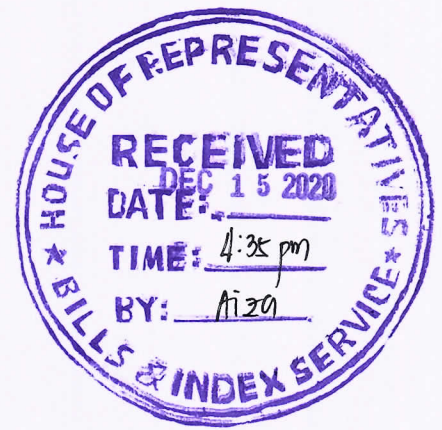


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 8256



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING EDUCATION PROGRAM
FOR THE YOUTH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Human trafficking comes in many different forms, including forced labor and sexual exploitation, where our children are among the most vulnerable victims. Human trafficking is a crime that undermines the very values and human dignity of Filipinos to live free and safe from abuse, harm, and exploitation.

In a UNICEF Report, an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 children in the country are involved in prostitution rings, while an undetermined number of children are forced into exploitative labor operations.¹

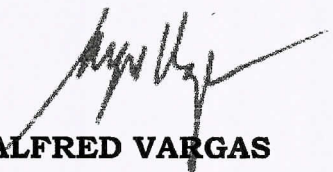
The state recognizes the issue and has taken multiple courses of action from increasing the budget of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and collaborating with the Interagency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) to combat it and increase awareness for the general public.

The lack of understanding and awareness of human trafficking continues to facilitate a culture of impunity for the perpetrators, and a burden of injustice for the victims. The State must assume a larger role in stopping trafficking at its source - by educating potential victims about the dangers of trafficking and instructing them on how to seek protection from the government.

¹ UNICEF. (undated). Factsheet: Child trafficking in the Philippines.
<https://www.unicef.org/spanish/protection/files/ipulocaltrafficking.pdf> (Accessed 8 November 2020)

In order to better empower our youth against the threats of human trafficking, this bill seeks to uphold a preventive education program to protect the youth from human trafficking and other crimes that would cause undesirable effects on the welfare and future of our children. This bill seeks to establish a comprehensive Anti-Human Trafficking Education Program that will arm members of the youth sector with the information needed to protect themselves from falling prey to human trafficking. The Program shall also institute grassroots reporting mechanisms to further empower community members to take decisive action against heinous criminals who take advantage of our youth and undermine our fundamental human rights. This bill also serves as a counterpart legislation for Senate Bill No. 735 filed by Senator Sherwin Gatchalian.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ALFRED VARGAS

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
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House Bill No. **8256**

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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AN ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING EDUCATION PROGRAM
FOR THE YOUTH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Anti-Human Trafficking Education Program Act".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared a policy of the State to protect the youth from human trafficking and other crimes fundamentally detrimental to their development and wellbeing. The State shall enhance the knowledge of the youth of their basic rights and promote their vigilance against human traffickers by providing preventive education to teach them about the dangers of human trafficking in its various forms.

SECTION 3. Anti-Human Trafficking Education Program. - The Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (Council) shall facilitate the establishment of an Anti-Human Trafficking Education Program. The Program shall accomplish the following objectives:

- a) Educate the youth about fundamental rights concerning labor and employment, liberty, human security, as well as other essential rights;
- b) Orient the youth about the dangers of international and domestic human trafficking in its various forms including but not limited to illegal recruitment, unfair labor practices, involuntary servitude, sexual exploitation and prostitution, and child labor;
- c) Provide the youth with information on services provided by government agencies and non-governmental organizations to aid

and protect victims of human trafficking, and;

- d) Identify members of the youth who have been, or are currently victims of human trafficking and refer them to the proper agency or organization for protection and rehabilitation.

The Program shall have a school-based component and a community-based component.

SECTION 4. *School-Based Program.* - The Council, in cooperation with the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, shall implement a School Based Program to accomplish the objectives stated in Section 3 of this Act. The School-Based Program shall cover all students enrolled in junior high schools, senior high schools, colleges and universities, and technical or vocational education programs.

The school principal, college or university president, or technical school head shall be responsible for the following:

- a) Facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of the Program in his or her educational institution;
- b) Assign guidance counsellors or equivalent support staff to identify and protect human trafficking victims and at-risk students, and;
- c) Establish a safe and proactive human trafficking reporting mechanism which allows members of the school community to report suspected or confirmed cases of human trafficking within the school.

SECTION 5. *Community-Based Program.* - The Council, in cooperation with the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), shall implement a Community-Based Program to accomplish the objectives stated in Section 3 of this Act. The Community-Based Program shall cover all out-of-school youth in the Philippines, and it shall be implemented at the barangay level.

The Chairman of the various Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPC) of the CWC shall be responsible for the following:

- a) Facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of the Program in their respective barangays;
- b) Assign guidance counsellors, social workers, or equivalent staff to identify and protect human trafficking victims and at-risk out-of-school youth, and;
- c) Establish a safe and proactive human trafficking reporting mechanism which allows barangay residents to report suspected cases of human trafficking within the community.

SECTION 6. *Youth in Conflict-Afflicted Areas* - The Council shall prioritize the implementation of the Program in conflict-afflicted areas, with special emphasis on human trafficking practices commonly perpetrated in conflict afflicted areas.

SECTION 7. *Accountability Measures* - The head of the educational institution and the Chairman of the BCPC, as the case may be, shall submit to the Council a bi-annual progress report on the implementation and outcomes of the Program in their respective jurisdictions.

Failure to ensure faithful implementation of the Program consistent with the provisions of this Act shall result in administrative sanctions for the Institution Head or Chairman, as the case may be, subject to due process and the provisions of applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* - The amount of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00) is hereby initially appropriated to implement the provisions of 2 this Act. Thereafter, such amount necessary to effectively carry out the 3 provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 9. *Civil Society Participation.* - The Council shall endeavor to utilize non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community stakeholders, and other civil society actors with knowledge and experience on human trafficking prevention and suppression in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of the Program.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within (60) days 10 from the effectivity of this Act, the Council, in coordination with the government agencies and entities mentioned in the provisions of this Act, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* - Should any part of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the rest of the provisions of this Act shall continue to be in effect and subsisting.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* - The provisions of other laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and/or in at least two (2) national newspapers in general circulation.

Approved,