

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10119



Introduced by HONORABLE WES GATCHALIAN

AN ACT
RENAMING THE LITERACY COORDINATING COUNCIL TO THE NATIONAL
LITERACY COUNCIL, STRENGTHENING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS,
STREAMLINING ITS MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE, PROVIDING ITS LOCAL
SUPPORT MECHANISMS, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO.
7165, AS AMENDED, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the 2020 data of the Philippine Statistics Authority, for every 100 Filipinos, 94 are “basic literate.” Basic Literacy is the ability of a person to read and write with understanding a simple message in any language or dialect. The Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) plays an important role in this.

The LCC was established under Republic Act No. 7165 on 15 November 1991. It is an inter-agency body administratively attached to the Department of Education. This is in line with the policy of the state to give the highest priority to the adoption of measures for the total eradication of illiteracy. The LCC was further strengthened by Republic Act No. 10122 by adding the following functions: (1) engagement of services, expertise, and resources for the cooperation, assistance, and support of appropriate government agencies or NGOs involved in literacy; (2) formulation of policies towards maximizing public and private sector support and involvement on literacy endeavors; and (3) proposing measures on how to organize and strengthen support structures for literacy at the regional, provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels.

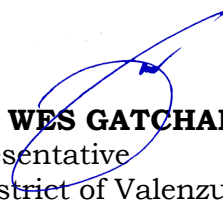
The LCC has gone a long way in boosting literacy in the country. Despite the aforementioned impressive statistics, around 6 million Filipinos are still illiterate. These are the ones who are completely unable to read and write. Today, as most transactions are digitalized, especially because of the pandemic, these 6 million are left behind. Hence, the continued improvement of the LCC is sought in order to achieve the national policy of totally eradicating illiteracy.

This bill proposes the repeal of Republic Act No. 7165 by strengthening the powers and functions of the newly renamed National Literacy Council (NLC). It aims to align the membership structure of the NLC with the following: (1) Republic Act No. 11510 or the “Alternative Learning System Act;” and (2) Republic Act No. 11315 or the “Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) Act.” Specifically, it is proposed that

the NLC's secretariat be transferred to the Bureau of Alternative Education for administrative and technical support. It is also proposed to mobilize local government units through the establishment of the Local School Boards (LSB) as the *de facto* local literacy councils to provide the local support ecosystem to the NLC.

Furthermore, the NLC will also be mandated to formulate a three-year roadmap that shall incorporate strategies on how to eradicate illiteracy using relevant measurable targets and indicators for the introduction of interventions that are based on empirical results. The LSB's three-year roadmap shall be anchored on this.

In line with the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



HON. WES GATCHALIAN
Representative
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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1.** *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “National Literacy
2 Council Act”.

3
4 **SEC. 2.** *Declaration of Policy.* – Pursuant to Article II, Section 17 of the 1987
5 Constitution, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to give priority to education
6 to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total
7 human liberation and development. Article XIV, Section 2(4) likewise mandates the
8 State to encourage non-formal, informal, and indigenous learning systems, as well
9 as self-learning, independent, and out-of-school study programs particularly those
10 that respond to community needs.

11 To this end, the State shall give priority to the adoption of measures for the
12 universalization of literacy.

13
14 **SEC. 3.** *Renaming of the Literacy Coordinating Council.* – The name of the
15 Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC), established pursuant to Republic Act No. 7165,
16 as amended, is hereby changed to National Literacy Council, hereinafter referred to
17 in this Act as the “Council”.

18 The Council shall serve as the lead inter-agency coordinating and advisory body
19 to the various National Government Agencies (NGAs), the Local Government Units
20 (LGUs), and the private sector on matters pertaining to the formulation of policies
21 and the adoption and implementation of measures for the universalization of literacy.

22 The Council shall be attached to the Department of Education (DepEd).
23
24

1 **SEC. 4. *Composition of the Council.*** – The Council shall be governed by the
2 following:

- 3 a) the Secretaries of Education and the Interior and Local Government, as
4 Co-Chairpersons, who may designate their respective undersecretaries as
5 permanent representatives;
- 6 b) the National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippine
7 Statistics Authority (PSA) or a duly designated representative;
- 8 c) the Director of the Bureau of Alternative Education (BAE) of the DepEd;
- 9 d) the President of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP);
10 and
- 11 e) one (1) representative from the non-government organizations (NGOs).

12 The NGO representative must be a citizen of the Philippines with
13 demonstrated personal or professional commitment and advocacy in the propagation
14 of literacy.

15 Through the adoption of a resolution, the Council shall approve and confirm
16 the election of the NGO representative who shall serve for a term of three (3) years,
17 subject to reappointment on the basis of merit and performance.
18

19 **SEC. 5. *Council Meetings.*** – The Council shall conduct its regular meetings
20 quarterly and may hold special meetings to consider urgent matters upon the call of
21 the Chairperson or a majority of its members.

22 The Council shall meet at any agreed location within the Philippines, and the
23 presence of a majority of all its incumbent members shall constitute a quorum.

24 The members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be
25 entitled to an appropriate honorarium for attendance at meetings as well as
26 appropriate allowances and reimbursement of expenses related to their participation
27 in the official activities of the Council, in accordance with pertinent laws, rules and
28 regulations.

29 The duly designated representatives to the Council shall be afforded equal
30 opportunity to vote and participate in any deliberation during meetings of the
31 Council. They shall likewise be afforded, whenever necessary, reimbursement of any
32 actual expenses incurred during the performance of Council-related functions and
33 duties, subject to the provisions of existing laws, rules and regulations.
34

35 **SEC. 6. *Powers and Functions of the Council.*** – The Council shall exercise the
36 following powers and functions:

- 37 a) act as the lead advisory and coordinating body of the government and
38 initiate, promote and recommend the adoption of policies for all literacy
39 endeavors in the country, as well as the formulation of legislative agenda
40 related to literacy;
- 41 b) formulate a three-year roadmap that shall incorporate strategies on how
42 to achieve zero illiteracy, including relevant measurable targets and
43 indicators for the introduction of interventions that are based on empirical
44 results, and which shall be subject to annual review and updating to
45 determine its implementation status and ensure that the objectives of this
46 Act are achieved;

- c) set up and adopt schemes on how to organize and strengthen support structures for the LGUs identified as literacy advocates at the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels, including the adoption of strategies to maximize private sector support, cooperation and involvement on literacy programs, projects, and other related activities;
- d) promote and coordinate with NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, and academic institutions on matters concerning local community literacy mapping activities, consistent with the local generation and mapping of data related to education under Republic Act No. 11510, otherwise known as the “Alternative Learning System Act”, and come up with a database for out-of-school children, youth and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may not have availed of or completed their basic education and in need of intervention and support;
- e) coordinate with the PSA for the regular conduct of literacy surveys, such as the Functional Literacy Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), every two years pursuant to Sec. 9 of this Act;
- f) evaluate the literacy situation in the country, propose ways and means for expanding educational opportunities to citizens of varied socio-economic origins, and adopt modern communications technology and other innovative modes of transmitting knowledge to support literacy endeavors at the national and local levels;
- g) promote and support initiatives for the conduct of research studies and similar undertakings aimed at enhancing and strengthening the crafting of relevant and timely policy recommendations and for the effective implementation of literacy-related programs, projects, and other activities;
- h) organize periodic assemblies such as, among others, literacy conferences and awards, discover and help strengthen good literacy practices, and engage close partnerships with literacy advocates throughout the country; and
- i) perform such other functions as may be necessary in furtherance of the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 7. *The Secretariat.* – The BAE shall provide secretariat support and render the following administrative support and technical assistance to the Council:

- a) prepare policy recommendations, plans, and other Council priorities and measures necessary for the advancement of basic and functional literacy, and other basic capabilities of out-of-school children, youth and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable members of society, who may not have availed of or completed their basic education and in need of intervention and support;
- b) consult and coordinate with NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, academic institutions, and other stakeholders on matters relating to the functions of the Council and other matters pertaining to the propagation of literacy endeavors;
- c) provide technical assistance to literacy implementers relative to the programs and projects on literacy;

- d) initiate, organize, and promote the holding of research activities, workshops, conferences, national literacy awards and the like, subject to the approval of the Council;
- e) set up, maintain, and update a management information system on literacy programs and projects, policies, best practices, research studies, statistical data and other relevant information relative to the literacy situation in the country;
- f) coordinate with the PSA in the conduct of the FLEMMS and other similar surveys for purposes of providing a quantitative framework that will serve as one of the bases in the formulation of policies and programs on the improvement of literacy and education status in the country;
- g) recommend programs, projects, and other activities to be included for funding in the annual budget proposal of the Council, including support services in the preparation of the Council's annual budget proposal; and
- h) perform other tasks as may be directed by the Council.

SEC. 8. *Establishment of Local Literacy Councils through the Local School Boards.* – The Council shall promote the establishment of Local Literacy Councils (LLCs) at the provincial, city and municipal levels, which shall serve as the coordinating and advisory bodies at the local level on matters pertaining to the adoption and implementation of measures for the universalization of literacy.

For this purpose, the Local School Boards (LSBs) established pursuant to Republic Act No. 7160 or the “Local Government Code of 1991” shall act as the *de facto* LLCs in the provinces, cities and municipalities, with the following functions in addition to Sec. 9 thereof:

- a) formulate a local roadmap, anchored on the Council's three-year roadmap under Section 6 of this Act, to guide its strategies on how to achieve zero illiteracy in the community, based on empirical data and determined by relevant measurable targets and indicators, and subject to an annual implementation review and assessment;
- b) implement literacy programs and endeavors at the local level, including the identification of priority literacy programs, provision of technical assistance to literacy volunteer workers, program monitoring and evaluation, and coordination with government and non-government partners for program support activities, among others;
- c) ensure the implementation of community literacy mapping activities within the local level through a community-based monitoring system, consistent with Republic Act No. 11315 or the “Community-Based Monitoring System Act”, to generate updated and disaggregated data on literacy and be able to introduce literacy interventions and allocate resources based on empirical data; and
- d) coordinate with partner NGOs and other agencies of the government in the identification of out-of-school children, youth and adults, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized and vulnerable members of the community who are in need of literacy intervention and support, consistent with the local generation and

1 mapping of data related to education under RA No. 11510, as well as the
2 Child Find System under existing laws.

3 The Council shall issue the guidelines necessary for the establishment,
4 monitoring and evaluation of the LSBs as *de facto* LLCs.
5

6 **SEC. 9. PSA Literacy Surveys.** – To ensure an evidenced-based formulation of
7 policies and programs on the improvement and universalization of literacy in the
8 country, the PSA is hereby mandated to:

- 9 a) conduct the FLEMMS every two years;
- 10 b) strengthen its core unit that is dedicated to the generation, analysis,
11 utilization, and dissemination of all education and literacy statistics and
12 information under RA No. 11315;
- 13 c) develop and manage a nationwide database of such statistics and
14 information; and
- 15 d) coordinate with other government agencies whose mandates require the
16 conduct of community mapping programs that are relevant to the
17 education sector such as the Department of the Interior and Local
18 Government and the Department of Social Welfare and Development.
19

20 **SEC. 10. Transfer of Existing LCC Secretariat and its Appropriations to the**
21 **BAE.** – Pursuant to Sec. 7 of this Act, the existing secretariat of the LCC, including
22 the appropriations corresponding to their salaries and other benefits, shall be
23 transferred to and absorbed by the BAE of the DepEd: *Provided*, That such transfer
24 shall neither cause any diminution in the salaries of the personnel concerned nor
25 loss of rank and seniority: *Provided, Further*, That the transfer of positions and
26 corresponding appropriations to the BAE shall be subject to the guidelines to be
27 jointly issued by the DepEd and the Department of Budget and Management.
28

29 **SEC. 11. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to cover the initial
30 implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the appropriation of the LCC under
31 the current General Appropriations Act (GAA). Thereafter, the amount necessary for
32 its continuous implementation shall be included in the budget of the DepEd under
33 the annual GAA.
34

35 **SEC. 12. Submission of Annual Report.** – The Council shall submit to the
36 Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture, and the House of
37 Representatives Committee on Basic Education and Culture a detailed annual report
38 of its accomplishments which shall include, among others, its accomplishments,
39 programs and projects, and policy recommendations for the universalization of
40 literacy in the country.
41

42 **SEC. 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from
43 the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the LCC, in consultation with the
44 members of the Council and other stakeholders, shall issue the rules and regulations
45 implementing its provisions.
46

1 **SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.*** – Republic Act No. 7165, as amended by Republic
2 Act No. 10122 otherwise known as “An Act Strengthening the Literacy Coordinating
3 Council by Amending Republic Act No. 7165, Otherwise Known as ‘An Act Creating
4 the Literacy Coordinating Council, Defining Its Powers and Functions, Appropriating
5 Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes’”, is hereby repealed. All other laws, decrees,
6 orders, and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of
7 this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

8
9 **SEC. 15. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
10 unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and
11 effect.

12
13 **SEC. 16. *Effectivity.*** – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act
14 shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a
15 newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,