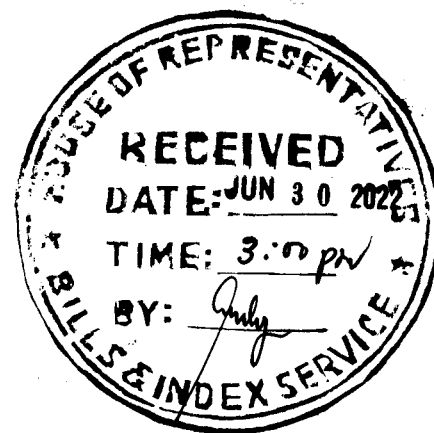


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 203



Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women's Party Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS,
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL**

AN ACT
UPGRADING THE SALARY LEVELS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS TO
SALARY GRADE 15 AND TEACHING PERSONNEL IN HIGHER
EDUCATION TO SALARY GRADE 16, AND INCREASING THE SALARIES
OF NON-TEACHING PERSONNEL TO ₱16,000

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The *Salary Standardization Law* was amended in 2020 but the struggle of public school teachers, faculty in state and local universities and colleges, and education sector personnel for salaries that can afford decent lives for them and their families is far from over.

This latest adjustment, via Republic Act 11466, by no means addressed the disparity between the salaries of those in the low- and middle-level salary grades—who comprise majority of the civil service—and those in the managerial levels and especially of top officials. As always, the rank-and-file are at the losing end in this set-up. As one goes lower in salary grade—clerks, administrative aides, down to the janitorial positions—the poorer he or she gets. Those who need additional finances most are given mere loose change—for one in Salary Grade 1, an average of ₱483 annual increase, to be exact. On the other hand, top officials like those in SG 31 and SG 33 including members of the cabinet and of Congress and the President are given annual increases of more than ₱5,000 up to ₱7,762.

Even after the last tranche of SSL 5 in 2023, the frontliners in education will still be no better off than the police and soldiers in uniform, whose salaries the Duterte administration increased by 50% to 100%. Teachers are given increases of a little

over ₱6,000 spread across four years, or about ₱1,500 annually. Teachers might not bear arms, but they are professionals with qualifications higher than police and soldiers. Teachers cannot enter and remain in the service without the training and fortitude required of the daily and myriad battles in public education—And it must never be alleged that their qualifications, training, and fortitude are less than those of the police and the military.

These measly increases will be quickly eaten away by excise taxes and inflation—especially those brought by the TRAIN Law. For mid-level personnel like teachers, income taxes will further reduce their take-home pay, as their salaries will go past the ₱250,000-cap for exempt incomes. The salaries of majority in the civilian bureaucracy remain insufficient for a family living wage of ₱1,119 per day or ₱33,570 per month for a family of six to have a decent and humane condition of living. The disparity between the salary and the family living wage continues to widen, as inflation steadily rises without corresponding timely increases in salaries.

At present, the dire financial woes of low- to mid-level employees only worsened mere two years after RA 11466, considering the COVID-19 pandemic and several slaps of increases in the prices of fuel and basic commodities. Indeed, how far can ₱25,439 take a Teacher I and his or her family at a time when fuel prices—rising weekly—are nearing ₱100 per liter? Until when can the humble janitor stretch his or her base monthly pay of ₱12,517? (Their net salaries are in fact much lower.)

Hence, this bill proposes substantial salary increases through salary upgrading for teachers and education sector personnel to close the gap between their salaries and the cost of living. It will also address the distortion created by the doubling of entry-level pay of military and uniformed personnel. It also proposes the annual adjustment of salaries to ensure that these keep pace with the cost of living. This bill mandates the Department of Budget and Management, in consultation with public sector unions, to recommend to Congress the appropriation of the necessary funds.

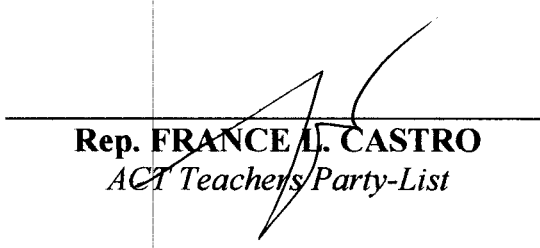
Furthermore, the need for Salary Grade 15 for entry-level public school teachers is highlighted with the recent Supreme Court decision which upheld Salary Grade 15 for public nurses and ordered the funding of their victory, one unacknowledged by government since 2002. Government nurses and public school teachers possess comparable qualifications, training, and duties—both being frontline employees in the delivery of basic health and education services—and our laws such as the *Magna Carta for Public School Teachers* (Republic Act 4670) mandate that their salaries must also be comparable.

This bill parallels the demand of the rest of those dutifully toiling in the civilian bureaucracy for substantial salary increases and for a national minimum salary of ₱16,000, as well as the demand of workers in the private sector for a national minimum daily wage.

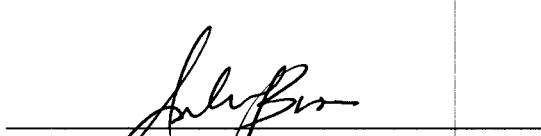
Heeding the demand for substantial salary increases promotes and protects the rights of the majority of our frontliners in education to decent lives, to be fully compensated for their hard work, and to a just return of the taxes they are faithfully paying. It is a matter of justice, one that must be granted at the soonest possible time for teachers and non-teaching personnel.

The fourth tranche of SSL 5 will take effect next year, in 2023, and teachers and other employees in the education sector, fear that this final adjustment will follow the trend of past adjustments of giving paltry increases to those in the rank-and-file, thus further distorting the salary scales to their disadvantage. Before this happens, there exists the urgent—and yet unmet—need to immediately correct the distortion.

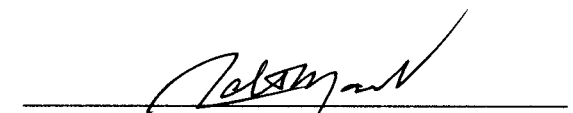
For these reasons, immediate approval of this bill is sought.



Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Party-List



Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party



Rep. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL
KABATAAN Party-List

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to alleviate the living conditions of government employees and to guarantee employees' rights to living wage.

The State policies of ensuring that education receives the highest budgetary priority and that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment are hereby reiterated.

In the formulation of decisions with regard to education reforms, the State shall likewise hold paramount the protection and promotion of the right of citizens to quality education at all levels and the rights of education workers to human conditions of work and a living wage.

SEC. 2. *Upgrading of the Salary Levels of Public School Teachers in Basic Education.* The present minimum salary grade level of public school teachers shall be upgraded from Salary Grade 11 to Salary Grade 15. Salary grade levels of those occupying higher positions shall be adjusted accordingly.

SEC. 3. *Upgrading of the Salary Levels of Public Teaching Personnel in Higher Education.* The present minimum salary grade level of teaching personnel or instructors in public universities and colleges shall be upgraded from Salary Grade 12 to Salary Grade 16. Salary grade levels of all other teaching personnel occupying higher positions shall be adjusted accordingly.

SEC. 4. *Raising of the Minimum Salaries of Regular Employees in Public Elementary and High Schools.* The present salary of a regular entry-level position in public elementary and high schools shall not be less than Sixteen Thousand Pesos (P16,000) a month. The salaries of those occupying higher positions shall be adjusted accordingly.

SEC. 5. *Annual Adjustment of Salaries.* Salaries of public school teachers and non-teaching personnel shall be adjusted annually to keep pace with the cost of living. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM), in consultation with public sector unions, shall recommend to Congress the appropriation of the necessary funds.

SEC. 6. *Rules and Regulations.* The Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and the DBM shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from current appropriations. Thereafter, funds needed in subsequent years shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,