

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 206



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
LOWERING THE OPTIONAL RETIREMENT AGE OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS
FROM SIXTY (60) YEARS TO FIFTY-SIX (56) YEARS, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE SECTION 13-A OF REPUBLIC ACT 8291, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
"THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM ACT OF 1997"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill proposes to lower the optional retirement age for government workers which include the public school teachers from 60 to 56 years old.

Earlier retirement is one of the demands resoundingly voiced during formal and informal consultations with public school teachers conducted by this Representation. Teachers protest that, with the hazards and level of stress accompanying their duties, compulsory retirement at the late stage of 65 years old will not allow them to fully enjoy their retirement years. Teachers usually leave the profession not with satisfied smiles but assaulted by various illnesses; whatever retirement benefits they receive will be spent not for their rest or their own businesses but solely for medical bills.

Teaching in our country's public schools is indeed a challenging occupation, with duties claiming much from teachers not just physically, but emotionally and psychologically as well. The Philippines ranks among the countries with the most dismal statistics descriptive of teachers' working conditions, with average pupil-teacher ratios from 31 students (primary level) to 45 students to each teacher (secondary level), and average class size of 42.4 (primary) and 43.7 (secondary). (UNESCO, 2015) Officially, instruction time is six hours each day, but actually goes up to more than eight including advisory loads. Teachers work in 40 out of 54 weeks per year, but they have duties during vacation months, and even beyond the classroom and the school premises.

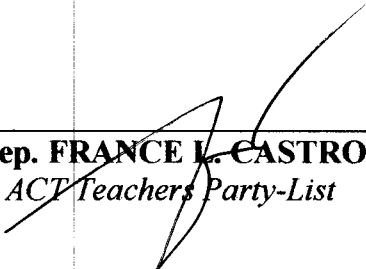
Indeed, when compared to figures worldwide, it is harder to be a public school teacher in the Philippines than in most countries. However, our teachers retire five years later than those in most countries. Retirement age is 60 in most North American, European, and Asian countries.

Respect and humane consideration demand that a person of 55 years—a few years shy of being a senior citizen—should not be required to perform the arduous functions expected of a public school teacher in the Philippines. At such stage of their lives, public school teachers should at least be given the choice if they wish to rest from the profession and enjoy more good and healthy years ahead.

As rigorous work and the physical and psychological burdens it causes likewise applies to all those working in government, this measure also extends the benefit of earlier retirement to the rest of the employees in the civil service.

This bill was approved on third reading in the 18th and 17th Congresses (House Bills 5509 and 8683, respectively).

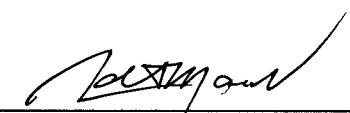
For the above reasons, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



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 in the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Section 13-A of Republic Act 8291, otherwise known as "*The Government Service Insurance System Act of 1997*" is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 13-A. *Conditions for Entitlement.* – A member who retires from the service shall be entitled to the retirement benefits enumerated in paragraph (a) of Section 13 hereof: **Provided, That SUCH MEMBER:**

- (1) [he] has rendered at least fifteen (15) years of service;
- (2) [he] is at least [sixty (60)] **FIFTY-SIX (56)** years of age at the time of retirement;
and
- (3) [he] is not receiving a monthly pension benefit from permanent total disability.

SEC. 2. *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 or modified accordingly.

SEC. 3. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,