

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4966



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Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE IRENE GAY F. SAULOG**  
KALINGA PARTY-LIST

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#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. (Article II, Section 13, 1987 Constitution). Moreover, Article II, Section 15 states that the people's right to health shall be protected and promoted by the State.

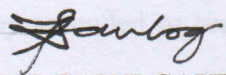
Guidance counselors perform an important role in the public-school system. They provide career guidance and counseling to the students. With the passage of the Mental Health Act, guidance counselors are mental health professionals who provide a myriad of mental health services which includes psychosocial, psychiatric, or neurologic activities.

With the increased attention paid to mental health issues nowadays, it is important that there be an adequate number of guidance counselors in public schools. The continuing vacancy in many guidance counselor positions is alarming. This shortage means that many students do not receive proper guidance regarding career choices. Worse, this also means that even more students do not have access to a qualified professional who can help them with their problems of diverse nature.

Despite the passage of the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, smoking among the youth remains a persistent problem. One of the studies that documented this is the Global Youth Tobacco Survey. The 2019 report found that 36.3% of the students aged 13-15 years old have tried smoking tobacco. 14.5% are described as current smokers or those who have smoked anytime within the past 30 days. It has to be emphasized that the study only captured a segment of the youth. Combining the figures with the smokers from the other youth age brackets would clearly yield a much higher number of youth smokers.

The said study also reported that 77.1% of the cigarette smokers obtained their cigarette from a store or shop.

This bill aims to address these disturbing findings by increasing the penalties for the sale of tobacco products to minors. It is hoped that doing so would contribute to minimizing, if not eliminating smoking among the youth. It is in our nation's best interest that we preserve the health of the Filipino youth.

  
**IRENE GAY F. SAULOG**  
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**AN ACT**  
**UPGRADING THE MINIMUM SALARY GRADE OF PUBLIC-SCHOOL GUIDANCE**  
**COUNSELORS FROM SALARY GRADE 11 TO SALARY GRADE 12, AND**  
**APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFROM**

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

**SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.*** – The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. In this regard, the State shall ensure that there are adequate guidance counselors in public schools to help the students receive services including but not limited to career guidance, counseling, and mental health.

**SEC. 2. *Raising the Minimum Monthly Salaries of Public School Guidance Counselors.*** – The minimum monthly salaries of guidance counselors is hereby raised from Salary Grade 11 to Salary Grade 12. The salaries of those occupying higher positions shall be adjusted in increments of two Salary Grades. Thus, the next higher position shall have Salary Grade 14, followed by Salary Grade 16 for the next higher position, and so forth.

**SEC. 3. Coverage.** – This Act shall cover all guidance counselors, as defined by existing laws, in all public schools in the elementary and secondary levels, whether nationally or locally funded, including those in technical-vocational schools and state universities and colleges.

**SEC. 4. Priority in Budget Allocation.** – The government shall appropriate such amount as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act: Provided, That the salary increase of guidance counselors in public schools shall take priority over non-educational and non-agricultural budgetary allocations.

**SEC. 5. Budget Requirement.** – The Department of Education shall come up with a specific programmed budget to cover the expenses for the upgrading in salary levels for all corresponding guidance counselor plantilla positions for a period of at least five (5) years to allow the Department of Budget and Management to make the necessary budgetary adjustments to facilitate the smooth implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 6. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act for the year following the approval of this Acts.

**SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The Department of Education and the Department of Budget and Management shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 8. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, letters of instruction, executive issuances, resolutions, orders or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

**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,