

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7376



Introduced by Honorable Representatives
ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party),
FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers Partylist),
and **RAOUL A. MANUEL (Kabataan Partylist)**

**AN ACT IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES FOR GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT
IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN EDUCATION OR TRAINING INSTITUTIONS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11313, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE SAFE SPACES ACT**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This year, the Philippines will celebrate the 4th anniversary of the enactment of the Republic Act (R.A.) No. 11313, or the Safe Spaces Act, which was passed into law on April 17, 2019. The measure seeks punishment for sexual harassers, abusers, and predators in schools, workplaces, and other institutions and public spaces.

But, despite the law's passage, various forms of sexual harassment and abuse have been on the rise. In 2020, Plan International conducted a survey and in-depth interviews of over 14,000 girls aged 15 to 24 in 31 countries, including the Philippines. The report shows that girls who use social media in high and low-income countries alike are subjected to different forms of online harassment, such as threats of sexual violence, sexual harassment, threats of physical violence, Anti-LGBTIQ+ comments, racist comments, body-shaming, purposeful embarrassment, stalking, and abusive and insulting language.

In the Philippines, the survey also revealed that sixty-eight percent (68%) or nearly 7 in 10 of young women, have experienced online harassment. Most of these girls also said that harassment happens frequently fifty percent (50%) or very frequently thirty percent (33%). 8 out of 10, or seventy-nine percent (79%), said that they or other girls they know have received threats of sexual violence on social media. The majority, or sixty-seven percent (67%), of the Filipino girls and young women who were surveyed, said they were harassed by people they know.

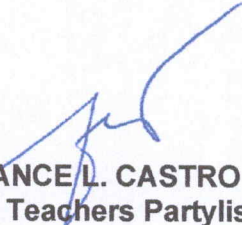
Gabriela Women's Party, one of the principal authors of the Safe Spaces Act, filed House Resolution No. 46 to investigate the cases of sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse against students in the Philippine High School for the Arts in Laguna. The cases lodged by the students against the perpetrators prompt serious reflections on how the Safe Spaces Act is being enforced, especially in schools.

The growing trend of sexual harassment perpetrated against young women online and in public spaces is alarming. While an existing law penalizes various forms of sexual harassment, it is clearly not enough. There is a need to review the Safe Spaces Act and ensure that stiffer penalties may be imposed on perpetrators and institutions who fail to act on the reported cases of sexual harassment.

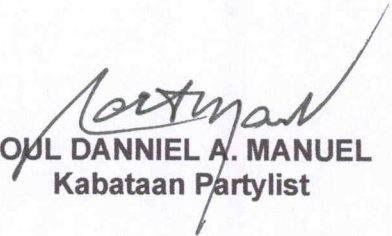
In sum, immediate amendments to the penalties under the Safe Spaces Act will further protect students from sexual harassment and ensure stiffer penalties for perpetrators of abuse. Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party



FRANCE L. CASTRO
Act Teachers Partylist



RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL
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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress
assembled:*

SECTION 1. A new section is hereby added after Section 19 of the Republic Act (R.A.) No. 11313, or the Safe Spaces Act, to read as follows:

**"SECTION 19-A. PENALTIES FOR GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE
WORKPLACE.** – THE PENALTY OF *PRISION CORRECCIONAL* IN ITS MAXIMUM
PERIOD, OR A FINE OF NOT LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS
(PHP250,000.00) BUT NOT MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS
(PHP500,000.00), OR BOTH, AT THE DISCRETION OF THE COURT, SHALL BE
IMPOSED UPON ANY PERSON FOUND GUILTY OF ANY GENDER-BASED SEXUAL
HARASSMENT UNDER THIS ARTICLE.

IF THE PERPETRATOR IS THE HEAD OF THE WORKPLACE OR ORGANIZATION,
HIS OR HER APPOINTMENT SHALL BE AUTOMATICALLY DEEMED REVOKED UPON
CONVICTION. AN ALIEN WHO COMMITS GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT
IN THE WORKPLACE SHALL BE SUBJECT TO DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS
AFTER SERVING SENTENCE AND/OR PAYMENT OF FINES."

SECTION 2. A new section is hereby added after Section 23 of R.A. No. 11313, to read as follows:

**"SECTION 23-A. PENALTIES FOR GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN
EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.** – THE PENALTY OF *PRISION
CORRECCIONAL* IN ITS MAXIMUM PERIOD, OR A FINE OF NOT LESS THAN TWO
HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS (PHP250,000.00) BUT NOT MORE THAN FIVE
HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (PHP500,000.00), OR BOTH, AT THE DISCRETION
OF THE COURT SHALL BE IMPOSED UPON ANY PERSON FOUND GUILTY OF ANY
GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT UNDER THIS ARTICLE.

IF THE PERPETRATOR IS THE HEAD OF THE EDUCATIONAL OR TRAINING INSTITUTION, OR ORGANIZATION, HIS OR HER APPOINTMENT SHALL BE AUTOMATICALLY DEEMED REVOKED UPON CONVICTION. AN ALIEN WHO COMMITS GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN AN EDUCATION OR TRAINING INSTITUTION SHALL BE SUBJECT TO DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS AFTER SERVING SENTENCE AND/OR PAYMENT OF FINES.”

SECTION 3. Separability Clause. - If any portion or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining portions or provisions shall not be affected.

SECTION 4. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,