



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7405**



Introduced by Representative Midy N. Cua
Lone District, Quirino

AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE PROMOTION AND DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN BASIC EDUCATION SCHOOLS THROUGH THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAM, PRESCRIBING THE HIRING AND DEPLOYMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, PRESCRIBING THE CREATION OF PLANTILLA POSITIONS OF GUIDANCE ASSOCIATES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, INCREASING THE SALARY GRADES OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 13, Article II of the 1987 Constitution explicitly recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and the need to promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. To achieve this, proper guidance must be extended to the youth to ensure and enable their fullest development physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, spiritually, and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity appropriate to their corresponding developmental stage¹.

This bill institutionalizes the Mental Health and Well-Being Program which shall provide mental health services, emotional, developmental and preventive programs, and other support services, and eliminate the stigma on mental health counseling, to ensure the emotional and social well-being of basic education learners and teaching and non-teaching personnel in both public and private schools. In line with this, the Department of Education (DepEd), in consultation with the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, other relevant government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector, shall develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated multi-year roadmap using the Whole of Society Approach.

¹ Articles 9 and 10, Presidential Decree 603 or the Child and Youth Welfare Code, state:

Art. 9. Levels of Growth. The child shall be given adequate care, assistance and guidance through his various levels of growth, from infancy to early and later childhood, to puberty and adolescence, and when necessary even after he shall have attained age 21.

Art. 10. Phases of Development. - The child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to ensure and enable his fullest development physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity appropriate to the corresponding developmental stage.

To ensure the institutionalization of an effective, efficient, and integrated Mental Health and Well-Being Program, the bill mandates to: (1) establish and maintain a Mental Health and Well-Being Center ("Center") in every public basic education school as well as ensure their establishment and maintenance in private basic education schools in the country; (2) prescribe the creation of a sufficient number of plantilla items for the positions of Guidance Counselors and Guidance Associates; (3) set the qualifications and functions of a Guidance Associate; (4) hire mental health professionals and deploy them to public elementary, secondary, and vocational institutions; (5) guarantee the professional and career development of mental health professionals; (6) increase the salary grades of Guidance Counselors who are currently classified as Guidance Counselor I, Guidance Counselor II, and Guidance Counselor III from Salary Grades 11, 12, and 13, respectively, to Salary Grades 16, 17, and 18; (7) endeavor to attract the best available and qualified officers and support personnel of the Centers through career progression, adequate and competitive remuneration, benefits, incentives and allowances, scholarship and training grants, and exchange programs; (8) carry out the appropriate regular training and skills upgrading and development for mental health professionals and support personnel; and (9) ensure that teacher education institutions offering teacher education programs include in the curriculum subjects on mental health.

The DepEd requires basic education schools to hire one (1) Guidance Counselor for every 500 students. Currently, however, the Philippines has only 4,069 registered Guidance Counselors as of June 2022 since the first batch took the licensure examinations in 2008.² Clearly, with 27.4 million elementary and high school students,³ the desired ratio of 1:500 Guidance Counselor to students is far from being met. It has also been revealed that the national shortage of guidance counselors is hampering DepEd's efforts to protect students' mental health.⁴

This measure recognizes the shortage of registered Guidance Counselors and perceives the urgent need to address the current challenges in the delivery of the appropriate mental health and well-being services and programs, the increasing number of incidents of suicide due to various mental health issues and disorders, and the need to provide the needed intervention to ensure the mental health and well-being of learners as well as of the teaching and non-teaching personnel.


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² Data from the Professional Regulation Commission Board of Guidance and Counseling is inclusive of individuals who may have shifted careers or passed war. Note that for 2020 and 2021, there were no licensure examinations due to the pandemic.

³ SY 2021-2022 data as of December 2021 for both public and private elementary and secondary schools, the DepEd, including the BARMM

⁴ Philippine Star, *Lack of guidance counselors hampers prevention of student suicides*, Published on 1 February 2023, Available at <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/02/01/2241784/lack-guidance-counselors-hampers-prevention-student-suicides> (Accessed on 22 February 2023)



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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Basic Education Mental Health and Well-being Promotion Act*”.

SEC. 2. 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. Towards this end, it shall be the duty of the State to establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of society and its people.

To achieve these goals, the State shall:

- a) institutionalize an effective, efficient, and integrated mental health and well-being program, and strengthen the existing mental health and guidance and counseling program that will ensure the mental health and emotional well-being of the learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel in all public and private basic education schools in the country;
- b) hire and capacitate competent mental health professionals, and other qualified support personnel to meet the current demand of the education sector. They shall develop strategies and standards that will promote and ensure the mental health and well-being of the learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel; and
- c) protect and ensure the physical, moral, intellectual, and social well-being of learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel in public and private basic education schools to

make them resilient and well-adjusted individuals possessed with the appropriate qualities, skills, and attitude in life.

SEC. 3. Objectives. – The objectives of this Act are as follows:

- a) to enable the Department of Education (DepEd) to recruit, train and hire additional mental health professionals, promote and sustain their well-being, competencies, professional growth, and career development in the DepEd;
- b) to adequately address the mental, emotional and developmental needs of learners as well as of the teaching and non-teaching personnel through the provision of mental health professionals, with the end view of developing their social skills, self-esteem, individual resilience, motivation, self-awareness, and sense of belonging in the school community, among others;
- c) to promote the emotional, psychological and the mental health and well-being of learners and teachers to enhance their learning and classroom preparedness, including those learners identified as children in conflict with the law (CICL), students at risk of dropping out (SRDO), learner-victims of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), and learners-victims of other related forms of child abuse and criminal acts;
- d) to support teachers and other education personnel in improving classroom management through the conduct of behavioral and other guidance-related interventions, to improve the learners' well-being, emotional and psychosocial development, daily disposition and career decision-making;
- e) to train the teachers and the non-teaching personnel in developing awareness and skills to enable them to identify early warning signs of mental health problems and the need for mental health interventions;
- f) to establish linkages with the community to include parents, guardians, and concerned stakeholders, through the promotion of mental health and well-being programs and activities geared to address the mental, emotional and developmental needs of learners as well as of the teaching and non-teaching personnel;
- g) to support parents, guardians, and concerned stakeholders in improving the school behavior and academic success of the learners;
- h) to remove the emotional, behavioral, and psychosocial barriers to learning to achieve a learner-friendly, inclusive, safe, and motivating learning environment; and
- i) to provide aftercare support in the treatment of mental health concerns of learners as well as of the teachers and non-teaching personnel.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

- a) *Counseling* – refers to a dynamic face-to-face personal interaction between the counselor and the counselee, where the counselor employs various methods, approaches or techniques to enhance the counselee's intrapersonal and interpersonal development and competencies;
- b) *Guidance Associate* – refers to an individual who holds a guidance associate plantilla in the DepEd and a graduate of Bachelor's degree in Guidance and Counseling, Psychology,

Social Work, Human Services, and other allied disciplines or any related courses, and possesses the qualification provided hereafter;

- c) *Guidance Counselor* – refers to an individual who possesses license or certification granted by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) and holds a minimum master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, Guidance, or Counseling without prejudice to those registered under the grandfather's clause of Republic Act (R.A.) 9258, otherwise known as the "Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004," and is competent to perform guidance and counseling, career guidance and implement mental health and well-being programs;
- d) *Guidance Services Specialist* – refers to the specific plantilla position in the DepEd of Guidance Counselor who are tasked to ensure the mental health and well-being of learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel;
- e) *Guidance Teacher* – refers to a regular teacher who is given additional assignments related to guidance or counseling services, or both, aside from the teaching load, to augment the lack of supply of Guidance Counselors. They shall be selected by the school principal based on their leadership skills and potentials, and competence in handling guidance-related concerns. Preferably, a Guidance Teacher has at least a background in psychology, values education, or units in guidance and counseling;
- f) *Mental Health* – as defined in R.A. No. 11036, otherwise known as the "Mental Health Act", refers to a state of well-being in which the individual realizes one's own abilities and potentials, copes adequately with the normal stresses of life, displays resilience in the face of extreme life events, works productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a positive contribution to the community;
- g) *Mental Health Professional* – refers to a medical doctor, nurse, Guidance Counselor, Guidance Associates who can be a psychologist, psychometrician, social worker, or any other appropriately trained and qualified person with specific skills relevant to the provision of mental health and well-being services;
- h) *Mental Health and Well-Being Program* – refers to the system of services designed to maintain the state of well-being of an individual in order that one may realize one's own abilities and potentials, cope adequately with the normal stresses of life, displays resilience in the face of extreme life events, works productively and fruitfully, and be able to make a positive contribution to the community;
- i) *Mental Health Services* – as defined in R.A. No. 11036, refer to the psychosocial, psychiatric or neurologic activities and programs along the whole range of the mental health support services including promotion, prevention, treatment and aftercare, which are provided by mental health facilities and mental health professionals;
- j) *Multi-year Mental Health and Well-Being Program Roadmap* – refers to a document that shall serve as a guide for the DepEd, Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), other relevant government agencies, and the private stakeholders for the optimal realization of the objectives of this Act. It shall contain the current policy, practices, gaps, and challenges affecting the mental health and well-being of learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel, as well as the

implementation of the current guidance and counseling or mental health programs of schools. It shall likewise set detailed targets and outcomes for a minimum period of five (5) years and provide the stakeholders' specific actions or interventions to include implementation and monitoring strategies and annual budgetary requirements. It shall be subject to a periodic review and updating to determine its implementation status and ensure that the implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Program as envisioned in this Act is sustained;

- k) *Psychologist* – refers to a natural person who has professional training and clinical skills in psychotherapeutic intervention and assessment for mental health problems, possesses license or certification granted by the PRC, and holds a minimum Master's Degree in Psychology without prejudice to those granted licenses under the grandfather's clause of R.A. 10029, otherwise known as the "Psychology Act of 2009"; and
- l) *Psychometrician* – refers to a natural person who has professional training skills in psychological assessment, possesses license or certification granted by the PRC, and holds a minimum Bachelor's Degree in Psychology without prejudice to those granted licenses under the grandfather's clause of R.A. 10029, otherwise known as the "Psychology Act of 2009".

SEC. 5. *The Mental Health and Well-Being Program.* – The Mental Health and Well-Being Program is hereby institutionalized which shall be implemented by the DepEd. It shall be designed to provide mental health services, emotional, developmental and preventive programs, and other support services, and to eliminate the stigma on mental health counseling, to ensure the emotional and social well-being of basic education learners and teaching and non-teaching personnel in both public and private schools.

SEC. 6. *The Mental Health and Well-Being Program Roadmap.* – To ensure the effective implementation of this Act, the DepEd, through the Schools Division Offices (SDOs), in consultation with the DOH, the DSWD, other relevant government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector, shall develop and implement a comprehensive and integrated multi-year roadmap using the Whole of Society Approach.

The multi-year roadmap shall likewise be crafted and implemented in complementarity with the provisions of R.A. No. 11036 or the "Mental Health Act," R.A. No. 11206 or the "Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act," and R.A. No. 10533 or the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013".

The Superintendents of the SDOs shall require all schools within their jurisdiction to periodically prepare and submit reports on the implementation of each school of the multi-year roadmap and of the other provisions of this Act, and submit a consolidated report to the Secretary of the DepEd through the Regional Director having jurisdiction of the SDOs.

SEC. 7. *The Mental Health and Well-Being Center; Personnel.* – Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2, Section 27 of R.A. No. 9258, and to facilitate the effective implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Program and the provisions of this Act, the DepEd shall establish and maintain a Mental Health and Well-Being Center (Center) in every public basic education school as well as ensure their establishment and maintenance in private basic education schools in the country. The Center shall be equipped with functional physical facilities, located within an adequate space, and provide privacy and accessibility to the learners, the teaching and non-teaching personnel, and parents.

For this purpose, secondary schools may utilize the Career Guidance and Counseling Program Centers required to be established under Section 5 of R.A. No. 11206. Existing Guidance and Counseling Offices may be utilized for this purpose or integrated into the Center.

The Center shall be supervised and headed by the school principal and shall have a Registered Guidance Counselor, Guidance Associate, and other support personnel.

SEC. 8. *Functions of the Center.* – This Center in every public and private basic education school shall implement the provisions of this Act by delivering mental and well-being services to address the mental, emotional and developmental needs of learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel.

It shall likewise craft and implement a localized multi-year roadmap anchored on the DepEd's multi-year roadmap as provided herein.

In crafting the localized multi-year roadmap, the Center shall undertake the following steps in the development and implementation of the multi-year roadmap:

- a) needs assessment;
- b) identification of priorities, goals and objectives;
- c) designing activities or services to meet the desired goals and objectives;
- d) drawing up a program multi-year budget, including the allocation of resources;
- e) identification and hiring of necessary personnel as provided in this Act;
- f) evaluation and its outcomes; and
- g) revision of goals leading to the specification of new objectives.

The Center shall periodically prepare and submit reports to the SDO in its implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Program.

SEC. 9. *Organization of the Center Officers and Support Personnel, and Creation of Positions.* – To ensure the effective implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Program and the delivery of mental health and well-being services towards the attainment of the objectives of this Act, the DepEd, in consultation with the DBM and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), shall develop an organization focused on the implementation of this Act and of the multi-year roadmap. As such, a sufficient number of plantilla items for the positions of Guidance Counselors, and Guidance Associates shall be prescribed to be created in schools in order to cater to the needs of learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel, according to minimum standards to be determined by the DepEd and the DOH.

The concerned agencies shall consider the position classification, salaries, career progression, and the detailed description of the duties and responsibilities of such officers and support personnel.

SEC. 10. *Personnel for the Center.* – The Center shall have a Registered Guidance Counselor, a Guidance Associate, and other necessary officers and support personnel as may be determined by the school principal. It shall be headed by a Registered Guidance Counselor who shall have qualified pursuant to the provisions of R.A. No. 9258.

SEC. 11. *Qualifications of a Guidance Associate.* – To qualify as a Guidance Associate, one must have:

- a) completed the academic requirements for a Bachelor's Degree in Guidance and Counseling or completed the academic requirements for a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, and other allied disciplines; and

- b) must have earned a minimum of twelve (12) units of Behavioral Science subjects and two hundred (200) hours of supervised practicum or internship experience on guidance and counseling preferably in a school or community setting.

SEC. 12. *Functions of a Guidance Associate.* – A Guidance Associate shall perform the following functions:

- a) actively participate in the implementation of the Mental Health and Well-Being Program;
- b) conduct preliminary screening or evaluation of learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel using pre-approved forms;
- c) conduct or assist in the orientation of teachers, parents, learners, or the community on psychosocial well-being and mental health;
- d) engage in conversations with, or listen to, learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel who require such support from the Center;
- e) coordinate with teachers, parents or guardians, and external partners on concerns affecting the psychosocial well-being or mental health and academic performance of learners who need guidance and counseling, and facilitate the conduct of such guidance and counseling by the Guidance Counselor;
- f) assist the Guidance Counselor in assessing and monitoring learners and the teaching and non-teaching personnel who need guidance or counseling, or both;
- g) participate and assist in the implementation and facilitation of educational and training workshops for teachers, Center officers, support personnel, and parents; and
- h) perform such other functions as may be assigned by the Guidance Counselor or school principal.

SEC. 13. *Hiring and Deployment of Mental Health Professionals.* – Subject to the guidelines set by the CSC and the DBM, the DepEd shall hire and deploy mental health professionals such that each public elementary, secondary, and vocational institution shall have mental health professionals or mental health service providers within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act.

Notwithstanding the provisions of R.A. No. 9258, public and private educational institutions may hire, as may be necessary, graduates with relevant background in psychology or similar fields, who do not yet qualify as mental health professionals, to provide school-based mental health services: *Provided*, That they undergo sufficient capacity building as determined by the DepEd and supervised by qualified mental health professionals in their provision of mental health services: *Provided, further*, That they shall be licensed as mental health professionals within three (3) years from their date of hiring.

The DepEd shall establish mechanisms to maximize existing mental health services offered by other executive departments such as agencies attached to the DOH and the DSWD.

SEC. 14. *Professional and Career Development of Mental Health Professionals.* – The DepEd, in coordination with the DBM, CSC, DOH, and PRC, shall:

- a) prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan that shall include provisions on personal wellness, merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service training, postgraduate scholarship grants, research grants, incentive award system;
- b) match the salary grades of mental health professionals related items with respect to the provisions of R.A. No. 6758, otherwise known as the "Position Classification and Compensation Act";
- c) align the qualifications and standards for the qualification outcomes of mental health professionals to R.A. No. 10968, otherwise known as the "Philippine Qualifications Framework Act";
- d) revisit the DepEd's organizational structure in order to provide competent and professional personnel who will provide supervision and technical assistance to Guidance Counselors, Guidance Associate and other personnel at the school levels;
- e) review, revise and develop the duties and responsibilities of mental health professionals in accordance with their professionalizing laws;
- f) prepare performance evaluation plan that considers the improvement of individual counselor efficiency and organizational effectiveness: *Provided*, That each employee shall be informed regularly by the immediate supervisor of one's performance evaluation; and
- g) provide for the institutionalization of the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Manual.

SEC. 15. Salary Grade Adjustment of Guidance Counselors. – The salary schedule for the positions of Guidance Counselors shall be modified as follows:

Position Title	Current Salary Grade	Modified Salary Grade
Guidance Counselor I	11	16
Guidance Counselor II	12	17
Guidance Counselor III	13	18

SEC. 16. Remuneration, Benefits, and Incentives for Center Officers and Support Personnel. – The DepEd shall endeavor to attract the best available and qualified Center officers and support personnel through career progression, adequate and competitive remuneration, benefits, incentives and allowances, scholarship and training grants, and exchange programs. As such, the career and salary grades of mental health professionals shall provide for a gradual progression from a minimum to a maximum salary by means of regular increments, to be given regularly based on merit and competencies as similarly given to Master Teachers.

The salary grades of mental health professionals and support personnel shall be set in accordance with the Revised Compensation and Position Classification System and other CSC Rules and Regulations.

SEC. 17. Other Benefits. – The mental health professionals shall enjoy the rights and privileges as provided in the Magna Carta for Public Health Workers, Mental Health Law, and other pertinent laws.

SEC. 18. Scholarship Program and Service Obligation. – The DepEd, in collaboration with the CHED, shall develop a scholarship program for in-service teachers who shall take the required master's degree or units on Guidance and Counseling, or other related courses to equip them with knowledge on policies, principles, and pedagogies on guidance and counseling.

As their return service, the grantees shall serve as Guidance Counselors or Guidance Associates as they continue to work in the DepEd for such reasonable period as may be determined by the latter.

SEC. 19. *Continued Education and Training.* – The DepEd shall carry out the appropriate regular training and skills upgrading and development for mental health professionals and support personnel.

To ensure that the in-service teachers have the basic knowledge in guidance and counseling, the DepEd, within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, shall ensure that all teachers as well as the non-teaching personnel in public and private basic education schools are equipped with the needed basic training to detect learners who may need mental health support and guidance and counseling, and refer them to the Center for the appropriate intervention.

SEC. 20. *Pre-Service Education and In-Service Training.* – The DepEd shall collaborate with the CHED to ensure that teacher education institutions offering bachelor of elementary or secondary education degrees include in the curriculum subjects on mental health.

In order to adequately provide the needed personnel for the implementation of this Act, the CHED and the DepEd shall closely coordinate and effectively implement programs necessary to support the continuing education of DepEd personnel including a unified system for ladderized education, which shall have a mechanism for conversion of career experience into education degree credits. This shall include programs for transitions and progressions for teaching and non-teaching personnel, such as but not limited to programs for an education degree graduate to become a Guidance Associate, and a psychology degree graduate to become a Guidance Counselor: *Provided, that*, they shall pass the required licensure examinations or were issued the required certifications.

SEC. 21. *Readiness Assessment.* – Upon the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd shall conduct an evaluation of all schools to determine their readiness in the provision of mental health and well-being services, including a general assessment of each school's current mental health and well-being programs and services, as well as the resources and personnel they need: *Provided, that*, the DepEd shall coordinate with the CHED to ensure the supply of qualified professionals through recruitment of students in the appropriate courses and ensure their seamless progression from higher education to employment, taking into consideration the demand for such personnel in the multi-year roadmap as provided in this Act.

SEC. 22. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the budget as a separate line item in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The DepEd shall likewise submit the funding requirements, with its corresponding annual targets for the implementation of the multi-year roadmap, to the DBM and other concerned agencies for the determination of appropriate budget allocation and inclusion under the yearly National Expenditure Program of the government.

SEC. 23. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee (JCOC) on Mental Health.* – There is hereby created a JCOC to oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Act. The JCOC shall be composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and the House of Representatives with the Chairs of the Committees on Basic Education of both Houses as Co-chairs. The Chairs of the Committees on Higher and Technical Education of both Houses shall likewise be designated as members of the JCOC. The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate shall designate the other three (3) members of the JCOC of the House and the Senate, respectively, from among the members of the Committees on Basic Education, one (1) member of which shall be from the minority.

SEC. 24. *Sunset Review.* – Within five (5) years after the effectivity of this Act, or as the need arises, the JCOC shall conduct a sunset review. For purposes of this Act, the term "sunset review" shall mean a systematic evaluation by the JCOC of the implementing agencies' performance and accomplishments, including the impact of this Act, for purposes of determining remedial legislation.

SEC. 25. *Annual Report.* – For a period of five (5) years from the approval of this Act, the DepEd shall submit an annual report to the Committees on Basic Education of both houses of Congress on the status of the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 26. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in consultation with relevant national government agencies and other concerned stakeholders, shall issue the rules and regulations implementing its provisions. The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) issued pursuant to this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

SEC. 27. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 28. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly. Except as otherwise provided in this Act, nothing herein contained shall repeal, amend or modify the provisions of R.A. No. 9258

SEC. 29. *Effectivity.* – Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,