

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL 8550



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
MANDATING THE RETURN OF THE JUNE-TO-MARCH SCHOOL
CALENDAR, FURTHER AMENDING SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO.
7797, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO LENGTHEN THE SCHOOL
CALENDAR FROM TWO HUNDRED (200) DAYS TO NOT MORE THAN
TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220) CLASS DAYS"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution guarantees every Filipino's right to education. This includes the State's responsibility to provide accessible and quality education to all. This is the declared purpose of Republic Act 7797, which lengthened the school calendar from the 200 days implemented prior to 1995 to not more than 220 class days.

However, that traditional school calendar was derailed in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic came into the country. School opening, an event highly anticipated and prepared for by schoolchildren and even the community, was repeatedly pushed back, beginning September 2020 with the declaration of a "no vaccine, no classes" policy. Pushed back, until schools were closed entirely. Then, after two long years of "#WalangPasok" (practically, due to the so-called blended learning program), in-person classes resumed in August 2022, the beginning of the first post-pandemic school year.

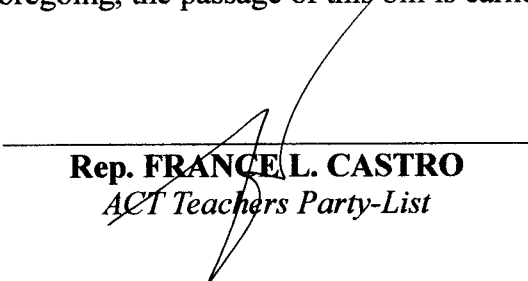
This deviation from the traditional school calendar has caused confusion and immense hardships for students and parents, especially teachers, who lost their

time for rest and recuperation since they were made to work—mostly without remuneration—even during the months when they were supposedly on vacation.

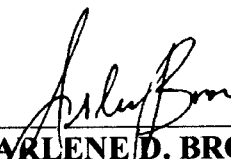
Apart from these effects is the odd yet dangerous phenomena of a tropical country adopting a school calendar ill-suited to its climate. The April-to-May school break long observed in the Philippines was lost with an August school opening, and the results include temperatures sweltering, blood pressures rising, and children and teachers fainting. The intolerable heat in cramped classrooms have led to a worrisome drop in attendance and, for those who persevered in staying in class, had a hard time concentrating and understanding the lessons.

Thus, this bill seeks to mandate the return of the June-to-March school calendar by further amending Section 3 of Republic Act 7797. Under this proposal, the school year will start on the first Monday of June but not later than the last day of August, with a particular proviso for a June opening for School Year 2024-2025 which will ensure the urgent return to the pre-pandemic calendar upon the passage of this Act. And, in consideration of the welfare of public school teachers in the transition, there are mandates for an “early” close of School Year 2023-2024 on the fourth week of May 2024 and the grant of service credits. The first will cut the school year a few days shy of the 180 days of “non-negotiable contact time” set under Department of Education regulations but will give teachers at least a week of rest in between the two school years. The second mandate will ensure that teachers will receive some form of remuneration for the work done during their lost vacation months.

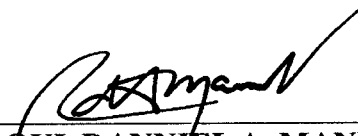
In light of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



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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AN ACT
MANDATING THE RETURN OF THE JUNE-TO-MARCH SCHOOL
CALENDAR, FURTHER AMENDING SECTION 3 OF REPUBLIC ACT 7797,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO LENGTHEN THE SCHOOL
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TWO HUNDRED TWENTY (220) CLASS DAYS"

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

SECTION 1. Section 3 of Republic Act 7797 is hereby further amended to read as follows:

Section 3. *Start of the School Year.* – The school year shall start on the first Monday of June but not later than the last day of August: ***PROVIDED, THAT SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025 SHALL BEGIN ON THE FIRST MONDAY OF JUNE:*** *Provided, FURTHER,* That in the event of a declaration of a state of emergency or state of calamity, the President, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Education, may set different date for the start of the school year in the country or parts thereof.

Notwithstanding, the provision of any law to the contrary, the deferred school opening shall apply to all basic education schools, including foreign or international schools.

In the implementation of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall determine the end of the regular school year, taking into consideration the Christmas and summer vacations, and the peculiar circumstances of each region: **PROVIDED, THAT IN CONSIDERATION OF THE JUNE SCHOOL OPENING OF SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025, THE SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024 SHALL END NOT LATER THAN THE FOURTH WEEK OF MAY 2024. FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL GRANT THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF SERVICE CREDITS TO TEACHERS ON TOP OF THE 15-DAY CAP UNDER EXISTING RULES AND THE PROPORTIONAL VACATION PAY.**

In the exercise of **THE AUTHORITY UNDER THIS SECTION**, the Secretary of Education may authorize the holding of Saturday classes for elementary and secondary levels for public and private schools.

SEC. 2. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education, in consultation with relevant stakeholders including but not limited to all accredited regional teachers' unions, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 3. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, administrative orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with, or contrary to provisions of this Act are hereby modified, amended, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 4. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take immediately upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,