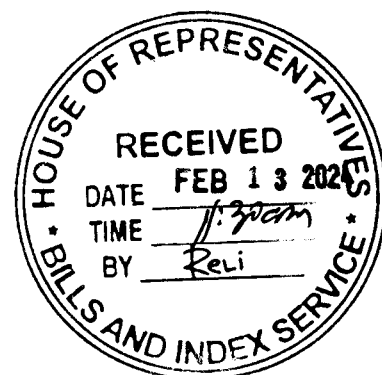


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL No. 9920

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
INCREASING THE MINIMUM SALARIES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL
TEACHERS TO ₱50,000 AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The *Salary Standardization Law* was amended in 2020 but the struggle of public school teachers for salaries that can afford decent lives for them and their families is far from over.

This latest adjustment, via Republic Act 11466 or the *Salary Standardization Law (SSL) of 2019*, by no means addressed the disparity between the salaries of those in the low- and middle-level salary grades—who comprise majority of the civil service—and those in the managerial levels and especially of top officials. As always, the rank-and-file are at the losing end in this set-up. As one goes lower in salary grade—clerks, administrative aides, down to the janitorial positions—the poorer he or she gets. Those who need additional finances most are given mere loose change—for one in Salary Grade 1, an average of ₱483 annual increase, to be exact. **Despite the salary adjustment, the monthly pay of even mid-level personnel like public school teachers (Salary Grade 11)—estimated to be about 803,272 occupying Teacher I to Teacher III positions¹—remains insufficient to meet the family living wage of ₱1,119 per day or ₱33,570 per month. This is the ideal amount for a family of five to have a decent and humane condition of living.**

¹ Figures from the DBM's Manpower Information System as of November 10, 2022

On the other hand, top officials like those in SG 31 to SG 33, including members of the cabinet and of Congress and the President, are given annual increases of more than ₱5,000 up to ₱7,762.

Even after the last tranche of SSL V, the frontliners in education will still be no better off than the police and soldiers in uniform, whose salaries the Duterte administration increased by 50% to 100%. Teachers are given increases of a little over ₱6,000 spread across four years, or about ₱1,500 annually. They might not bear arms, but they are professionals with qualifications higher than police and soldiers. Teachers cannot enter and remain in the service without the training and fortitude required of the daily and myriad battles in public education—And it must never be alleged that their qualifications, training, and fortitude are less than those of the police and the military.

These measly increases are quickly eaten away by inflation and excise taxes — especially those brought by the TRAIN Law. For mid-level personnel like teachers, income taxes further reduce their take-home pay, as their salaries go past the ₱250,000-cap for exempt incomes. The disparity between the salary and the family living wage continues to widen, as inflation steadily rises without corresponding timely increases in salaries. With the measly salaries that public school teachers are receiving, they could not afford their families' basic needs.

At present, their dire financial woes only worsened, considering the COVID-19 pandemic and several slaps of increases in the prices of fuel and basic commodities. Indeed, how far can ₱27,000 take a Teacher I and his or her family at a time when fuel prices rise almost weekly? It must be stressed that this level of pay of the main frontliners of education—professionals who went through long years of academic and practical training—amounts to less than the family living wage. No wonder most teachers would rather work abroad despite the risks and hazards to earn almost thrice or eight times the entry-level salary.

Moreover, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crises that began in 2020, and the international oil crisis, the Filipino people, including government employees, are suffering from rising prices of food and basic goods and services, and oil price hikes. Philippine Statistics Authority data shows that headline inflation rate is 2.8% in January 2024. This might have slowed from last year, yes, but it is still much higher than our neighbors in Asia and the Pacific, like in Thailand which will soon increase its minimum pay for government employees—even with its negative inflation rate.

Hence, this bill proposes substantial salary increases for public school teachers to close the gap between their salaries and the cost of living. It will also address the distortion created by the doubling of entry-level pay of military and uniformed personnel. It also proposes the annual adjustment of salaries to ensure that these keep

pace with the cost of living. This bill mandates the Department of Budget and Management, in consultation with public sector unions, to recommend to Congress the appropriation of the necessary funds.

This bill parallels the demand of the rest of those dutifully toiling in the civilian bureaucracy for substantial salary increases and for a national minimum salary of ₱33,000, as well as the demand of workers in the private sector for a national minimum daily wage. We have put forward this demand for urgent passage through House Bill 6560.

Heeding the demand for substantial salary increases promotes and protects the rights of the majority of our frontliners in education to decent lives, to be fully compensated for their hard work, and to a just return of the taxes they are faithfully paying. It is a matter of justice, one that must be granted at the soonest possible time for public school teachers.

Again, teachers fear that the final adjustment of the Salary Standardization Law will follow the trend of past adjustments of giving paltry increases to those in the rank-and-file, thus further distorting the salary scales to their disadvantage, which increases have not been followed by new adjustments for several long years after the last tranche. Indeed, there is an urgent need for salary increases for public school teachers, along with other government employees.

For these reasons, immediate approval of this bill is sought.



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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to alleviate the living conditions of government employees and to guarantee employees' rights to living wage.

The State policies of ensuring that education receives the highest budgetary priority and that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment are hereby reiterated.

In the formulation of decisions with regard to education reforms, the State shall likewise hold paramount the protection and promotion of the right of citizens to quality education at all levels and the rights of education workers to human conditions of work and a living wage.

SEC. 2. *Raising of minimum salaries for public school teachers in basic education.* The present minimum monthly salary for public school teachers shall be equivalent to Fifty thousand pesos (₱50,000) per month or equivalent to salary grade (SG) 15 of the

Salary Standardization Law, as amended, or whichever is higher, *Provided*, That salaries of those occupying higher positions shall be adjusted accordingly.

SEC. 3. *Annual adjustment of salaries.* Salaries of public school teachers and education support personnel shall be adjusted annually to keep pace with the cost of living. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM), upon consultation with the unions and organizations of public school teachers, shall recommend to Congress the appropriation of the necessary funds.

SEC. 4. *Rules and regulations.* The Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and the DBM shall, upon consultation with the unions and organizations of public school teachers, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from current appropriations. Thereafter, funds needed in subsequent years shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. *Separability clause.* Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. *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.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,