

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 11366



Introduced by Representative Marjorie Ann "Maan" A. Teodoro

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare the last week of August of every year in the entire country as "National Youth Mental Health Week" to raise awareness on the mental health of the youth today on their social, emotional and psychological well-being, while providing them a safe space within their communities.

The state acknowledges the importance of our youth to nation-building as they are integrated in our society in many ways. However, back in the old days, the subject on mental health was taboo since it was not yet a fully understood topic. Even the individual experiencing mental health could not completely comprehend his/her condition, just simply learning to live with it. This stigma led to discrimination and fear of being misjudged as someone being weak, which hindered them to share their real thoughts and feelings, and receive the proper treatment due to them.

In 2018, the country reached a major milestone as they enacted Republic Act No. 11036 or the "Mental Health Act" that formulated, developed, and implemented national policies, strategies, programs, and regulations towards mental health, as well as a mental health care system responsive to the psychiatric, neurologic, and psychosocial needs of the Filipino people. This law promises them equal rights and freedom in educational institutions, their workplaces, and within their communities.

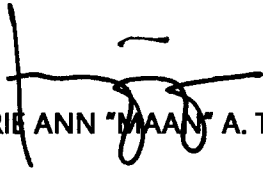
Unfortunately, in spite of this law's passage, mental health amongst the youth is surging especially since the onset of technology and smart phones. The youth today is under the impression of conforming to certain standards and expectations that are somewhat sometimes unreasonable and even unachievable just because of what they see on social media, on the news, and on other platforms. These expectations stress an individual and one finds it difficult to cope with.

In 2022, the University of the Philippines Population Institute released the 2021 Youth Adult Fertility Surveys showing that nearly 1 in 5 Filipino youth aged between 15-24 had suicidal thoughts. Scientifically, the stage between 15 to 24 years old is the peak of one's

childhood in terms of physical, social, and psychological developments, yet it is likewise the stage where a child experiences the onset of mental illness. It is during this time that they need more attention and care, otherwise, their mental health will greatly affect their physical, social, and psychological health.

The Department of Education (DepEd) has shared that in the School Year 2023-2024, more than 1,700 students committed attempted suicide and 254 students committed suicide. Of that number, 113 were junior high students while 61 were senior high students. Education Undersecretary Wilfredo Cabral said that one of the contributing factors to this were "*influence of social media, problems in the family, and abuse, among others*".¹ This concern also became one of the reasons for the passage of Republic Act No. 12080 or the "Basic Education Mental Health and Well-being Promotion Act" in 2024 to strengthen mental health programs in educational institutions wherein students spend most of their time, aside from their homes.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly requested.


MARJORIE ANN "MAAN" A. TEODORO

¹ <https://malaya.com.ph/news/national-news/why-are-pinoy-students-committing-suicide/>

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AN ACT
DECLARING THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST OF EVERY YEAR AS "NATIONAL YOUTH MENTAL
HEALTH WEEK" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. The last week of August of every year is hereby declared as "National Youth Mental Health Awareness Week" nationwide as the State's role and responsibility in not only acknowledging the growing mental health issues of the youth today, but presenting them a safe space in the country.

SEC. 2. The National Youth Commission shall, in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), together with the youth organizations and youth-serving organizations shall implement an annual program of activities ensuring its observance and expanding its awareness.

All schools, colleges, and universities shall conduct activities in their respective jurisdictions in celebration of the National Youth Mental Health Awareness Week.

Private companies and organizations are enjoined to launch activities that will promote Youth and Family Wellness Programs, Healthy Lifestyle, Open Communication Projects, among others.

SEC. 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,