

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 167



Introduced by Hon. Kenneth T. Gatchalian

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Children with learning and developmental disabilities—such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, and sensory processing disorders—often face unique challenges in navigating public environments. These challenges are frequently invisible yet deeply impactful, affecting their ability to engage with their surroundings and access essential services.

While Republic Act No. 7277, or the “Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities,” has laid the foundation for the protection and inclusion of persons with disabilities, there remains a critical gap in infrastructure and support systems tailored to the needs of children with learning and developmental disabilities. These children may not require physical accommodations, but they often benefit greatly from calm, controlled environments that help reduce sensory overload.

International best practices reinforce this direction. In the United Kingdom, statutory guidance under the Children and Families Act 2014 for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) requires schools to make “reasonable adjustments.” This often includes the provision of “chill-out” or quiet rooms with reduced sensory input, calming visuals, and comfortable seating to help children self-regulate and participate fully in learning¹.

In Canada, provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia² have encouraged and funded the creation of sensory rooms in public schools and libraries as part of inclusive education initiatives. Meanwhile, major Canadian airports³, like Vancouver International Airport, have established calm zones to assist neurodivergent travelers, particularly children on the autism spectrum.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dcb85ed915d2ac884d995/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

²<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/book/export/html/2470>

³ <https://autismalliance.ca/cals/cals/cals2025/accessible-travel/>

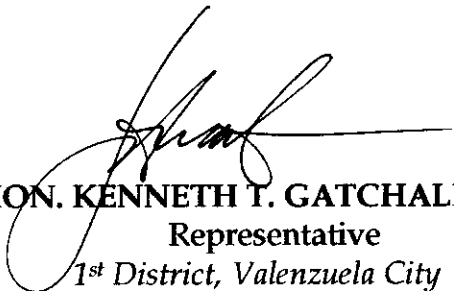
In the United States, although not mandated at the federal level, many school districts provide sensory rooms as part of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In addition, several major U.S. airports, such as Pittsburgh International Airport⁴ and Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport⁵, have introduced sensory-friendly rooms in terminals to support children with sensory processing issues.

These global examples highlight a growing recognition of the importance of sensory-friendly infrastructure in both educational and public service settings.

Hence, this bill seeks to amend the Magna Carta for PWDs by mandating the establishment of sensory rooms and inclusive spaces in public facilities across the country. Sensory rooms provide a safe and supportive environment where children can regulate their emotions, reduce overstimulation, and develop coping skills. These facilities have been widely recognized in both educational and clinical settings as effective tools for inclusive care and early intervention.

By expanding the scope of Republic Act No. 7277, this amendment affirms the government's commitment to inclusive public spaces and ensures that no child is left behind due to a lack of understanding or accommodation of their developmental needs.

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



HON. KENNETH T. GATCHALIAN
Representative
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⁴<https://flypittsburgh.com/pittsburgh-international-airport/accessibility/sensory-room/>

⁵<https://metroairports.org/news/msp-airport-create-passenger-sensory-friendly-rooms>

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AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7277, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
“MAGNA CARTA FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES,” TO MANDATE
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SENSORY ROOMS IN PUBLIC FACILITIES
FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

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

1 **SECTION 1.** A new Section 25-A is hereby inserted, amending Republic
2 Act No. 7277, otherwise known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities,
3 as amended, to read as follows:

4 “Section 25-A. *Establishment of Sensory Rooms and Inclusive Spaces.* All
5 local government units (LGUs), public recreational facilities, public hospitals,
6 transportation terminals, government service centers, and other major public
7 institutions are hereby mandated to establish sensory rooms or inclusive safe
8 spaces designed to support the needs of children with learning and developmental
9 disabilities.

10 The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in
11 coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Public

1 Works and Highways (DPWH), shall issue the implementing guidelines on the
2 design, location, and operation of these sensory rooms.”

3 **SEC. 2.** Section 46 of Republic Act No. 7277, as amended, is hereby
4 amended to read as follows:

5 “Any public or private institution that fails to comply with the requirement
6 under Section 25-A within two (2) years from the effectivity of this Act
7 shall be subject to administrative sanctions, as may be determined by the
8 implementing agencies.”

9 **SEC. 3. *Implementation.*** – The DSWD in coordination with DOH, and
10 DPWH shall issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the
11 purpose of this Act.

12 **SEC. 4. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is held
13 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall
14 remain in full force and effect.

15 **SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, presidential
16 decrees or issuances, letter of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and
17 regulations as well as local ordinances contrary to or inconsistent with the
18 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

19 **SEC. 6. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
20 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general
21 circulation.

22 *Approved,*