



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1471**



Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego “Ping” D. Remulla

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE MAGNA CARTA OF STUDENTS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A strong and educated youth is the foundation of a strong and just nation. Yet in many schools across the Philippines, students continue to face barriers that limit not only access to quality education but also their right to speak, organize, and participate meaningfully in shaping their learning environment.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, over 2.5 million youth aged 6 to 24 are out of school. Many drop out due to poverty, bullying, unsafe conditions, or lack of voice in their institutions. While education is a declared priority of the State under the Constitution, students often remain unprotected by law when their basic rights are ignored.

This bill seeks to establish the Magna Carta of Students, a comprehensive charter that enshrines the rights of learners in both public and private schools. It affirms their right to quality education, safe spaces, academic freedom, freedom of expression, and the right to organize. It aims to level the playing field so that every student, regardless of background, has a real chance to uplift the lives of their family and the generations that follow.

For these reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Remulla', with a stylized flourish at the end.

CRISPIN DIEGO "PING" D. REMULLA



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

ARTICLE I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the “*Magna Carta of Students*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to promote and protect the rights of students to enable them to participate actively and effectively in the democratic processes of effective, progressive, and developmental changes in society.

SEC. 3. *Guiding Principles.* – This Act declares the following as basic guiding principles:

- (a) The formal educational system, being the principal institutional mechanism for imparting knowledge and developing skills, is given priority attention and support by the government.
- (b) Education is a right and not a mere privilege. It is therefore the responsibility of the State to provide quality education accessible at all curriculum levels. Student organizations enhance democratic processes on the campus.

- (c) Membership and activities that promote and protect students' rights and welfare and/or contribute to national development shall be guaranteed by the State and school authorities.
- (d) Student organizations shall not be subject to rules and regulations that unduly hamper their activities and are prejudicial to their objectives and interests, provided such objectives, activities, and interests are consistent with the school's mission.
- (e) Student councils and governments, being the most representative and legitimate voice of the student body, shall be consulted in the formulation, review, and implementation of all school policies that directly affect student rights, welfare, and campus life. Their participation shall be institutionalized to uphold democratic engagement within academic institutions.
- (f) The student publication shall serve as a vital platform for free, responsible, and fearless expression. It shall be a space for the dissemination of truth, exchange of diverse ideas, and constructive interaction among students, faculty, and administration, fostering critical thinking and active citizenship.
- (g) With their democratic rights protected and upheld, students shall be recognized as a dynamic force in the pursuit of equity, justice, and lasting social transformation in the nation.
- (h) Students shall have the right to initiate and participate in peaceful assemblies, issue position papers, and engage in dialogues with school authorities and public officials on matters of public interest, provided these are done in accordance with existing laws and institutional policies respecting academic freedom and order.
- (i) The institution shall promote an environment that encourages civic consciousness and leadership development by supporting student-led initiatives, volunteerism, and service-oriented programs both within and beyond the campus.
- SEC. 4. Definition of Terms.** As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:
- (a) *Student* – any person enrolled in school at post-secondary, tertiary, graduate, and postgraduate levels, including vocational and technical education.
- (b) *School* – any private, public, or government-run and funded academic educational institution offering any or all courses in the above-mentioned levels.
- (c) *School campus* – the totality of all contiguous or proximate buildings, grounds, and other facilities designed by the school as areas or facilities for the use of its students.
- (d) *Governing Board* – the highest policy-making body of the school, such as the Board of Directors, Trustees, or Regents.

1 (e) *Student Council / Government* – the body representing the whole student population
2 in one school or school campus, whose officers are annually elected at large by the
3 whole student population pursuant to its constitution and by-laws, if any.

4 (f) *Council of Leaders* – the body composed of the heads of various student
5 organizations, chaired by the President/Chairman of the Student Council.

6 (g) *Tuition Fee* – The fee represents the direct costs of instruction, training, and other
7 related activities, and the use of school facilities. The term “other school fees” refers
8 to fees which cover other necessary costs supportive of instruction, including but not
9 limited to medical and dental, athletic, library, laboratory, and Citizen Army Training
10 (CAT) or Citizen Military Training (CMT) fees.

11 CHAPTER II

12 RIGHT TO ADMISSION AND QUALITY EDUCATION

13 **SEC. 5. *Admission.*** – No student shall be denied admission to any school on account
14 of his/her physical handicap, socio-economic status, political or religious beliefs, or shall
15 pregnant students and certified reformed drug abusers be discriminated against.

16 A student shall have the right to freely choose his/her field of study subject to existing
17 curricula and the institution’s admissions policies and to continue his/her course up to
18 graduation except in case of academic deficiency, inability to meet program requirement, or
19 violation of disciplinary regulations which do not infringe upon the exercise of students’
20 rights.

21 **SEC. 6. *Rights to Competent Instruction and Relevant Quality Education.*** – Every
22 student shall have the right to competent instruction and quality education relevant to his/her
23 personal and cultural development and that of the nation, and commensurate with the school
24 fees paid, and for state institutions, public subsidies granted.

25 Students shall have the right to make a written evaluation of the performance of their
26 teachers toward the end of the school term.

27 **SEC. 7. *Right to Adequate Student Services and Academic Facilities.*** – It shall be
28 the responsibility of the school administration to provide the students with adequate student
29 services and academic facilities commensurate with the school fees paid, and for SCUs,
30 public subsidies granted.

31 CHAPTER III

32 RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

1 **SEC. 8. *Right to Organize among Themselves.*** – Unity and collective effort being
2 fundamental to the realization of a common goal and the promotion and protection of
3 common interest, the State recognizes the right of students to organize among themselves.

4 The rights of students to form, assist, or join any campus organization, alliance, or
5 federation, not contrary to the school mission, for their physical, intellectual, moral, cultural,
6 spiritual, and political interests shall not be abridged.

7 **SEC. 9. *Student Council / Government.*** – The State shall ensure the democratic and
8 autonomous existence of student councils/governments. Pursuant thereto, there shall be one
9 student council/government for each school campus, which shall be given recognition by the
10 school, colleges, and universities concerned. It shall have its own set of officers elected in
11 annual popular elections. Every student council/government shall have the right to determine
12 its policies and programs on student activities, subject to this duly ratified charter or
13 constitution, school rules and regulations, and state policy.

14 **SEC. 10. *Recognition of and Granting of Privileges to Student Organizations.*** – No
15 unreasonable requirements shall be imposed on student organizations seeking recognition.

16 The guidelines concerning recognition shall be formulated by the Student Affairs
17 Office in consultation with the student council.

18 The process for seeking recognition shall begin upon the submission to the Student
19 Affairs Office by the organization concerned of its (1) concept paper and constitution; and (2)
20 a formal letter addressed to the Student Affairs stating the organization's intent to be
21 recognized. Recognition will be granted by the Student Affairs Office upon compliance with
22 the guidelines.

23 There shall be no discrimination in the assignment of school facilities and the granting of
24 other privileges to student organizations.

25 Excessive charges for the use of school facilities shall be prohibited. Whenever
26 possible the school administration shall allow student organizations to use school facilities
27 free of charge.

28 **SEC. 11. *Coordination of Student Organizations' Activities.*** – All on- and off-
29 campus activities of student organizations shall be coordinated by the student
30 council/government in consultation with the Student Affairs Office.

31 The Committee on Elections (COMELEC) constituted to conduct the election of the
32 officers of the student council/government shall be composed solely of bona fide students of
33 the school. The conduct of the student council election shall be held in coordination with the
34 Student Affairs Office.

SEC. 12. *Prohibition against the Use of Force and Exaction and Excessive.* – All campus organizations shall be prohibited from using force in initiation and from exacting excessive fees from their members, as well as in their other students' activities.

CHAPTER IV

RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN POLICY MAKING

SEC. 13. *Student Representation in Policy-Making Processes.* - Students shall have the right to be represented in policy-making bodies and committees of the school or academic institution, excluding the governing board, that directly affect their rights, welfare, and development. These include, but are not limited to, bodies involved in curriculum development and review, academic standards, student discipline, and co-curricular program planning.

Student representatives shall be officially designated by the student council or government through a transparent and democratic selection process. Their participation shall be regular, meaningful, and given due consideration in all deliberations, consistent with the principles of shared governance and academic freedom.

CHAPTER V

RIGHT TO FREE EXPRESSION AND INFORMATION AND RIGHT TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

SEC. 15. *Right to be Informed.* – The right of the student to be given information upon request on matters directly affecting their welfare shall be recognized.

SEC. 16. *Freedom of Expression.* – Subject to existing laws, school rules, and regulations, students shall have the right to freely express their views and opinions.

SEC. 17. *Academic Freedom.* – Students’ academic freedom shall be subject to school rules and regulations, and the exercise by the school and members of the faculty of their respective academic freedom, consists of, but is not limited to, the following rights:

- (a) To conduct research in connection with academic work, and to freely discuss and publish their findings and recommendations;
- (b) To conduct an inquiry in curricular and extracurricular activities within the campus and in appropriate circumstances;
- (c) To choose a field of study for research and to pursue the quest for truth; to express their opinion on any subject of public or general concern which directly or indirectly affects the students of the educational system;
- (d) To invite off-campus speakers or resource persons to student-sponsored assemblies, forums, symposia, and other activities of a similar nature;

- (e) To express contrary interpretations or dissenting opinions inside and outside the classroom;
- (f) To participate in the drafting of a new curriculum and in the review or revision of the old; and,
- (g) To participate in the drafting and/or revising of the student handbook, which shall include the school rules and regulations, a copy of which shall be furnished to the students upon admission to the school.

CHAPTER VI

RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

SEC. 18. *Right to Due Process.* – A student subject to disciplinary proceedings shall have the right to defend himself/herself, to be heard, and to present evidence on his/her behalf before an impartial body. There shall be a Student Disciplinary Board to be composed of two (2) representatives from the school administration, one (1) faculty member, and two (2) students to conduct investigations into and decide on cases of student violations of disciplinary standards.

The blacklisting, expulsion, suspension and other such disciplinary sanctions that may be taken against a student shall not be valid unless the following rights have been observed:

- (a) the right to be informed in writing of the nature and cause of the accusations against his/her;
- (b) the right to confront witnesses against him/her and to have full access to the evidence on the case;
- (c) the right to defend himself/herself and to be defended by a representative or counsel of his/her choice, adequate time being given for the preparation of a defense;
- (d) the right to a hearing before the Student Disciplinary Board;
- (e) the right against self-incrimination; and,
- (f) the right to appeal adverse decisions of the Student Disciplinary Board to the governing board and ultimately to the appropriate education agencies.

The decision in any disciplinary proceeding must be rendered on the basis of relevant and substantial evidence presented at the hearing, or at least contained in the record and disclosed to the student affected.

The deciding body must act on its own independent consideration of the facts of the case. The body should, in all controversial questions, render its decision in such a manner that the issues involved and the reasons for any decision made are clear to the student.

Disciplinary sanctions shall be primarily corrective in nature. Acts deemed to be in violation of school rules and regulations, along with their corresponding disciplinary sanctions, may be published on a periodic basis, provided that such publication does not violate the rights guaranteed under this Charter and the Philippine Constitution.

CHAPTER VII OTHER RIGHTS

SEC. 19. *Right Against Unreasonable Searches and Seizures.* – Every student shall be free from any form of unreasonable search and seizure. Except for the following instances, no search or seizure of a student shall be deemed valid:

- (a) Searches made at the point of ingress and egress by authorized personnel of the school;
- (b) Searches and seizures of illegal articles or articles falling in the plain view of duly authorized personnel;
- (c) Searches and seizures of articles that are illegal, discovered inadvertently by duly authorized personnel;
- (d) Searches are made when the student is about to commit, is committing, or has just committed a crime or a serious infraction of the school's rules and regulations;
- (e) Searches are made with a valid search warrant.

Articles seized in violation of the rights mentioned above shall not be used as evidence against the student in any disciplinary action that may be brought against him/her.

SEC. 20. *Right to Mental Health Support.* – Every student shall have the right to access adequate, responsive, and culturally sensitive mental health services within the school or academic institution.

SEC. 21. *Access to School Records and Issuance of Official Certificates.* – Subject to the provision of the following section, every student shall have access to her/him own school record, the confidentiality of which the school shall maintain. He/she shall have the right to be issued official certificates, diplomas, transcript of records, grades, transfer credentials, and other similar documents within thirty (30) days from the filing of the request and accomplishment of all pertinent requirements.

SEC. 22. *Unpaid Tuition Fees and Examination.* – No student shall be prohibited from taking a periodic or final examination because of unpaid tuition and other fees under the established terms of payment prescribed by the school concerned and approved by the appropriate education agency.

1 Students with delinquent fees permitted to take an examination shall nevertheless be
2 subject to the right of the school concerned to withhold the release or issuance of such
3 students' school records or of the documents mentioned in the preceding section or to deny
4 such students' admission at the next succeeding term or year until the prior delinquencies are
5 fully paid.

6 **SEC. 23. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
7 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise affected shall
8 remain valid and subsisting.

9 **SEC. 24. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,
10 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with
11 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

12 **SEC. 25. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
13 the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,