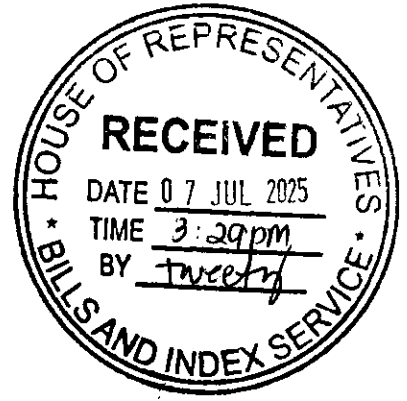




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1476**



Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego "Ping" D. Remulla

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A CENTER FOR AUTISM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the World Health Organization, about 1 in every 100 children globally is on the autism spectrum. In the Philippines, the Autism Society Philippines estimates that approximately 1 million Filipinos live with autism, yet less than 10% are formally diagnosed or receiving proper intervention. For most of them, especially those from low-income families, access to support remains out of reach.

Autism is a lifelong condition. It affects communication, learning, and social behavior. It is not an illness to be cured, but a condition to be understood and supported. Unfortunately, the national response has been fragmented, limited to small-scale programs and pilot initiatives. There is no centralized public institution that provides comprehensive services for individuals with autism and their families.

This bill proposes the creation of a national Center for Autism. A government-supported institution dedicated to diagnosis, therapy, professional training, research, and advocacy. It will provide lifelong care, train public school teachers and healthcare workers, and serve as a hub for inclusive programs and scientific advancement.

Establishing this center affirms that Filipinos with autism deserve more than sympathy; they deserve structure, support, and equal opportunity.

In a country where stigma still silences, this measure speaks up. In a system where families often feel lost, this bill offers direction. Autism does not discriminate. Our support systems shouldn't either.

In view of the abovementioned considerations, immediate passage of this proposed measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. D. Remulla', with a stylized, cursive script.

CRISPIN DIEGO "PING" D. REMULLA



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

1 **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** - It is hereby recognized that autism remains to
2 be unknown in the Philippines because of the lack of government support. Until now, autistic
3 individuals belong to the marginalized sectors of Philippine society, preventing their total
4 rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance.

5 **SEC. 2. Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the terms below shall be
6 construed to mean, except where explicitly indicated or where the text clearly indicates
7 otherwise as follows:

8 a) *Autism* - is a developmental disability that appears during the first three years of
9 life; the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain; autism and
10 its associated behaviors occur in approximately 15 of every 10,000 individuals;

11 b) *Disability* - shall mean 1) a physical or mental impairment to substantially limits
12 one or more psychological, physiological or anatomical function of an individual or activities
13 of such individual; 2) a record of such an impairment; or 3) being regarded as having such an
14 impairment;

15 c) *Disabled Gifted* - persons who demonstrate superior performance capabilities in
16 intellectual, creative, specific academic areas, leadership, or in the arts in spite of physical,
17 sensory or psychological disabilities;

1 d) *Disabled Worker* - means a worker whose earning capacity is impaired by mental,
2 physical, or sensory deficiency or injury;

3 e) *Handicap* - refers to a disadvantage for given individual, resulting from an
4 impairment or disability that limits or prevents the function of activity, that is considered
5 normal given the age and sex of the individual;

6 f) *Impairment* - is any loss, diminution or aberration of psychological, physiological,
7 or anatomical structure or function;

8 g) *Indigent patient* - a disabled person whose level of income falls below the poverty
9 threshold;

10 h) *Rehabilitation* - an integrated approach to physical, psychological, cultural,
11 spiritual, educational, or vocational, measures that create conditions for individual to attain
12 the highest possible level of functional ability; and,

13 i) *Special Education (SPED)* - that type of education specifically designed for learners
14 with special needs who can not profit maximally from regular education such that they
15 require trained personnel, modifications in the curricula, teaching methods, instructional
16 materials and adaptations in facilities equipment.

17 **SEC. 3. *Creation of a Center for Autism.*** - There is hereby created a Center for
18 Autism which shall be tasked to perform the following functions:

- 19 1) Formulate and implement an integrated and comprehensive masterplan;
- 20 2) Create a diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitation clinic;
- 21 3) Provide vocational training programs for autistic adults;
- 22 4) Provide free diagnosis and rehabilitation services to indigent autistic;
- 23 5) Provide avenues for employment opportunities for autistic individuals;
- 24 6) Provide continuing training programs for teachers, therapists, medical;
- 25 7) Provide other services such as counseling, orientation and referral;
- 26 8) Increase public awareness and concern on autism by spearheading advocacy
27 programs.

28 **SEC. 4. *Governing Board, Composition, Term, Functions.*** - There is hereby created
29 a National Autism Board referred as to the Board, which shall be under the Office of the
30 President. The Board shall govern the Center for Autism and shall be composed of the
31 following:

- 32 1) One (1) representative from the Department of Health, who shall sit as
33 Chairperson;

- 2) One (1) representative from the Department of Education who shall sit as the Vice-Chairperson;
- 3) One (1) representative from the Department of Social Welfare and Development as Member;
- 4) Two (2) representatives from the National Council for the Welfare of Disabled Persons as Members;
- 5) Two (2) representatives from the Autism Society of the Philippines as Members;
- 6) Two (2) representatives from the Parents of Children and Adults with Autism as Members.

SEC. 5. Secretariat. - The Board shall have a Secretariat under an Executive Officer who shall be appointed by the President. The Executive Officer shall manage the day-to-day operations of the Board and shall be assisted by a Deputy Executive Officer who shall likewise be appointed by the President. The Executive Officer shall have the following powers and functions:

- 1) Execute, administer and implement the policies and measures approved by the Board;
- 2) Direct and supervise the affairs and operations of the Board;
- 3) Submit within thirty (30) days after the close of every calendar year an annual report to the Board and such other reports it may require;
- 4) Submit an annual budget and such supplementary budgets as may be necessary to the Board for its consideration and approval;
- 5) Represent the Board in all transactions with other offices, agencies, instrumentalities of government and with all persons and other entities, public or private, domestic or foreign; and,
- 6) Appoint, subject to confirmation of the Board, and discipline in accordance with Civil Service laws, rules and regulations, the officers and personnel below the level of Deputy Executive Officer.

The Deputy Executive Officer shall perform the following functions:

- 1) Assist the Executive Officer in the discharge of his powers and functions;
- 2) Act as the Executive Officer during the Executive Officer's absence; and ,
- 3) Discharge such other powers and functions as may be required by the Executive Officer and the Board.

SEC. 6. Early Detection and Intervention Program. – The Center shall develop and implement nationwide early detection and intervention programs for children under five (5)

1 years old. These shall include screening in barangay health centers, parent education, and
2 early therapy to improve developmental outcomes.

3 **SEC. 7. Appropriations.** - For the initial operating expenses of the Center, the amount
4 of Five Million Pesos (5,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated from the available funds of the
5 Office of the President. Thereafter, it shall submit to the Department of Budget and
6 Management, its proposed budget for inclusion in the General Appropriations Act.

7 **SEC. 8. Transitory Provisions.** - Within the period of one hundred and eighty (180)
8 days after the approval of this Act, the Board constituted shall start its operation. All other
9 government offices having functions similar to the Board shall then cease to perform such
10 functions. Henceforth, these functions shall be deemed transferred to the Board.

11 **SEC. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - The Board in consultation with
12 appropriate agencies from the private and government sectors, shall issue guidelines and
13 prescribe rules and regulations within one hundred (120) days after the effectivity of this Act,
14 which shall be published in two (2) newspapers of general circulation. A copy of such
15 guidelines, rules and regulations shall be furnished the Congress of the Philippines.

16 **SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations and
17 other issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
18 repealed or amended accordingly.

19 **SEC. 11. Separability Clause.** - Should any provision of this Act be declared invalid
20 or unconstitutional, no other provisions hereof shall be affected thereby.

21 **SEC. 12. Effectivity.** -This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,