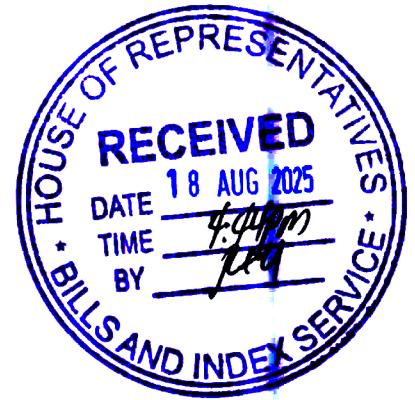


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 3825

Introduced by: **REP. RACHEL MARGUERITE "CUTIE" DEL MAR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others—is a foundational life skill critical to the development of emotionally intelligent, compassionate, and socially responsible individuals. It allows people to engage with others respectfully, resolve conflicts constructively, and contribute meaningfully to society.

Empathy is not only a personal virtue but a public good. Numerous studies and educational frameworks have shown that empathy can be taught and nurtured through structured learning, especially during childhood and adolescence.

In the Philippines, while elements of empathy training are present in certain schools through Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) modules or character education programs, there is no formal, mandatory curriculum for teaching empathy in a sustained and intentional manner.

This bill seeks to institutionalize a **dedicated, once-weekly empathy class** for all children aged **6 to 16 years old**, recognizing empathy as essential to a child's holistic development—equally important as literacy and numeracy.

Supporting Research and Global Practices

A **meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs** involving over **270,000 students** found that participants demonstrated significant improvements in social-emotional skills, attitudes, and behavior, as well as an average **11-percentile-point gain in academic achievement** compared to peers who did not participate in SEL programs¹.

In **Canada**, the **Roots of Empathy** program—a classroom-based intervention involving infants and parents—has shown evidence of **lasting reductions in aggression and bullying** and **increases in prosocial behavior**, with effects persisting for up to **three years**².

In **Denmark**, empathy has long been embedded in education through a weekly class known as “*Klassens tid*” (“class time”), during which students discuss personal or class-related issues in a safe, inclusive, and reflective environment³. The sessions are designed to foster emotional awareness, mutual support, and problem-solving among peers. While the format has evolved in recent years, the concept remains an internationally recognized model for empathy instruction.

In **China**, large-scale evaluations of humane and emotional education initiatives demonstrated measurable increases in prosocial behaviors and emotional understanding among elementary students⁴.

Similarly, in **South Korea**, a meta-analysis found that SEL programs significantly improved social-emotional competence, academic performance, and classroom climate, especially when delivered through **at least 10 short sessions** (e.g., 40 minutes)⁵.

Experts in educational psychology affirm that empathy is **teachable**, and that integrating it into the school curriculum fosters emotional resilience, cooperation, and long-term mental wellness⁶.

Conclusion

By requiring a weekly empathy class, this measure aims to:

- Support emotional and mental well-being;
- Reduce bullying and conflict in schools;
- Strengthen interpersonal and communication skills;
- Foster a culture of compassion and civic responsibility among Filipino youth.

In light of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


RACHEL MARGUERITE “CUTIE” DEL MAR

Footnotes

1. Durlak, J. A., et al. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students’ Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–432. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21291449>
2. Roots of Empathy. (n.d.). Program Research and Impact. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roots_of_Empathy
3. The Danish Way. (2020). Why Empathy is Taught in Danish Schools. <https://qz.com/761289/>
4. Pan, Y., et al. (2022). A Meta-Analysis of Social Emotional Learning Interventions in China. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1040522>
5. Lee, Y., & Lee, J. (2022). Meta-Analysis of Social and Emotional Learning Programs in South Korea. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9231796>
6. Samuel, J., & Kirwan, E. (2023). Teaching Empathy in Schools. *The Times UK*. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/teaching-empathy-children-education-kindness-julia-samuel-5fr3mctw5>

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3825
HOUSE BILL NO. _____

Introduced by: **REP. RACHEL MARGUERITE “CUTIE” DEL MAR**

AN ACT
INTEGRATING EMPATHY TRAINING INTO THE CURRICULUM OF ALL PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROVIDING PROGRAMS
FOR TEACHER AND EXECUTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the ***‘Empathy Education and Training Act of 2025’***.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote a culture of compassion, respect, and social responsibility among Filipinos. The State recognizes that empathy is essential in building inclusive communities, preventing bullying, improving mental health, and fostering unity across diverse sectors of society. To this end, empathy training shall be integrated into education and professional development programs to enhance the emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills of learners, teachers, and leaders.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - For purposes of this Act, the term:

(a) *Empathy* refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings and perspectives of others, leading to compassionate and appropriate responses.

(b) *Empathy Training* refers to structured activities, lessons, and programs designed to develop empathy, including but not limited to role-playing, empathy mapping, immersion activities, reflective listening, and mindfulness-based exercises.

(c) *Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)* refers to the process of acquiring and applying knowledge, skills, and attitudes to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve goals, feel and show empathy, maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

SEC. 4. *Integration into the Basic Education Curriculum.* - The Department of Education (DepEd) shall integrate empathy training into the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum in both public and private schools, particularly in:

- (a) Values Education, Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao, and Social Studies subjects;
- (b) Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- (c) School-based programs to prevent bullying, discrimination, and violence.

SEC. 5. *Teacher Professional Development.* - The National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP), in coordination with teacher education institutions, shall:

- (a) Provide mandatory empathy training modules for pre-service and in-service teachers;
- (b) Conduct workshops on empathy-based classroom management, inclusive teaching strategies, and interventions for students with special needs;
- (c) Develop resource materials and teaching guides for empathy-focused activities.

SEC. 6. *Executive and Leadership Programs.* - The Civil Service Commission (CSC), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and relevant academic institutions shall incorporate empathy and social-emotional learning modules in executive education programs, leadership training, and public service development courses.

SEC. 7. *Community and Workplace Application.* - Local Government Units (LGUs), in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), shall implement community-based empathy workshops to address social cohesion, conflict resolution, and workplace well-being.

SEC. 8. *Research and Evaluation.* - The Department of Education, in partnership with research institutions and universities, shall:

- (a) Conduct studies on the long-term effectiveness of empathy training in reducing bullying, improving mental health, and enhancing social cohesion;
- (b) Develop evidence-based enhancements to the empathy curriculum;
- (c) Submit an annual report to Congress on the implementation and outcomes of the program.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of DepEd, CHED, and concerned agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, CHED, CSC, NEAP, and other

concerned agencies shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be affected and shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,