

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4040



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
ENSURING UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO SAFE AND RELIABLE WATER SUPPLY IN
ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to education cannot be fully realized without ensuring the health, dignity, and well-being of every learner. Access to safe and reliable water in schools is fundamental not only for hydration, but also for sanitation, nutrition, and protection against disease. The absence of water in classrooms, toilets, and kitchens undermines student performance, teacher welfare, and public health.

According to the Department of Education's (DepEd) own assessments, thousands of public schools across the country — particularly those in **geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs)**, small islands, and upland barangays — still lack access to safe and adequate water supply. Many rely on intermittent deliveries, unsafe open wells, or have no water facilities at all. This condition disproportionately affects rural children, who already face the greatest barriers to quality education.

Global evidence reinforces this urgent need. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF emphasize that access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) in schools directly improves student learning outcomes, reduces absenteeism, especially among girls, and strengthens resilience against disease outbreaks. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted even more starkly the risks of inadequate hygiene infrastructure in schools.

This bill therefore proposes the **Water for All Schools Act**, which seeks to guarantee universal access to safe, reliable, and climate-resilient water supply in all public schools nationwide. It mandates the installation of potable drinking water facilities, hygiene and sanitation systems, and climate-adaptive solutions such as rainwater harvesting and solar-

powered pumps in GIDA schools. It also requires the conduct of a **national inventory of water access in schools** within one year, to establish a baseline and guide planning.

To ensure accountability, the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), shall submit annual reports to Congress on progress towards achieving 100% coverage. Partnerships with local governments, water districts, cooperatives, and the private sector are also encouraged to complement national resources.

By passing this measure, Congress will affirm the principle that no child should be deprived of a safe and supportive learning environment simply because of where they are born. **Water in schools is not a luxury — it is a right, a necessity, and a precondition for learning.**

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


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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 “Water for All Schools Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the right of every Filipino child to safe, adequate, and sustainable water supply in schools, as essential for health, sanitation, nutrition, and learning. The State shall ensure that all public schools are equipped with functioning water systems consistent with standards of safety, reliability, and climate resilience.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* This Act shall apply to all public elementary and secondary schools under the Department of Education (DepEd), and all state universities and colleges (SUCs) under the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

SEC. 4. *Water Access Mandate.* All schools covered by this Act shall have:

- (a) Potable drinking water facilities, accessible to all learners and personnel;
- (b) Water for sanitation and hygiene, including toilets, handwashing facilities, and kitchens;
- (c) Climate-resilient water systems, capable of operating during droughts, floods, or disasters, through rainwater harvesting, storage tanks, and other appropriate technologies; and
- (d) Monitoring and quality assurance, to ensure water safety consistent with Department of Health (DOH) standards.

SEC. 5. *Water Access in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDAs).* For schools in remote, island, upland, or water-scarce areas, DepEd, CHED, and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), in coordination with the DOH, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), shall implement alternative water solutions, including but not limited to:

- (a) rainwater harvesting systems;
- (b) solar-powered water pumps;
- (c) water purification and filtration technologies; and
- (d) partnerships with local water districts, cooperatives, and barangay water systems.

SEC. 6. *School Water Access Inventory.* Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, DepEd and CHED, in coordination with DPWH and DOH, shall conduct a nationwide inventory of water access in schools, identifying those without adequate and safe water supply. The results shall serve as the baseline for program planning and annual reporting.

SEC. 7. *Funding.* The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of DepEd, CHED, DPWH, and DOH in the annual General Appropriations Act. For schools in GIDAs, priority access to disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation funds shall be provided.

SEC. 8. *Partnerships.* The DepEd, CHED, DPWH, and DOH shall be authorized to enter into partnerships with local government units, water districts, cooperatives, and the private sector to implement water access projects for schools.

SEC. 9. *Reporting.* The DepEd and CHED shall submit an annual report to Congress on the status of water access in schools, including progress in achieving 100% coverage, challenges encountered, and recommendations for further legislation.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, CHED, DOH, and DPWH, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its implementation.

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

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,