

Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5473



Introduced by Hon. Florabel Co Yatco

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare the month of October as “**National Safe Sound Month**”, a national observance to raise awareness on safe sound levels, auditory sensitivity, and inclusive auditory environments for all... *particularly for persons with autism spectrum disorder and other neurodivergent conditions.*

This measure aims to help address public concern over a recent incident when a passenger with autism was assaulted inside a bus after showing distress triggered by sensory overload. The viral news drew national outrage and prompted the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to summon the bus company involved, while former Department of Transportation (DOTr) Secretary Vince Dizon publicly expressed solidarity with the autism community and called for safe and inclusive transport systems, citing his own family’s lived experience with autism.<sup>1</sup> This incident revealed a pressing gap in public understanding of sensory needs and underscored the need for institutionalized awareness to prevent similar occurrence.

Scientific research confirms that unsafe sound levels have deleterious effects. Prolonged exposure above 75 decibels (dB) is associated with hearing damage, increased stress, and reduced ability to concentrate. Individuals with autism or sensory sensitivities experience discomfort or meltdowns even at lower thresholds of 55–65 dB.<sup>2</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that sound levels in schools and community spaces remain below these thresholds.<sup>3</sup> Studies further show that up to 60% of individuals with autism report decreased sound tolerance, including

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<sup>1</sup>SunStar Cebu, When empathy fails: The quiet crisis facing persons with autism, June 2025; PhilStar, LTFRB summons bus firm over PWD assault video, June 2025.

<sup>2</sup>Safe Sound White Paper, “Soundesign Guidelines for Neurodiverse Safe Sound Spaces” (2025), pp. 3–5

<sup>3</sup>World Health Organization, Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region (2018).

hyperacusis and misophonia.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the creation of “safe sound” environments through education, information dissemination, quiet spaces and sound responsibility is both scientifically grounded and socially necessary.

This proposal is consistent with the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which mandates the State to value human dignity (Art. II, Sec. 11) and protect vulnerable groups (Art. XIII). It complements existing laws such as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 7277, as amended), the Mental Health Act (RA 11036), the Inclusive Education Act (RA 11650), and BP 344 (Accessibility Law). Unlike occupational or environmental noise regulations, this measure does not impose conflicting technical standards but focuses on awareness, education, and voluntary adoption of sound-inclusive practices.

The objectives of this legislative measure are as follows:

1. To declare the month of October as Safe Sound Month, this bill will foster empathy, prevent misunderstandings, and promote healthier, more inclusive communities for all and institutionalize a nationwide observance on auditory inclusivity and sound responsibility;
2. To raise public awareness on the impact of unsafe sound levels on health, noise sensitivity, and auditory inclusivity;
3. To promote understanding, respect, and empathy for individuals with autism and other neurodivergent conditions who experience sound sensitivity;
4. To encourage schools, workplaces, transport hubs, and public spaces to adopt voluntary sound-friendly practices, such as quiet hours, Safe Sound Spaces, and the use of decibel monitoring tool;
5. To foster partnerships among government agencies, civil society, academe, and the private sector in building inclusive auditory environments; and
6. To support further research, education campaigns, and innovations in sound design that promote accessibility and inclusion.

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<sup>4</sup> Williams, Z.J. et al., Prevalence of Decreased Sound Tolerance in Individuals with ASD: A Meta-analysis, *Ear & Hearing* 42(5), 2021, pp. 1137–1150

This bill is also close to the heart this humble representation. Inclusivity and welfare of persons with special needs is one of the long-standing advocacies of the undersigned. As a mother, homemaker, and legislator, the undersigned has consistently championed programs that promote equal opportunities, barrier-free environments, and holistic support for children and adults with disabilities. Moreover, the filing of this measure underscores our commitment to ensuring that persons with special needs, including those with autism and sound sensitivity, live with dignity, comfort, and respect.

By declaring October as Safe Sound Month, this bill will foster empathy, prevent misunderstandings, and promote healthier, more inclusive communities for all.

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



**HON. FLORABEL CO YATCO**

*Representative*

NANAY Partylist

Twentieth Congress of the  
Republic of the Philippines  
*First Regular Session*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
H.B. No. **5473**

Introduced by Hon. Florabel Co Yatco

**AN ACT DECLARING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER AS “NATIONAL SAFE  
SOUND MONTH” TO PROMOTE AWARENESS ON SOUND SENSITIVITY,  
NOISE RESPONSIBILITY, AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR  
INDIVIDUALS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH AUTISM AND OTHER  
NEURODIVERGENT CONDITIONS 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 “**Safe Sound Awareness Act  
of 2025.**”

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.**- It is the policy of the State to:

- a) Value the dignity and well-being of every person and promote respect for the rights of persons with disabilities, consistent with the Constitution and existing laws;
- b) Protect the rights of neurodivergent persons, including those with autism, in accordance with RA 7277, as amended, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- c) Complement the objectives of RA 11036 (Mental Health Act) and RA 11650 (Inclusive Education Act) by advancing auditory accessibility and psychosocial well-being; and
- d) Promote public awareness on sound responsibility as a means of ensuring inclusivity in schools, workplaces, transportation hubs, and public spaces.

### **SECTION 3. Objectives.**

This Act aims to:

- a) Declare October of every year as Safe Sound Month;
- b) Raise public awareness on safe sound levels, noise sensitivity, and auditory inclusivity;
- c) Promote respect, empathy, and understanding for individuals with sound sensitivity, particularly those with autism spectrum disorder;
- d) Encourage voluntary adoption of sound-friendly practices in public and private institutions;
- e) Foster inter-agency and multi-sectoral partnerships to promote inclusive auditory environments; and
- f) Support research and policy development on auditory inclusivity.

### **SECTION 4. Definition of Terms.-** As used in this Act:

- a) *Safe Sound* - a recommended sound range of approximately 65–75 dB (decibels), safe for hearing and inclusive for individuals with sensory sensitivities, consistent with international health standards;
- b) *Sound Sensitivity* – the heightened reactivity to everyday sound, including hyperacusis, misophonia, and auditory overload, common among individuals with autism and other neurodivergent conditions; and
- c) *Safe Sound Spaces*- designated areas in establishments or public spaces where noise levels are minimized to accommodate individuals with sensory sensitivity.

**SECTION 5. Declaration of October as Safe Sound Month.** – The month of October of every year is hereby declared as Safe Sound Month. During this month, government agencies, LGUs, and private institutions are encouraged to implement awareness campaigns, education programs, seminars, workshops, and other activities promoting safe sound and auditory inclusivity.

**SECTION 6. Lead Agency.** – The Department of Health (DOH) shall serve as the lead agency in implementing this Act, in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Interior Local Government (DILG), and the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA).

**SECTION 7. Private Sector Participation.** – Private entities, including transport operators, malls, and educational institutions, are encouraged to observe Safe Sound

Month through voluntary initiatives such as sound awareness campaigns, provision of Safe Sound Spaces, and inclusive programs.

**SECTION 8. Appropriations.** - The activities under this Act shall be carried out by the concerned agencies within their respective existing appropriations, subject to the usual government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

**SECTION 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations.**- Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Health, in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Interior Local Government (DILG), and the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), other relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 10. Separability Clause.**- If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

**SECTION 11. Repealing Clause.**- All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,