



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7740



Introduced by Representative **KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI**
1st District, Zamboanga City

AN ACT
MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE DRUG ABUSE
TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTER IN ZAMBOANGA CITY,
PROVIDING FOR ITS FUNCTIONS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND
FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution places upon the State an affirmative and continuing duty to protect human dignity, promote public health, and safeguard the youth. Article II, Section 11 declares that “the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.” Article II, Section 13 further commands that “the State shall promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being of the youth.” Complementing these provisions, Article XIII obligates the State to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, ensuring that essential health services are available to all people at an affordable cost.

Illegal drug abuse threatens these constitutional guarantees. It harms public health, weakens social institutions, and puts the youth, a significant part of the population, at greater risk of exploitation, crime, and long-term marginalization. This issue extends beyond criminal law enforcement and falls within the State’s broader duty to promote social justice and general welfare.

Zamboanga City requires targeted legislative action. As a highly urbanized gateway, it is especially vulnerable to transnational drug trafficking networks that exploit its location and socio-economic challenges. Recent large-scale drug seizures in its barangays show that organized syndicates operate locally and recruit young people into the illegal drug trade. If left unaddressed, this pattern endangers community safety and undermines the constitutional mandate to protect youth.

The Court has consistently recognized that the State’s power to punish must align with its duty to rehabilitate, especially when the goal is to restore individuals to society rather than seek retribution. Penal statutes are necessary but not sufficient for social protection. When the law recognizes drug dependency as a condition needing treatment, a lack of accessible rehabilitation facilities undermines both judicial discretion and legislative intent.

Republic Act No. 9165 adopts a dual approach, combining strict measures against drug trafficking with provisions for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependents. Effective implementation requires adequate and accessible rehabilitation facilities. Without them, courts, law enforcement, and local governments must rely on punitive measures, even when treatment and diversion would better serve individuals and society.

This bill aims to fulfill the constitutional policy and statutory intent by mandating the establishment of a Comprehensive Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Zamboanga City. The center will provide medical intervention, psychological care, mental health services, skills training, and structured aftercare. Its goals are to address drug dependency, support reintegration, reduce recidivism, ease detention facility congestion, and strengthen community resilience.

Institutionalizing rehabilitation locally aligns law enforcement with public health, aligns penal objectives with constitutional values, and supports a balanced, humane, and evidence-based approach to protecting society. This measure recognizes that lasting public order depends not only on punishment but also on prevention and healing. Given these constitutional mandates, factual circumstances, and legal considerations, I respectfully and strongly urge the immediate passage of this bill. Its enactment is crucial to protect our youth, uphold public health, and ensure the fulfillment of our constitutional values.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, 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 Zamboanga City Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center Act.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the declared policy of the State to protect the youth and all of its people, preserve public health, and promote peace and development by adopting a balanced, humane, and comprehensive approach to the problem of illegal drugs. The State recognizes that drug abuse is not solely a criminal issue but a public health and socio-economic concern, especially in gateway cities vulnerable to transnational drug trafficking. In recognition of Zamboanga City's strategic location, young population, and increasing exposure to international drug syndicates, the State shall ensure the availability of accessible, effective, and community-based drug treatment and rehabilitation services.

SECTION 3. *Establishment.* - There is hereby established a Comprehensive Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Zamboanga City, which shall be operated primarily by the national government in coordination with the City Government of Zamboanga. The Center may be constructed as a new facility or integrated within an existing government hospital or property, as may be determined feasible by the Department of Health (DOH). It shall be adequate in size, staffing, and capability to effectively serve the residents of Zamboanga City and nearby areas, subject to the standards and authorization of the DOH.

This Act aims to:

- (a) Establish a government-run Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Zamboanga City;
- (b) Provide medical, psychological, and social intervention for persons who use drugs;
- (c) Prevent drug dependency and reduce relapse through sustained treatment and aftercare;

- (d) Promote reintegration of rehabilitated individuals into society as productive citizens;
- (e) Complement law-enforcement efforts through prevention, education, and recovery-focused programs; and
- (f) Protect the youth and high-risk communities from recruitment by drug syndicates.

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* - The Center shall provide comprehensive and integrated services, including medical screening, detoxification, and clinical treatment; psychological, psychiatric, and behavioral therapy; youth-focused and family-based rehabilitation programs; and mental health services consistent with Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the Mental Health Act. It shall likewise offer values formation, education, skills training, and livelihood development in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Education (DepEd), and other relevant agencies, as well as community-based aftercare, monitoring, and relapse prevention programs. In addition, the Center shall extend referral and reintegration assistance to facilitate access to employment, education, and appropriate social services.

Priority shall be given to youth and first-time drug offenders, voluntary surrenderers, and individuals referred by courts, law-enforcement agencies, or local government units, as well as indigent and vulnerable residents from high-risk barangays. Preference shall likewise be accorded to persons who use drugs and are deemed eligible for treatment and rehabilitation in lieu of incarceration, in accordance with existing laws and applicable regulations.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Agencies and Coordination.* - The Department of Health (DOH) shall serve as the lead implementing agency and shall establish the necessary standards, staffing requirements, and operational guidelines for the Center. The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) shall provide overall policy direction, accreditation, and program evaluation. The City Government of Zamboanga shall provide land or facilities, counterpart funding, and support community-based aftercare programs. The Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) shall coordinate referrals, prevention education, and post-rehabilitation monitoring, while the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall assist in the provision of psychosocial care and family reintegration services.

SECTION 6. *Funding.* - The amount necessary for the establishment and initial operation of the Center shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Health, subject to the availability of funds. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued operation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA). The City Government of Zamboanga may likewise allocate counterpart funds from its local budget, subject to existing laws, rules, and auditing regulations.

SECTION 7. *Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting.* - The DOH, in coordination with the DDB, shall submit an annual report to Congress on the status, utilization, outcomes, and challenges of the Center, including recommendations for policy or legislative action.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH and DDB in coordination with concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,