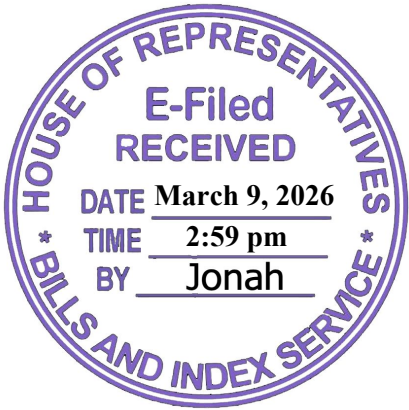


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 8367

**Introduced by AKBAYAN Representatives PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA,
JOSE MANUEL TADEO "CHEL" I. DIOKNO, and DADAH KIRAM ISMULA and
Dinagat Islands Representative KAKA BAG-AO**

AN ACT
DECLARING THE MONTH OF APRIL OF EVERY YEAR AS "BAWAL BASTOS
AWARENESS MONTH" AND MANDATING A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST
GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 11313, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "SAFE SPACES ACT"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 11313, otherwise known as the Safe Spaces Act, affirms the State's commitment to ensure that all individuals are protected from gender-based sexual harassment in streets, public spaces, workplaces, educational institutions, and online platforms. Despite the enactment of this landmark legislation, many incidents of gender-based harassment continue to be underreported, while awareness of the rights and protections guaranteed under the law remains limited among the general public.

Gender-based sexual harassment—commonly referred to as *bastos* behavior in public spaces—undermines the dignity, safety, and equality of individuals, particularly women and members of vulnerable sectors. Catcalling, unwanted sexual remarks, stalking, online harassment, and other forms of gender-based misconduct create environments of fear and intimidation that restrict the freedom of individuals to move, work, study, and participate fully in society.

While laws exist to penalize such acts, prevention through education, public awareness, and cultural change remains crucial. A sustained nationwide campaign can help cultivate a culture of respect, accountability, and gender sensitivity while encouraging victims and witnesses to report violations and seek redress.

This bill therefore seeks to declare the month of April of every year as *Bawal Bastos* Awareness Month, which is aligned with the enactment of the Safe Spaces Act on April 17, 2019. The annual observance will provide a dedicated platform for government agencies, local government units, educational institutions, and private organizations to

conduct information campaigns, seminars, trainings, and other activities aimed at promoting the provisions of the Safe Spaces Act and preventing gender-based sexual harassment.

Through a coordinated national campaign led by the Philippine Commission on Women and other relevant agencies, the observance will strengthen public awareness, reinforce reporting and accountability mechanisms, and encourage institutions to adopt proactive measures that ensure safe and respectful spaces for all.

This bill will help deepen public understanding of gender-based violence, promote respect in both physical and digital spaces, and strengthen the implementation of existing laws protecting the dignity and rights of every person.

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



PERCIVAL V. CENDAÑA
Akbayan Representative



JOSE MANUEL TADEO
"CHEL" I. DIOKNO
Akbayan Representative



DADAN KIRAM ISMULA
Akbayan Representative



KAKA BAG-AO
Dinagat Islands Representative

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ACT NO. 11313, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "SAFE SPACES ACT"

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

1 **SECTION 1.** *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Bawal Bastos Awareness
2 Month Act."
3

4 **SECTION 2.** *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 recognize the role of women in nation-building and ensure the fundamental equality
6 before the law of women and men. The State shall likewise guarantee the protection of
7 all persons, especially women, from all forms of gender-based violence and harassment
8 in streets, public spaces, workplaces, educational institutions, and online platforms.
9

10 Pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9710, otherwise known as the "Magna
11 Carta of Women," and Republic Act No. 11313, otherwise known as the "Safe Spaces Act,"
12 the State shall promote awareness and strengthen mechanisms to prevent and respond
13 to gender-based sexual harassment.
14

15 **SECTION 3.** *Bawal Bastos Awareness Month.* – The month of April of every year is
16 hereby declared as "*Bawal Bastos Awareness Month.*" During this period, a nationwide
17 campaign shall be conducted to raise public awareness on the prevention of gender-based
18 sexual harassment in streets, public spaces, workplaces, educational institutions, and
19 online platforms.
20

21 **SECTION 4.** *Implementing Agencies.* – The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)
22 shall lead the observance of Bawal Bastos Awareness Month in coordination with the

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and other relevant government agencies.

Local Government Units (LGUs), government agencies, educational institutions, and private establishments are hereby encouraged to participate in the observance through information campaigns, seminars, trainings, and other appropriate activities aimed at preventing gender-based sexual harassment.

SECTION 5. *Compliance Audit.* – The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), in coordination with relevant agencies, shall conduct periodic compliance audits of government agencies, local government units, schools, and private establishments with respect to the provisions of Republic Act No. 11313, including but not limited to:

- a. Installation of clearly visible warning signs against gender-based sexual harassment in public establishments;
- b. Establishment of mechanisms for reporting and addressing complaints of sexual harassment;
- c. Conduct of gender sensitivity seminars and awareness campaigns; and
- d. Implementation of educational modules and workplace policies addressing gender-based sexual harassment.

SECTION 6. *Participation of Educational Institutions.* – All public and private educational institutions shall support the annual observance of Bawal Bastos Awareness Month by conducting age-appropriate educational programs, discussions, and activities that promote respect, gender sensitivity, and awareness of the Safe Spaces Act.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations.* – The funding necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the existing appropriations of the implementing agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), in coordination with concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any clause, sentence, paragraph or part of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such judgment shall not affect, invalidate or impact any other part of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* - Any provision of laws, orders, agreements, rules or regulations contrary to and inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

69 **SECTION 11. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
70 in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,