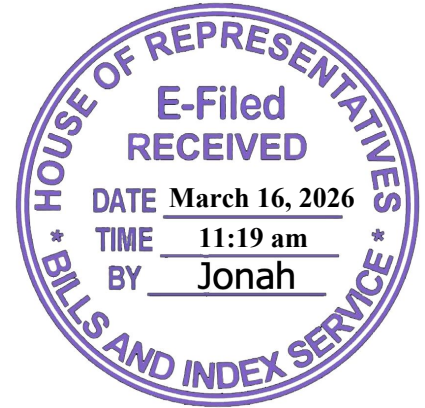


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8509



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Violence against women and children remains one of the most pressing social and human rights concerns in the Philippines. Internationally, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women recognizes violence against women as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, and as a mechanism through which women are often forced into subordinate positions in society. This structural inequality continues to manifest in various forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence.

Similarly, the World Health Organization has identified violence against children as a global public health and human rights problem affecting every country. Children, by reason of their age and dependency, are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in the home, in educational institutions, in workplaces, and increasingly in digital spaces.

Recognizing the vulnerability of these sectors, the Philippines has enacted several landmark laws designed to protect women and children from violence and abuse. Among these are Republic Act No. 9262, which penalizes acts of violence committed against women and their children within intimate relationships, and Republic Act No. 9710, which affirms the State's commitment to eliminating discrimination against women and ensuring substantive equality. These measures are complemented by other protective statutes such as Republic Act No. 7610 and Republic Act No. 11648.

Despite the existence of these laws, violence against women and children remains pervasive. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority indicate that approximately one in four Filipino women has experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence from a husband or intimate partner. Studies conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund further reveal alarming levels of violence

experienced by young people, with a significant proportion of Filipino children and youth reporting exposure to physical, emotional, or sexual abuse in various settings, including homes, schools, and communities.

The Philippine Commission on Women has likewise consistently described violence against women as among the country's most pervasive social issues, closely linked to persistent gender inequality and deeply rooted cultural norms that tolerate or normalize abusive behavior. In recent years, emerging forms of violence—including online harassment, digital exploitation, and technology-facilitated abuse—have further complicated the landscape of gender-based and child-related violence.

These realities highlight the need not only to maintain but to strengthen the country's legal and institutional mechanisms for the protection of women and children. While existing statutes provide a strong legal framework, gaps remain in implementation, coordination among agencies, victim protection mechanisms, and the adaptation of safeguards to emerging threats and evolving social conditions.

This proposed measure seeks to reinforce and strengthen existing protections for women and children by enhancing the mechanisms for prevention, protection, reporting, and accountability. The bill is designed to complement—not supplant—the protections already provided under existing laws such as Republic Act No. 9262, Republic Act No. 9710, and Republic Act No. 7610. It does not create conflicting obligations but instead aims to close operational gaps, improve coordination among relevant government agencies, and ensure more effective enforcement of the State's policies against violence and abuse.

The measure is likewise consistent with the State's constitutional duty under the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines to value the dignity of every human person and guarantee full respect for human rights, particularly those belonging to vulnerable sectors of society.

Strengthening protections for women and children is not merely a matter of criminal justice or social welfare; it is an investment in a safer, more just, and more equitable society. Ensuring that women and children are free from violence enables them to participate fully in national development and contributes to the overall stability and well-being of communities.

It is for these reasons that the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS
Representative, Ang Probinsyano Partylist

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE TO UPDATE EXISTING
PROTOCOLS OF THE CHILDREN AND WOMEN'S DESKS IN THE
PHILIPPINES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Children and Women’s Desk Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to value the dignity of every human person and guarantee full respect for human rights. It also recognizes the role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. In addition to this, the State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.

SECTION 3. *Scope.* – This Act shall apply to all children and women’s desks in the country, whether currently existing or yet to be established.

SECTION 4. *Roles and Responsibilities.* – The Department of Interior and Local Government, with the assistance of the Philippine National Police, shall identify, prepare, and provide policy guidance and technical resource assistance with regard to the inclusion of updates in the existing protocols of the children and women’s desks in the Philippines in order to ensure the prompt, efficient, and effective response to reported cases of abuse and the necessary rescue protocols therewith.

SECTION 5. *Immediate Rescue.* – The Department of Interior and Local Government and the Philippine National Police shall partner with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Philippine Commission on Women as regards protocols pertaining to response on the reported cases of abuse and rescue of the victims thereof within twenty-four hours from the receipt of report.

SECTION 6. *Mental Health Assistance.* - There shall be stationed at every children and women's desk a mental health professional who is tasked with providing assistance, including psychological first aid, to all victims referred to such a desk.

SECTION 6. *Socio-civic organizations and the Private Sector.* – This Act shall also empower the private sector in engaging and partnering with the government in promulgating these protocols. Non-governmental organizations, civic organizations, the academe, people's organizations, and the like shall be tapped by the government in providing assistance in the promulgation and enforcement of such guidelines.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Department of Agriculture shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts unaffected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,