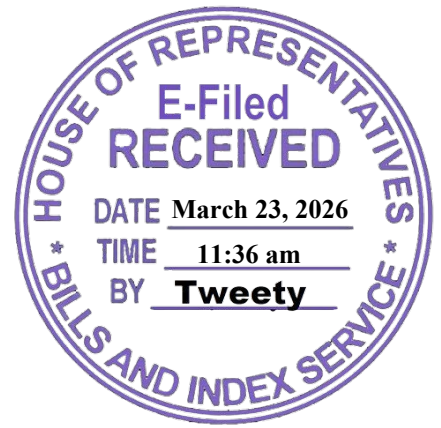


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8717**



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

AN ACT
IMPOSING STIFFER PENALTIES AND STRENGTHENING PROTECTIONS
AGAINST GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11313, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “SAFE
SPACES ACT”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 11313, otherwise known as the “Safe Spaces Act” or “Bawal Bastos Law,” was enacted in 2019 to prevent and penalize gender-based sexual harassment in streets, public spaces, workplaces, educational institutions, and online platforms. The law marked a significant step in protecting individuals, particularly women and marginalized groups, from harassment and abuse in both physical and digital environments.

Despite this progress, evolving technologies and the increasing prevalence of online interactions have exposed gaps in the current law. New platforms, including artificial intelligence and digital communication tools, have created additional avenues for harassment, intimidation, and exploitation. Reports from law enforcement and government agencies also indicate that gender-based sexual harassment continues to occur in workplaces, schools, and online spaces, often going underreported due to fear of retaliation, stigma, or victim-blaming¹.

Data from the Philippine National Police (PNP) recorded hundreds of violations of the Safe Spaces Act, while reports from the Department of Education (DepEd) and other agencies reveal continuing incidents of sexual harassment and abuse in

¹ Center for Women’s Resources (02 December 2025). Position Paper – Amendments to the Safe Spaces Act in the Philippines. Retrieved from: <https://centerforwomensresources.org/blog/2025/12/02/position-paper-on-house-bill-no-5198-amendments-to-the-safe-spaces-act-in-the-philippines-to-increase-penalties-for-violations-and-enhance-legal-protection-against-gender-based-harassment-center-f/>

educational institutions². These cases, some of which even involve individuals in positions of authority³, highlight the urgent need to strengthen safeguards, improve accountability mechanisms, and ensure stronger deterrence against offenders.

This measure seeks to strengthen the Safe Spaces Act by expanding the definitions of prohibited acts, including the recognition of grooming as a form of predatory conduct, and by addressing gender-based online harassment committed through emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. It likewise imposes stiffer penalties for gender-based sexual harassment in workplaces and educational or training institutions, where power imbalances may place victims in particularly vulnerable situations. The measure also promotes greater accountability for public officials and government employees who engage in or promote gender-based harassment.

It must be noted that the Philippines has reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work through the ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 190⁴, which recognizes every worker's right to a workplace free from violence and harassment. This measure complements these commitments by ensuring that existing national laws remain responsive to emerging threats and evolving social realities.

By strengthening penalties, expanding protections, and reinforcing accountability mechanisms, this proposed measure seeks to ensure that the Safe Spaces Act continues to effectively safeguard dignity, equality, and safety in workplaces, educational institutions, public spaces, and digital environments.

In the 20th Congress, this bill adopts the version of Representatives Sarah Jane Elago, Antonio Tinio, Renee Louise Co, Arlene Bag-ao, Jose Manuel Diokno, Percival Cendaña and Dadah Kiram Ismula. Further, similar bills have been filed by Representatives JC Abalos, Ching Bernos, Ann Matibag, Benjamin Agarao, and Crispin Diego Remulla.

The immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



LEILA M. DE LIMA

² *Id at 1.*

³ Cereno, A. (11 March 2026). The Need to change mindsets and cure the flu of Women's Month. Retrieved from: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/190322/the-need-to-change-mindsets-and-cure-the-flu-of-womens-month>

⁴ Adopted on December 11, 2023.

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PURPOSE REPUBLIC 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. *Section 3 of Republic Act No. 11313 shall be amended to read, as*
2 *follows:*

3
4 "Definition of terms:

5
6 (I) **“GROOMING” REFERS TO PREDATORY CONDUCT, ACT, OR**
7 **PATTERN OF ACTS, OF ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST, OR**
8 **EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH A CHILD OR SOMEONE WHO IS**
9 **BELIEVED TO BE A CHILD, BY A GUARDIAN, TEACHER, COACH,**
10 **COUNSELOR, SPIRITUAL ADVISER, CAREGIVER, OR ANY OTHER**
11 **PERSON IN THE POSITON OF AUTHORITY OR TRUST WITH RESPECT TO**
12 **THE SAID CHILD OR SOMEONE BELIEVED TO BE A CHILD,**
13 **REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE CONDUCT, ACT OR PATTERN OF**
14 **ACTS ARE DONE IN PERSON OR THROUGH ELECTRONIC AND OTHER**
15 **SIMILAR DEVICES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PERPETRATING SEXUAL**
16 **ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION”**

17
18 SEC. 2. *Section 12 of Republic Act No. 11313 shall be amended to read, as*
19 *follows:*

20
21 Section 12. Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment. - Gender-based
22 online sexual harassment includes acts that use information and
23 communications technology, **INCLUDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND**
24 **OTHER EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES**, in terrorizing and intimidating victims

1 through physical, psychological, and emotional threats, unwanted sexual
2 misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and sexist remarks and comments
3 online whether publicly or through direct and private messages, invasion of
4 victim's privacy through cyberstalking and incessant messaging, uploading and
5 sharing without the consent of the victim, any form of media that contains
6 photos, voice, or video with sexual content, any unauthorized recording and
7 sharing of any of the victim's photos, videos, or any information online,
8 impersonating identities of victims online or posting lies about victims to harm
9 their reputation, or filing, false abuse reports to online platforms to silence
10 victims.

11
12 SEC. 3. *Section 14 of Republic Act No. 11313 shall be amended to read, as*
13 *follows:*

14
15 "xxx

16
17 **INTERNET INTERMEDIARIES SHALL IMMEDIATELY BLOCK**
18 **ACCESS TO, REMOVE OR TAKE DOWN THE INTERNET ADDRESS,**
19 **UNIFORM RESOURCE LOCATOR (URL), WEBSITES OR ANY CONTENT**
20 **THEREOF CONTAINING MATERIAL CONSTITUTING VIOLATIONS OF**
21 **THIS ACT, WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR (24) HOURS FROM RECEIPT OF**
22 **NOTICE FROM A COMPETENT AUTHORITY: PROVIDED, THAT THESE**
23 **INTERMEDIARIES SHALL PRESERVE WITHIN SIX (6) MONTHS FROM**
24 **THE DATE OF THE TRANSACTION EXTENDIBLE FOR ANOTHER SIX (6)**
25 **MONTHS OR DURING THE PENDENCY OF THE CASE, ALL**
26 **SUBSCRIBER'S OR REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND TRAFFIC DATA**
27 **IN ITS CONTROL AND POSSESSION: PROVIDED FURTHER, THAT IN THE**
28 **CASE OF CONTENT DATA, THE SAME SHALL BE PRESERVED WITHIN**
29 **ONE (1) YEAR, AND UPON NOTICE BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY,**
30 **THE PRESERVATION SHALL BE EXTENDIBLE FOR ANOTHER SIX (6)**
31 **MONTHS: PROVIDED FINALLY, THAT THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY**
32 **SHALL, AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, EXPRESSLY IDENTIFY AND SPECIFY**
33 **SUCH RELEVANT EVIDENCE THAT NEEDS PRESERVATION."**
34

35 SEC. 4. *A new section is hereby added after Section 19 of the Republic Act*
36 *(R.A.) No.11313, or the Safe Spaces Act, to read, as follows:*

37
38 **"SECTION 19-A. PENALTIES FOR GENDER-BASED SEXUAL**
39 **HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE. - THE PENALTY OF *PRISION***
40 ***CORRECCIONAL* IN ITS MAXIMUM PERIOD, OR A FINE OF NOT LESS**
41 **THAN TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS (PHP250,000.00) BUT**
42 **NOT MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (PHP500,000.00),**
43 **OR BOTH, AT THE DISCRETION OF THE COURT, SHALL BE IMPOSED**
44 **UPON ANY PERSON FOUND GUILTY OF ANY GENDER-BASED SEXUAL**
45 **HARASSMENT UNDER THIS ARTICLE.**

46
47 **IF THE PERPETRATOR IS THE HEAD OF THE WORKPLACE OR**
48 **ORGANIZATION, THE APPOINTMENT OF SUCH PERSON SHALL BE**
49 **AUTOMATICALLY DEEMED REVOKED UPON CONVICTION. AN ALIEN**
50 **WHO COMMITS GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE**

1 **WORKPLACE SHALL BE SUBJECT TO DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS**
2 **AFTER SERVING SENTENCE AND/OR PAYMENT OF FINES."**

3
4 **"SECTION 19-B. PENALTIES FOR FOMENTING, PROMOTING, OR**
5 **EXHORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT, MISOGYNISTIC, TRANSPHOBIC,**
6 **HOMOPHOBIC, AND SEXIST SLURS BY PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT**
7 **OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES. - ANY PUBLIC OFFICIAL OR**
8 **GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE WHO IS FOUND GUILTY OF FOMENTING,**
9 **PROMOTING, OR EXHORTING ACTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT,**
10 **MISOGYNISTIC, TRANSPHOBIC, HOMOPHOBIC, AND SEXIST SLURS,**
11 **EITHER VERBALLY, IN WRITING, OR THROUGH DIGITAL OR SOCIAL**
12 **MEDIA PLATFORMS SHALL BE PENALIZED, AS FOLLOWS:**

13
14 **1) THE FIRST OFFENSE SHALL BE PUNISHED BY A MINIMUM**
15 **FINE OF ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P100,000.00) TO TWO**
16 **HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P200,000.00), MANDATORY**
17 **SUSPENSION FROM PUBLIC OFFICE OR EMPLOYMENT FOR A PERIOD**
18 **OF NOT LESS THAN SIX (6) MONTHS WITHOUT PAY, AND MANDATORY**
19 **COMPLETION OF A GENDER-SENSITIVITY AND ANTI-HARASSMENT**
20 **TRAINING PROGRAM, CERTIFIED BY AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION.**

21
22 **2) THE REPEAT OFFENSE SHALL BE PUNISHED BY A**
23 **MINIMUM FINE OF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P200,000.00) TO**
24 **THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P300,000.00), MANDATORY**
25 **DISMISSAL FROM OFFICE, ALONG WITH DISQUALIFICATION FROM**
26 **HOLDING ANY PUBLIC POSITION, WHETHER ELECTIVE OR**
27 **APPOINTIVE, FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN FIVE (5) YEARS; AND**
28 **A PERMANENT RECORD OF THE OFFENSE ON PUBLIC SERVICE**
29 **CREDENTIALS AND PROHIBITION FROM RECEIVING BENEFITS TIED TO**
30 **THE OFFICE.**

31
32 **3) THE OFFENDER IN ALL CASES UNDER THIS SECTION**
33 **SHALL BE REQUIRED TO ISSUE A PUBLIC APOLOGY TO THE AFFECTED**
34 **INDIVIDUALS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ACKNOWLEDGING THE**
35 **MISCONDUCT AND REAFFIRMING A COMMITMENT TO UPHOLDING THE**
36 **SAFE SPACES ACT'S PRINCIPLES.**

37
38 **COMPLAINTS AND FINDINGS UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE**
39 **REFERRED TO THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION OR THE OFFICE OF**
40 **THE OMBUDSMAN FOR MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT OF THESE**
41 **PENALTIES.**

42
43 **ANY ACTION ARISING FROM THE VIOLATION OF THIS SECTION**
44 **SHALL PRESCRIBE IN FIVE (5) YEARS.**

45
46 **THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL**
47 **GOVERNMENT (DILG), THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION (CSC), AND**
48 **OTHER RELEVANT AGENCIES SHALL PROMULGATE THE**
49 **IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THIS SECTION AND THE**
50 **MECHANISMS FOR REPORTING, INVESTIGATING, AND PENALIZING**

1 PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES WHO VIOLATE
2 THIS PROVISION."

3
4 SEC. 5. *A new Section 21 shall be inserted as follows, with the provisions below*
5 *it renumbered accordingly:*
6

7 SECTION 21. GENDER-BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN
8 EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS. -THE CRIME OF GENDER-
9 BASED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING
10 INSTITUTIONS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:
11

12 (A) AN ACT OR SERIES OF ACTS INVOLVING ANY UNWELCOME
13 SEXUAL ADVANCES, REQUESTS OR DEMAND FOR SEXUAL FAVORS
14 OR ANY ACT OF SEXUAL NATURE, WHETHER DONE VERBALLY,
15 PHYSICALLY OR THROUGH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY SUCH AS TEXT
16 MESSAGING, MESSAGING APPLICATIONS, ELECTRONIC MAIL, OR
17 THROUGH ANY OTHER FORMS OF INFORMATION AND
18 COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS;
19

20 (B) A CONDUCT OF SEXUAL NATURE AND OTHER CONDUCT-
21 BASED ON SEX AFFECTING THE DIGNITY OF A PERSON, WHICH IS
22 UNWELCOME, UNREASONABLE, AND OFFENSIVE TO THE RECIPIENT,
23 WHETHER DONE VERBALLY, PHYSICALLY OR THROUGH THE USE OF
24 TECHNOLOGY SUCH AS TEXT MESSAGING, MESSAGING
25 APPLICATIONS, OR ELECTRONIC MAIL OR THROUGH ANY OTHER
26 FORMS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS,
27 INCLUDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGIES;
28

29 (C) A CONDUCT THAT IS UNWELCOME AND PERVASIVE AND
30 CREATES AN INTIMIDATING, HOSTILE, OR HUMILIATING ENVIRONMENT
31 FOR THE RECIPIENT: PROVIDED, THAT THE CRIME OF GENDER-BASED
32 SEXUAL HARASSMENT MAY ALSO BE COMMITTED BETWEEN PEERS
33 AND THOSE COMMITTED TO A SUPERIOR OFFICER BY A
34 SUBORDINATE, OR TO A TEACHER BY A STUDENT, OR TO A TRAINER
35 BY A TRAINEE;
36

37 (D) CONDUCT THAT CONSTITUTES GROOMING IN ACCORDANCE
38 WITH SECTION 3 OF THIS ACT.
39

40 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEM REFERS TO A
41 SYSTEM FOR GENERATING, SENDING, RECEIVING, STORING OR
42 OTHERWISE PROCESSING ELECTRONIC DATA MESSAGES OR
43 ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND INCLUDES THE COMPUTER SYSTEM
44 OR OTHER SIMILAR DEVICES BY OR IN WHICH DATA ARE RECORDED
45 OR STORED AND ANY PROCEDURE RELATED TO THE RECORDING OR
46 STORAGE OF ELECTRONIC DATA MESSAGES OR ELECTRONIC
47 DOCUMENTS.
48

49 ANY PERSON WHO VIOLATES THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT
50 SHALL, UPON CONVICTION, BE PENALIZED BY IMPRISONMENT OF NOT

1 LESS THAN ONE (1) MONTH NOR MORE THAN SIX (6) MONTHS, OR A
2 FINE OF NOT LESS THAN TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P10,000) NOR MORE
3 THAN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P100,000)), OR BOTH, AT THE
4 DISCRETION OF THE COURT. IF THE PERPETRATOR IS AN ADULT AND
5 THE VICTIM IS A CHILD, THE PENALTY OF IMPRISONMENT SHALL BE
6 IMPOSED MANDATORILY.
7

8 WITHIN SIX (6) MONTHS FROM THE PASSAGE OF THIS ACT, THE
9 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (DOJ), THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
10 (DepEd), THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED), AND THE
11 CHILD WELFARE COUNCIL (CWC) SHALL FORMULATE RULES FOR THE
12 INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF A PRE-HIRING SAFETY CLEARANCE
13 MECHANISM TO ENSURE THAT ADULTS REGULARLY WORKING IN
14 CLOSE PROXIMITY TO MINORS, SUCH AS TEACHERS AND OTHER
15 SCHOOL PERSONNEL, HAVE NO HISTORY OF ABUSIVE OR
16 PREDATORY BEHAVIOR. THIS PRE-HIRING SAFETY CLEARANCE
17 SHALL NOT BE UNDULY BURDENSOME TO APPLICANTS, AND SHALL
18 BALANCE THE INTERESTS OF DUE PROCESS AND CHILD SAFETY.
19

20 GENDER SENSITIVITY AND CHILD PROTECTION TRAININGS
21 SHALL BE MANDATORY FOR ALL STAFF.
22

23 SEC. 6. *A new section is hereby added after Section 23 of R.A. No. 11313, to*
24 *read, as follows:*
25

26 "SECTION 23-A. PENALTIES FOR GENDER-BASED SEXUAL
27 HARASSMENT IN EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS. - THE
28 PENALTY OF *PRISION CORRECCIONAL* IN ITS MAXIMUM PERIOD, OR A
29 FINE OF NOT LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS
30 (P250,000.00) BUT NOT MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS
31 (P500,000.00), OR BOTH, AT THE DISCRETION OF THE COURT SHALL BE
32 IMPOSED UPON ANY PERSON FOUND GUILTY OF ANY GENDER-BASED
33 SEXUAL HARASSMENT UNDER THIS ARTICLE.
34

35 IF THE PERPETRATOR IS THE HEAD OF THE EDUCATIONAL OR
36 TRAINING INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION, THE APPOINTMENT OF
37 SUCH PERSON SHALL BE AUTOMATICALLY DEEMED REVOKED UPON
38 CONVICTION. AN ALIEN WHO COMMITS GENDER-BASED SEXUAL
39 HARASSMENT IN AN EDUCATION OR TRAINING INSTITUTION SHALL BE
40 SUBJECT TO DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS AFTER SERVING
41 SENTENCE AND/OR PAYMENT OF FINES."
42

43 SEC.7. *Section 36 of Republic Act No. 11313 is likewise amended to read, as*
44 *follows:*
45

46 "Section 36. Prescriptive Period. - Any action arising from the violation
47 of any of the provisions of this Act shall prescribe as follows:
48

- 49 a) XXX
- 50 b) XXX
- c) XXX

1 d) XXX

2 e) Offenses committed under Sections 16 and 21 of this Act shall
3 prescribe in ~~{five (5)}~~ **TEN (10)** years."
4

5 SEC. 8. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
6 unconstitutional, the provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force
7 and effect.
8

9 SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
10 presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
11 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
12 accordingly.
13

14 SEC. 10. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
15 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the
16 Philippines.

Approved,