

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8828**



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

AN ACT
RECOGNIZING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER, ATTENTION DEFICIT
HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER, AND DOWN SYNDROME AS DISTINCT AND
SEPARATE CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH'S PHILIPPINE REGISTRY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIII, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that, “[t]he Congress shall give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good.” In line with the constitutional directive on the promotion of social justice, there is a need to strengthen mechanisms that uphold the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities (PWDs), particularly those with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Despite the existence of laws and programs intended to support persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the country, many continue to face barriers in accessing essential services, such as healthcare, education, and appropriate developmental interventions. One of the persistent challenges is the lack of comprehensive, accurate, and disaggregated data on persons with disabilities. The absence of clear and distinct classifications in official registries contributes to gaps in policy formulation, inefficient resource allocation, and inadequate delivery of services tailored to specific needs.

At present, the Philippine Registry for Persons with Disabilities (PRPWD), maintained by the Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), does not sufficiently recognize Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Down Syndrome (DS) as distinct and separate categories of disabilities. These conditions are often

grouped under broader classifications, thereby obscuring their unique characteristics and specific intervention requirements.

ASD, ADHD, and DS are distinct neurodevelopmental conditions with varying developmental profiles, medical considerations, and support needs. The failure to properly identify and classify these conditions undermines and limits the State's ability to develop responsive and evidence-based programs. It also limits the capacity of government agencies and local government units to deliver targeted services and interventions, and to accurately assess the prevalence and needs of affected individuals.

This proposed measure seeks to address these gaps by mandating the recognition of ASD, ADHD, and DS as distinct categories in the Persons with Disabilities Registry Form and the PRPWD database. By doing so, it aims to enhance the accuracy of disability data, improve program targeting, and ensure that individuals with these conditions receive appropriate support and services. It also directs local government units, through their Persons with Disability Affairs Offices (PDAO), to reflect proper medical diagnoses in the registry and prevent misclassification.

Ultimately, this bill advances a rights-based and inclusive approach to disability by acknowledging the specific needs of persons with ASD, ADHD, and DS, and by strengthening institutional mechanisms that support their full participation in society.

The 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:

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as “Autism Spectrum
2 *Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Down Syndrome Recognition*
3 *Act of 2026*”.

4
5 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared policy of the State to
6 protect and promote the right to health of the people to achieve full, healthy, and
7 holistic development. This includes the rights of persons with autism spectrum disorder
8 (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and down syndrome (DS). As
9 such, the State shall promote an environment conducive to the growth and
10 development of persons with ASD, ADHD, and DS to become, to the best of their
11 potential, independent, self-reliant, and productive members of society.

12
13 Towards this end, the State commits itself to the establishment of institutional
14 and social mechanisms to support persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities and
15 their families. In this light, the State shall recognize ASD, ADHD, and DS as distinct
16 categories of disabilities and institutionalize a holistic program for persons with ASD,
17 ADHD, and DS in the country that is sensitive to their needs for purposes of
18 empowering them and providing them with a decent and dignified quality of life.

19
20 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

21
22 (a) *Neurodevelopmental Disabilities* – refer to a group of neurological conditions
23 negatively affecting the development of the nervous system, which includes the

1 brain and the spinal cord. They include autism spectrum disorder, attention
2 deficit hyperactivity disorder, down syndrome, cerebral palsy, learning
3 disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and other similar disabilities, including motor
4 disorders and communication disorders, among others;

5
6 (b) *Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)* – refers to a neurological disorder
7 characterized by impairment in social communication and socialization, and
8 restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior. This shall include conditions
9 previously-labeled as Asperger's Syndrome, Rett's Syndrome, Childhood
10 Disintegrative Disorder, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder not otherwise
11 specified;

12
13 (c) *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)* – refers to a neurological
14 condition that can affect children, adolescents, and adults, characterized by
15 persistent patterns of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes
16 with function or development;

17
18 (d) *Down Syndrome (DS)* – refers to a type of intellectual disability caused by an
19 extra genetic material in chromosome 21. This additional genetic material
20 results in characteristic physical features, intellectual and developmental
21 delays, and a higher risk of certain medical conditions;

22
23 (e) *Learning Disabilities* – refer to problems that affect the brain's activity to receive,
24 process, analyze, or store information. Learning disabilities can manifest as:

- 25
26 a. Dyslexia – a specific learning difficulty that affects auditory memory
27 processing speed, which impacts phonological mapping, literacy
28 development, and orthographic listening skills, manifested as difficulties
29 in reading, writing, and spelling;
30 b. Dyscalculia – difficulties in understanding basic arithmetic concepts;
31 c. Dysgraphia – poor writing skills;
32 d. Dyspraxia – affects coordination and motor skills, such as motor
33 planning, speech planning, hand-eye coordination, as well as the
34 coordination of the body and brain;
35 e. Other similar disabilities;

36
37 (f) *Intellectual disability* – refers to a disability characterized by significant
38 limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, and problem
39 solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and
40 practical skills;

41
42 (g) *Persons with Disabilities Registry Form* – refers to the application form for
43 registration to the Philippine Registry for Persons with Disabilities;

44
45 (h) *Philippine Registry for Persons with Disabilities (PRPWD)* – refers to a
46 database of persons with disabilities managed by the Department of Health
47 (DOH) and the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA).

48
49 SEC. 4. *Inclusion of ASD, ADHD, and DS in the Persons with Disabilities*
50 *Registration Form.* – Within three (3) months from the date of effectivity of this Act, the

1 Department of Health (DOH) shall update the Persons with Disabilities Registry Form,
2 or the Philippine Registry for Persons with Disabilities Application Form, to include
3 “Autism Spectrum Disorder,” “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder,” and “Down
4 Syndrome” as distinct categories in the list of disabilities written under “TYPE OF
5 DISABILITY.”
6

7 SEC. 5. *Database.* – The Department of Health (DOH) shall ensure that the
8 database on disabilities shall reflect these revisions in the PWD Registry. In the case
9 of ASD, ADHD, and DS, the Person with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO) under the
10 local government units shall input the proper diagnosis of the developmental
11 pediatrician or psychiatrist in the database, and shall refrain from reclassifying them
12 into other disabilities.
13

14 SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the effective
15 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the
16 Department of Health (DOH).
17

18 SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or
19 unconstitutional, the provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force
20 and effect.
21

22 SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
23 presidential proclamations, letters of instruction, rules and regulations, or parts thereof
24 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
25 accordingly.
26

27 SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
28 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the
29 Philippines.

Approved,