

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 9447



Introduced by Representative KAREN HOPE F. GARCIA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Violence against women and children (VAWC) remains one of the most pressing public health, development, and human rights concerns in the Philippines. Despite the enactment of a comprehensive legal framework that includes Republic Act (RA) No. 7610 or the “Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act,” RA No. 9262 or the “Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 (Anti-VAWC),” RA No. 9775 or the “Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009,” and most recently, RA No. 11930 or the “Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act,” violence against women and children persists at alarming levels.

According to the Philippine Commission on Women, 8,055 cases¹ were reported under Anti-VAWC alone. A report² from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and national child-protection reporting systems further reveal that tens of thousands of cases of violence against children are recorded yearly, reflecting both the magnitude of abuse and the gaps in protection and prevention. These figures are consistent with the findings of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Council for the Welfare of Children, which highlight the urgent need to strengthen frontline responses.

Qualitative studies and operational reports further confirm the persistence of systemic barriers. Many hospitals and police stations remain without standardized Women and Children Protection Units (WCPUs) or Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPDs). In some cases, existing desks are understaffed, or manned by personnel without specialized training. Medical personnel in hospitals lack uniform protocols for forensic and psychosocial care, weakening the preservation of evidence and increasing the risk of re-traumatizing victims. Survivors in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) are further deprived of immediate assistance due to the absence of accessible protection mechanisms.

This bill ensures that existing laws on violence against women and children are translated into concrete and adequately funded frontline services by mandating the

¹ Philippine Commission on Women. “2024 18-Day Campaign to End Violence Against Women.” Philippine Commission on Women, 2024, <https://pcw.gov.ph/2024-18-day-campaign-to-end-violence-against-women/>

² Philippine Statistics Authority. Violence Against Women 2024 Fact Sheet on Women and Men. Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024, <https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/phdsd/Violence%20Against%20Women%202024%20Fact%20Sheet%20on%20Women%20and%20Men.pdf>

establishment of Women and Children Protection Units in all government hospitals and Women and Children Protection Desks in every police station nationwide. It also provides for Mobile Protection Teams in geographically isolated areas, standardized protocols for medical, forensic, and psychosocial care, dedicated funding with accountability mechanisms, and continuous capacity-building programs for frontline personnel to guarantee survivor-centered and evidence-based responses.

The benefits of this measure are clear. Survivors will gain faster, more survivor-centered responses, with immediate medical, legal, and psychosocial support. Higher reporting rates and improved data collection will enable government agencies to strengthen policy planning and resource allocation. Prosecution rates are expected to improve through standardized forensic and chain-of-custody procedures, while mobile teams and mandated units will ensure equitable access to services across both urban centers and remote areas.

This measure likewise includes critical safeguards: minimum staffing standards per WCPU and WCPD, 24/7 operations or rapid-response systems, mandatory training and certification, and child-friendly protocols such as private interview rooms and trauma-informed processes. Furthermore, it acknowledges the evolving nature of abuse by including cyber- and OSAEC-related modules in training, and by requiring institutional cooperation with internet service providers and digital platforms in the enforcement of RA 11930 and RA 9775.

The Constitution mandates the State to value the dignity of every person and to guarantee full respect for human rights. By strengthening health- and policy-based responses to VAWC and mandating institutionalized frontline services nationwide, this bill fulfills that constitutional duty and ensures that women and children across the country are not left behind in the fight against violence and abuse.

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



Rep. KAREN HOPE F. GARCIA
3rd District, Province of Cebu

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House Bill No. **9447**

Introduced by Representative KAREN HOPE F. GARCIA

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING HEALTH- AND POLICY-BASED RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN BY MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
WOMEN AND CHILDREN PROTECTION UNITS AND DESKS NATIONWIDE,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. *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. In line with its duty to protect women and children from violence and abuse, the State shall institutionalize specialized units and services to ensure access to immediate medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and protection nationwide

Section 2. *General and Specific Objectives.* This Act seeks to:

- a. To institutionalize a comprehensive, nationwide response system to address violence against women and children (VAWC).
- b. To protect and uphold the rights, dignity, and welfare of women and children who are victims of physical, verbal, psychological, mental, and social violence, consistent with the Constitution and international treaties.
- c. To integrate health, social, legal, and law enforcement services into a coordinated protection framework.
- d. To establish Women and Children Protection Units (WCPUs) in every government hospital in provinces and chartered cities nationwide.
- e. To establish Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPDs) in every police station nationwide as initial reporting and referral points.
- f. To deploy Mobile Protection Teams in GIDAs to provide outreach, emergency response, and case documentation.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. *Women and Children Protection Units (WCPUs)* - refer to specialized units staffed by a multidisciplinary team composed of trained physicians, social workers, mental health professionals, and police officers. These units provide comprehensive medical

and psychosocial services to women and children victims of violence and are located near hospital emergency rooms to ensure immediate response.

- b. *Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPDs)* - refer to help desks situated at police stations, consisting of social workers and police officers who have completed multidisciplinary team training on cases of exploitation, violence, and abuse. WCPDs serve as important points for the initial assessment and referral of victims.

Section 4. *Establishment of Women and Children Protection Units.* The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Philippine National Police (PNP) of each region, shall establish Women and Children Protection Units (WCPUs) in every government hospital in provinces and chartered cities nationwide. Each WCPU shall be staffed by a multidisciplinary team composed of trained physicians, social workers, psychologists, and dedicated PNP Women and Children Protection officers. WCPUs shall be located near hospital emergency rooms to provide immediate response to survivors of abuse.

The WCPUs shall serve as specialized centers for the medical treatment, psychosocial support, case documentation, and referral of women and children victims of violence, in accordance with standardized protocols developed under this Act.

Section 5. *Establishment of Women and Children Protection Desks.* The PNP, in coordination with DSWD and the local government units (LGUs), shall establish Women and Children Protection Desks in every police station nationwide, regardless of whether a women's help desk or similar mechanism already exists.

Each WCPD shall serve as a dedicated and permanent unit within the police station, staffed by trained personnel, and shall function as a one-stop facility for the initial reporting, documentation, and immediate response to cases of violence against women and children (VAWC). These desks shall also facilitate prompt referral to appropriate medical, psychosocial, and legal services, in accordance with standardized protocols developed under this Act.

Section 6. *Establishment of Mobile Protection Teams.* To ensure access in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs), the PNP, DOH, and DSWD, in coordination with concerned local government units (LGUs), shall organize and deploy Mobile Protection Teams nationwide.

These teams shall be composed of specially trained police officers, health professionals, and social workers, and shall be equipped to deliver on-site outreach services, emergency medical and psychosocial interventions, case documentation, and referral assistance to survivors of violence in remote barangays.

The Mobile Protection Teams shall likewise serve as liaison units to connect victims in GIDAs with the nearest Women and Children Protection Units (WCPUs) and Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPDs), ensuring that no survivor is denied timely assistance due to geographic or resource limitations.

Section 7. Appropriations. Such sums as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be taken from any available appropriations of the Department of Health and the Philippine National Police under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, the succeeding appropriations for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The PNP, DOH, and DSWD expert course providers and other stakeholders shall formulate the Rules and Regulations within Ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act. Furthermore, the DOH, in consultation with the DSWD, DOJ, and PNP, shall develop standardized protocols for the identification, treatment, documentation, and referral of VAWC and child abuse cases. These protocols shall be binding on all hospitals, clinics, and WCPUs and WCPDs nationwide to improve evidence preservation and prosecution.

Section 9. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 10. Repealing Clause. - All laws, executive orders, administrative orders and rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Section 11. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,