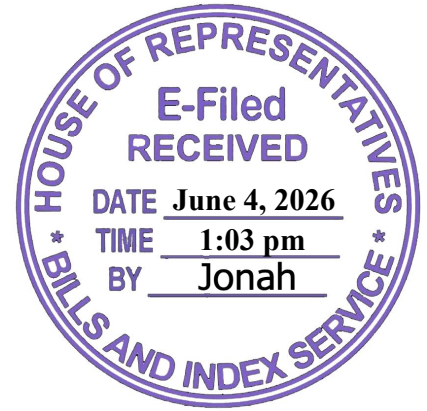


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9803



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND CHILD WELFARE PROGRAMS,
ENHANCING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTION,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Every child deserves the chance to grow up safe, healthy, educated, and hopeful. Yet many Filipino children continue to suffer from poverty, hunger, neglect, violence, and lack of support. Too often, children who stop attending school or struggle at home are only noticed when they are already in serious trouble. This bill seeks to strengthen youth development and child welfare programs so that children receive help early, before they fall deeper into crisis.

Although existing laws already protect children, many communities still lack enough counselors, social workers, nutrition programs, and support services. As a result, many young people become disconnected from school, exposed to abuse, or pushed toward conflict with the law. This measure strengthens coordination among schools, barangays, local governments, and national agencies to ensure that children are guided, supported, and protected rather than neglected or punished.

The bill promotes practical and compassionate solutions such as school attendance monitoring, feeding and nutrition programs, counseling services, and community-based intervention for children at risk. By helping children stay in school, addressing family and mental health concerns early, and providing stronger support systems, this measure gives every child a better chance to succeed and build a brighter future.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to recognize the vital role of the youth in nation-building and to promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. The State shall likewise defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and to special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

Consistent with these constitutional mandates, and in furtherance of the State policy of special protection for children, this Act strengthens school- and community-based programs that prevent children from being at risk and from coming in conflict with the law and ensures timely referral to appropriate social welfare interventions.

This Act shall be implemented in a manner consistent with the restorative and child-centered framework of the juvenile justice system, including the coordinated inter-agency implementation mechanism under the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC).

SECTION 2. School Attendance and Truancy Prevention; Designation of Barangay Truancy Focal Person. —

(a) **Designation.** Every barangay shall designate a **Barangay Truancy Focal Person** from among the members of the Sangguniang Barangay or any qualified barangay personnel, who shall coordinate school attendance interventions in partnership with the school head and the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC).

(b) **Functions.** The Barangay Truancy Focal Person shall:

1. Coordinate with schools on reports of habitual absenteeism;
2. Conduct home visits jointly with the Barangay Social Welfare and Development Officer under Section 5 of this Act;
3. Facilitate family conferencing and referral to community-based services; and
4. Submit periodic reports to the City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (C/MSWDO) and to the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC), consistent with local child protection planning.

(c) **Definition of truancy.** For purposes of this Act, “truancy” refers to **habitual absenteeism** as defined in DepEd rules and policies, and in the absence thereof, absence without valid cause for at least **five (5) school days within a month**, whether consecutive or not.

(d) **Referral and case management.** A child identified as truant shall be referred to the **C/MSWDO** for assessment and case management. Referral to **alternative care** (including foster care or licensed child-caring institutions) shall be governed by existing child welfare laws and DSWD regulations, and shall not be automatic or punitive.

SECTION 3. Local Truancy and Child Attendance Monitoring Desk (TCAMD). —

(a) **Creation.** The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shall issue guidelines for the creation, in every city and municipality, of a **Truancy and Child Attendance Monitoring Desk (TCAMD)** within the LCPC Secretariat or such office as the LGU may designate.

(b) **Functions.** The TCAMD shall:

1. Serve as the LGU's consolidated data and referral desk for school attendance concerns;
2. Ensure privacy and confidentiality of child data;
3. Coordinate referrals to social welfare services; and
4. Support the LCPC in planning and budgeting child protection and juvenile intervention measures.

(c) **Coordination on parental neglect.** When warranted by social case study and after appropriate intervention efforts, the C/MSWDO may recommend to appropriate authorities action under applicable laws on parental neglect and child protection, consistent with due process and the best interests of the child.

SECTION 4. Guidance Counselors in Schools. —

(a) **Minimum standard; phased compliance.** DepEd, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission and relevant professional regulatory bodies, shall set **minimum guidance counselor-to-learner ratios** and implement a phased compliance plan prioritizing schools with high-risk indicators (dropout, violence, substance abuse, bullying, and the like).

(b) **Functions.** Guidance counselors shall provide counseling and developmental guidance services and coordinate with child protection committees and local social welfare offices for early intervention.

SECTION 5. Strengthening Social Welfare Presence at the Barangay Level. —

(a) **Barangay Social Welfare and Development Focal Person.** Every barangay shall have a designated **Barangay Social Welfare and Development Focal Person**, preferably a registered social worker, who shall operate under the technical supervision of the C/MSWDO.

(b) **Functions.** The Barangay Social Welfare and Development Focal Person shall conduct home visits, counseling, child-rights education, and case conferencing, and shall assist in community-based intervention for children at risk and children in conflict with the law.

- (c) **Compensation.** LGUs shall provide honoraria or compensation subject to applicable budgeting, civil service, and auditing rules.

SECTION 6. Expanded School-Based Feeding and Nutrition Support. —

- (a) **Program.** DepEd shall strengthen and expand school-based feeding and nutrition support, prioritizing undernourished and food-insecure learners, consistent with available appropriations and program standards.
- (b) **Food donations.** Donations of apparently wholesome food to schools for feeding programs shall be governed by the Food Donation Act and its implementing rules.

SECTION 7. School Health Services (Nurses and Dentists). —

- (a) **Standard-setting.** The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with DepEd, shall establish minimum standards for school health staffing and service delivery, with phased implementation prioritizing high-need areas.
- (b) **Employment arrangements.** LGUs and relevant agencies may adopt shared service arrangements consistent with local autonomy and existing public health staffing mechanisms.

SECTION 8. Child Witness Assistance. — The Department of Justice (DOJ), in coordination with DSWD, shall strengthen child witness assistance throughout criminal proceedings, including psychosocial support, referrals, and coordination with schools and local social welfare offices, consistent with applicable rules and confidentiality protections.

SECTION 9. Juvenile Reformatory Centers. — The DSWD, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), shall establish, fund, and manage 24-hour child-caring institution providing residential care for children in conflict with the law who commits parricide, murder, infanticide, kidnapping, and serious illegal detention where the victim is killed or raped, robbery with homicide or rape, destructive arson, rape, or carnapping where the driver or occupant is killed or raped or offenses under Republic Act No. 9165, otherwise known as the “Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002,” punishable by more than twelve (12) years of imprisonment.

Each Juvenile Reformatory Center shall contain facilities such as gyms, libraries, and vocational-technical training shops.

SECTION 10. Amendment to Article 60 of Presidential Decree No. 603 (Child and Youth Welfare Code). — Article 60 of P.D. No. 603 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Article 60. Penalty. – The act mentioned in the preceding article shall (be punishable) with imprisonment from two or six-month or a fine not exceeding five hundred pesos, or both, at the discretion of the Court, unless a higher penalty is provided for in the Revised Penal Code or special laws, without prejudice to actions for the involuntary commitment of the child under Title VIII of this Code) **SUFFER THE PENALTY OF PRISION CORRECCIONAL IN ITS MINIMUM PERIOD TO PRISON CORRECCIONAL IN ITS MAXIMUM PERIOD.**”

SECTION 11. Amendment to Section 20-C of Republic Act No. 9344, as amended (Exploitation of Children for Commission of Crimes). — Section 20-C of Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, is hereby amended to expressly include parents and guardians and to strengthen penalties, as follows:

“SEC. 20-C. Exploitation of Children for Commission of Crimes. – Any person, **INCLUDING THE PARENT OF CHILD**, who, in the commission of a crime, makes use, takes advantage of, or profits from the use of children, including any person who abuses his/her authority over the child or who, with abuse of confidence, takes advantage of the vulnerabilities of the child and shall induce, threaten, or instigate the commission of the crime, shall be imposed the penalty [prescribed by law for the crime committed in its maximum period] **OF RECLUSION PERPETUA, IF THE CRIME COMMITTED IS PUNISHABLE BY IMPRISONMENT OF MORE THAN SIX (6) YEARS, AND RECLUSION TEMPORAL, IF THE CRIME COMMITTED IS PUNISHABLE BY IMPRISONMENT OF SIX (6) YEARS OR LESS. THE FACT THAT THE PERSON WHO EXPLOITED THE CHILD FOR THE COMMISSION OF CRIMES IS A PUBLIC OFFICER SHALL BE CONSIDERED AS A GENERIC AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**”

SECTION 12. Information Campaign. — Within three (3) months from effectivity, DSWD, DepEd, DILG, DOJ, and the JJWC shall conduct a sustained information campaign on child rights, parental responsibilities, community-based intervention, and prevention of exploitation of children in crime, consistent with the national coordinating role of the JJWC.

SECTION 13. Amendment to Section 49. —Section 49 of Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 49. Establishment of ‘Bahay Pag-Asa’. – [Each province and highly-urbanized city (the LGU)] THE DSWD shall be responsible for building, funding, and operating a ‘Bahay Pag-asa’ [within their jurisdiction] following the standards that will be set by the DSWD and adopted by the JJWC. **THE ALLOCATIONS NECESSARY FOR BUILDING, FUNDING, AND OPERATING THE ‘BAHAY PAG-ASA’ SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET OF THE DSWD IN THE ANNUAL GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT.**

EVERY ‘BAHAY PAG-ASA’ SHALL CONTAIN FACILITIES SUCH AS GYMS, LIBRARIES, AND VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL TRAINING SHOPS, AND SHALL HAVE PROGRAMS FOR ALTERNATIVE LEARNING OR EDUCATION PROGRAMS GEARED TOWARDS VALUES FORMATION, CULTURAL AWARENESS, READING, AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT. *PROVIDED*, THAT CHILDREN WHO DO NOT POSE A RISK TO THE COMMUNITY MAY BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE BAHAY PAG-ASA TO WHICH THE CHILD IS COMMITTED.

A CHILD COMMITTED TO A BAHAY PAG-ASA MAY BE RELEASED TO THE CHILD’S PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR FOSTER PARENT UPON ORDER BY A COURT AND AFTER A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY CONDUCTED BY THE LOCAL SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER OF THE DSWD. IN THE LATTER CASE, THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE MAY REFUSE TO DISCHARGE THE CHILD IF, IN ITS OPINION, HIS RELEASE WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO HIM OR TO THE COMMUNITY.

[Every ‘Bahay Pag-asa’ will have a special facility called the IJISC. This Center will be allocated for children in conflict with the law in accordance with Sections 20, 20-A, and 20-B hereof. These children will be required to undergo a more intensive multidisciplinary intervention program of the IJISC. Upon institutionalization of the IJISC program, the JJWC will continue to monitor and provide technical assistance to the multi-disciplinary teams operating the said centers.]”

SECTION 14. Amendment to Section 20 (Children Below the Age of Criminal Responsibility). —Section 20 of Republic Act No. 9344, otherwise known as the

Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 20. Children Below the Age of Criminal Responsibility. – If it has been determined that the child taken into custody is fifteen (15) years old or below, the authority which will have an initial contact with the child, in consultation with the local social welfare and development officer, has the duty to immediately release the child to the custody of his/her parents or guardian, or in the absence thereof, the child’s nearest relative. The child shall be subjected to a community-based intervention program supervised by the [local] BARANGAY social welfare and development officer, unless the best interest of the child requires the referral of the child to a [youth care facility or ‘Bahay Pag-asa’ managed by the LGUs or licensed and/or accredited GOs monitored by the DSWD] ANY CHILD-CARING INSTITUTION LICENSED AND ACCREDITED BY THE DSWD TO IMPLEMENT THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM, OR TO A PERSON DULY REGISTERED WITH THE DSWD WHO IS WILLING TO PROVIDE FOSTER CARE.

NO CHILD UNDER SEVEN YEARS OF AGE SHALL BE SEPARATED FROM THE MOTHER, UNLESS THE LATTER IS UNFIT. GIVING CUSTODY OF CHILD TO THE PARENTS, GUARDIANS, OR NEAREST RELATIVES SHALL BE CONSIDERED NOT TO BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD IN THE CHILD’S PARENTS, GUARDIANS OR NEAREST RELATIVES:: (1) ARE TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO PROVIDE THE CHILD WITH ADEQUATE CARE; (2) ARE ENGAGED IN DRUG ADDICTION OR HABITUAL ALCOHOLISM; (3) TREAT THE CHILD WITH EXCESSIVE HARSHNESS OR CRUELTY; (4) IMPROPERLY EXPLOIT THE CHILD; OR ANY OTHER ANALOGOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE FOLLOWING CHILDREN MAY ALSO BE PLACED IN FOSTER CARE:

- a. A CHILD WHO IS ABANDONED, SURRENDERED, NEGLECTED, DEPENDENT OR ORPHANED;**
- b. A CHILD WHO IS VICTIM OF SEXUAL, PHYSICAL, OR ANY OTHER FORM OF ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION;**
- c. A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS;**

- d. A CHILD WHOSE FAMILY MEMBERS ARE TEMPORARILY OR PERMANENTLY UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO PROVIDE THE CHILD WITH ADEQUATE CARE;**
- e. A CHILD AWAITING ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT AND WHO WOULD HAVE TO BE PREPARED FOR FAMILY LIFE;**
- f. A CHILD WHO NEEDS LONG-TERM CARE AND CLOSE FAMILY TIES BUT WHO CANNOT BE PLACED FOR DOMESTIC ADOPTION;**
- g. A CHILD WHOSE ADOPTION HAS BEEN DISRUPTED;**
- h. A CHILD WHO IS UNDER SOCIALLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, A STREET CHILD, A CHILD IN ARMED CONFLICT, A VICTIM OF CHILD LABOR OR TRAFFICKING;**
- i. A CHILD WHO COMMITTED MINOR OFFENSE BUT IS RELEASED ON RECOGNIZANCE, OR WHO IS IN CUSTODY SUPERVISION OR WHOSE CASE IS DISMISSED; AND**
- j. A CHILD WHO IS IN NEED OF SPECIAL PROTECTION AS ASSESSED BY A SOCIAL WORKER, AN AGENCY OR THE DSWD.**

The [local] **BARANGAY** social welfare and development officer shall determine the appropriate programs for the child who has been released, in consultation with the child and the person having custody over the child. If the parents, guardians, or nearest relatives cannot be located, or if they refuse to take custody, the child may be released to any of the following:

- a. A duly registered nongovernmental or religious organization;**
- b. A barangay official or a member of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC);**
- c. A local social welfare and development officer; [or, when and where appropriate, the DSWD.]**
- d. A FOSTER PARENT; OR,**
- e. WHEN AND WHERE APPROPRIATE, THE DSWD.**

If the child has been found by the [local] **BARANGAY** social welfare and development officer to be dependent, abandoned, neglected, or abused by his/her parents and the best interest of the child requires that he/she be placed in [a youth care facility or 'Bahay Pag-asa'] **ANY CHILD-CARING INSTITUTION LICENSED AND ACCREDITED BY THE DSW TO IMPLEMENT THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM, OR TO A PERSON DULY REGISTERED WITH THE DSWD WHO IS WILLING TO PROVIDE FOSTER CARE**, the child's parents or guardians shall execute a written authorization for the voluntary commitment of the child: *Provided*, That if the child has no parents or guardians or if they refuse or fail to execute the written authorization for voluntary commitment, the proper petition for involuntary commitment shall be immediately filed by the DSWD or the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO) pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 603, as amended, otherwise known as "The Child and Youth Welfare Code" and the Supreme Court rule on commitment of children: *Provided, further*, That the minimum age for children committed to a youth care facility or 'Bahay Pag-asa' shall be twelve (12) years old."

SECTION 15. Amendment to Section 20-A (Serious Crimes). — Section 20-A of Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 20-A. Serious Crimes Committed by Children [Who are Exempt From Criminal Responsibility. – A child who is above twelve (12) years of age up to fifteen (15) years of age and who commits parricide, murder, infanticide, kidnapping and serious illegal detention where the victim is killed or raped, robbery with homicide or rape, destructive arson, rape, or carnapping where the driver or occupant is killed or raped or offenses under Republic Act No. 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, punishable by more than twelve (12) years of imprisonment, shall be deemed a neglected child under P.D. No. 603, as amended, and shall be mandatorily placed in a [special facility within the youth care facility or 'Bahay Pag-asa' called the Intensive Juvenile Intervention and Support Center (IJISC)] **JUVENILE REFORMATORY CENTER**.

In accordance with existing laws, rules, procedures, and guidelines, the proper petition for involuntary commitment and placement under [the IJISC] **JUVENILE REFORMATORY CENTER** shall be filed by the local social welfare and development officer of the LGU where the offense was committed, or by the

DSWD social worker in the local social welfare and development officer's absence **OR INABILITY**, within twenty-four (24) hours from the time of the receipt of a report on the alleged commission of said child. The court, where the petition for involuntary commitment has been filed shall decide on the petition within seventy-two (72) hours from the time the said petition has been filed by the DSWD/LSWDO. The court will determine the initial period of placement of the child within the **[IJISC] JUVENILE REFORMATORY CENTER** which shall not be less than one (1) year. The multi-disciplinary team of the **[IJISC] JUVENILE REFORMATORY CENTER** will submit to the court a case study and progress report to include a psychiatric evaluation report and recommend the reintegration of the child to his/her family or the extension of the placement under the **[DISC] JUVENILE REFORMATORY CENTER**. The multi-disciplinary team will also submit a report to the court on the services extended to the parent and family of the child and the compliance of the parents in the intervention program. The court will decide whether the child has successfully completed the center-based intervention program and is already prepared to be reintegrated with his/her family or if there is a need for the continuation of the center-based rehabilitation of the child. The court will determine the next period of assessment or hearing on the commitment of the child."

SECTION 16. Amendment to Section 20-B (Repetition of Offenses). — Section 20-B of Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 20-B. Repetition of Offenses. – A child who is above twelve (12) years of age up to fifteen (15) years of age and who commits an offense for the second time or oftener [*Provided*, That the child was previously subjected to a community-based intervention program, shall be deemed a neglected child under Presidential Decree No. 603, as amended, and shall undergo an intensive intervention program supervised by the local social welfare and development officer: *Provided, further*, That, if the best interest of the child requires that he/she be placed in a youth care facility or] **SHALL BE PLACED IN A CHILD-CARING INSTITUTION LICENSED AND ACCREDITED BY THE DSWD TO IMPLEMENT THE FOSTER CARE PROGRAM, OR TO A PERSON DULY REGISTERED WITH THE DSWD WHO IS WILLING TO PROVIDE FOSTER CARE. HOWEVER, IF THE CHILD IS ALREADY IN THE CARE OF SUCH CHILD-CARING INSTITUTION OR FOSTER PARENT, THEN THE CHILD SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER CHILD-CARING INSTITUTION OR FOSTER PARENT. THE CHILD SHALL UNDERGO REGULAR EVALUTATIONS BY THE BARANGAY SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER. IF THE LATTER DETERMINES IN A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY THAT THE CHILD'S**

INTEREST REQUIRED COMMITMENT TO A BAHAY PAG-ASA, THEN THE CHILD SHALL BE SO COMMITTED [‘Bahay Pag-asa’, the child’s parents or guardians shall execute a written authorization for the voluntary commitment of the child: *Provided*, finally, That if the child has no parent or guardians or if they refuse or fail to execute the written authorization for voluntary commitment, the proper petition for involuntary commitment shall be immediately filed by the DSWD or the LSWDO pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 603, as amended].”

SECTION 17. Amendment to Section 20-D (Joint Parental Responsibility). — Section 20-D of Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, is further amended to read, as follows:

“SEC. 20-D. Joint Parental Responsibility. – Based on the recommendation of the multi-disciplinary team of the [IJISC] BAHAY PAG-ASA, the LSWDO or the DSWD, the court may require the parents of a child in conflict with the law to undergo counseling or any other intervention that, in the opinion of the court, would advance the welfare and best interest of the child.

As used in this Act, ‘parents’ shall mean any of the following:

- a) Biological parents of the child; or
- b) Adoptive parents of the child; or
- c) Individuals who have custody of the child.]; **OR,**
- d) A DULY REGISTERED FOSTER PARENT.**

A court exercising jurisdiction over a child in conflict with the law may require the attendance of one or both parents of the child at the place where the proceedings are to be conducted.

The parents shall be **PRIMARILY** liable for **CIVIL** damages **ARISING OUT OF THE ACTIONS OF THE CHILD IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW** unless they prove, to the satisfaction of the court, that they were exercising reasonable supervision over the child at the time the child committed the offense and exerted reasonable effort and utmost diligence to prevent or discourage the child from committing another offense.

SECTION 18. Amendment to Section 43 (Confidentiality; Expungement). — Section 43 of Republic Act No. 9344 is hereby amended to read, as follows:

“SEC. 43. Confidentiality of Records and Proceedings. – All records and proceedings involving children in conflict with the law from initial contact until final disposition of the case shall be considered privileged and confidential. The public shall be excluded during the proceedings and the records shall not be disclosed directly or indirectly to anyone by any of the parties or the participants in the proceedings for any purpose whatsoever, except to determine if the child in conflict with the law may have his/her sentence suspended or if he/she may be granted probation under the Probation Law, or to enforce the civil liability imposed in the criminal action.

The component authorities shall undertake all measures to protect this confidentiality of proceedings, including non-disclosure of records to the media, maintaining a separate police blotter for cases involving children in conflict with the law and adopting a system of coding to conceal material information which will lead to the child’s identity. [Records] **THE CRIMINAL RECORDS** of a child in conflict with the law shall, after undergoing a community-based intervention program, or being committed to a Bahay Pag-Asa or Juvenile Reformatory Center **SHALL BE EXPUNGED AND** not be used in subsequent proceedings for cases involving the same offender as an adult [, except when beneficial for the offender and upon his/her written consent].

A person who has been in conflict with the law as a child shall not be held under any provision of law, to be guilty of perjury or of concealment or misrepresentation by reason of his/her failure to acknowledge the case or recite any fact related thereto in response to any inquiry made to him/her for any purpose.”

SECTION 19. Amendment to Section 63 (Appropriations). —Section 63 of Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, is hereby further amended to read, as follows:

“SEC. 63. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the JJWC under the budget of the Department of Justice. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the budget of the DSWD under the annual General Appropriations Act: *Provided*, That the amount of four hundred million pesos (PhP 400,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the construction of ‘Bahay Pag-asa’ rehabilitation centers in

provinces or cities with high incidence of children in conflict with the law to be determined and identified by the DSWD and the JJWC on a priority basis: *Provided, further,* That the said amount shall be coursed through the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for its proper implementation.

The LGUs concerned shall make available, from its own resources or assets, their counterpart share equivalent to the national government contribution of Five million pesos (PhP 5,000,000.00) per rehabilitation center.

In addition, the Council may accept donations, grants, and contributions from various sources, in cash or in kind, for purposes relevant to its functions, subject to the usual government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

EVERY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT SHALL SET ASIDE FIVE PERCENT (5%) OF ITS SHARE OF THE INTERNAL REVENUE ALLOTMENT TO FUND THE PROGRAMS UNDER THIS ACT AND OTHER RELEVANT LAWS."

SECTION 20. Joint Congressional Oversight Committee. — There is hereby created a Joint Congressional Oversight Committee to oversee, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of this Act and other related laws. The Oversight Committee shall be composed of five (5) members each from the Senate and from the House of Representatives, including the Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights, to act as Chairperson of the Senate Panel, and the House Committee on Justice, to act as Chairperson of the House Panel. The membership of the Committee for every House shall have at least one (1) minority member.

The Oversight Committee shall conduct a mandatory review of this Act every three (3) years from its approval.

The DSWD and DepEd are required to report to the Oversight Committee, copy furnished the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, on a monthly basis relevant data on school enrollment.

SECTION 21. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 22. Repealing Clause. — All laws, rules, regulations, issuances, and parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 23. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect **fifteen (15) days** after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,