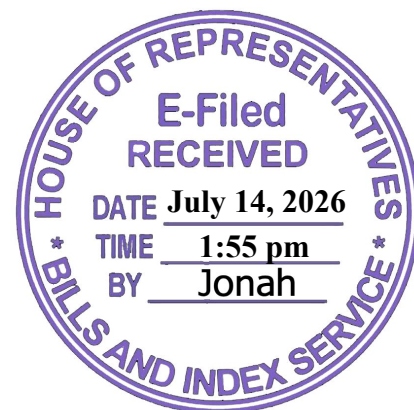




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10056



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez
and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
PROTECTION, PROMOTION, AND ENFORCEMENT OF STUDENT
RIGHTS AND WELFARE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS, INSTITUTIONALIZING STUDENT SUPPORT
SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION GOVERNANCE,
STRENGTHENING DUE PROCESS IN DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS, ENSURING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS IN PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SPACES, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill, to be known as the *Magna Carta of Student Rights and Welfare Act*, affirms the State's constitutional duty to prioritize education and to afford special protection to the youth. It recognizes students not merely as recipients of instruction but as essential partners in the educational process, contributors to social development, and active participants in democratic life. Anchored on the principles that education is a human right, a public good, and a public responsibility, the measure institutionalizes a comprehensive framework for the protection of student rights and welfare across senior high school, higher education, and technical-vocational pathways. It seeks to ensure that student

welfare—covering access, participation, retention, completion, and lifelong learning—is not treated as ancillary, but as integral to quality and inclusive education.

The proposed Act establishes clear guiding principles rooted in dignity, non-discrimination, transparency, restorative discipline, and responsible use of technology. It safeguards meaningful and non-tokenistic student participation in governance, protects students from harassment, discrimination, red-tagging, retaliation, and privacy-invasive practices, and mandates accessible and impartial grievance redress mechanisms, including the creation of Student Ombud services. In recognition of the growing digitalization of education, it also provides protections against opaque or discriminatory uses of artificial intelligence and technology-assisted decision-making. The measure promotes coordination and policy coherence among the Commission on Higher Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the Department of Education to ensure integrated delivery of student welfare services and smooth transitions across learning pathways.

Ultimately, this bill establishes minimum, enforceable standards applicable to all public and private educational institutions offering senior high school, higher education, and TVET programs. It clarifies key definitions, ensures that institutional rules and contracts are consistent with constitutionally protected student rights, and declares void any policy inconsistent with the Act, without precluding the adoption of more protective measures. By institutionalizing a coherent and rights-based student welfare framework, this measure strengthens democratic participation in education, enhances accountability and fairness in institutional practices, and affirms the State's commitment to nurturing empowered, protected, and engaged learners.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known and cited as the “Magna Carta of Student Rights and Welfare Act” hereinafter referred to as the Act.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the rights and welfare of students as essential partners in the educational process, as contributors to social development, and as active participants in democratic life, consistent with the Constitution which mandates the priority of education, guarantees academic freedom, and affords special protection to the youth.

The State recognizes that education is a human right, a public good, and a public responsibility, and that student welfare is integral to access, participation, retention, completion, and lifelong learning across formal, non-formal, and technical-vocational pathways. Toward this end, the State shall:

- (a) Recognize education as a human right and a public good, and ensure that student welfare measures are integral to access, participation, retention, completion, and lifelong learning across formal, non-formal, and technical-vocational pathways;
- (b) Uphold academic freedom, institutional autonomy, public accountability, and academic integrity, provided that institutional policies, rules, and practices shall at all times be consistent with constitutional guarantees and shall not impair or diminish legally protected student rights;
- (c) Promote inclusive, learner-centered, and quality education responsive to contemporary and emerging challenges in education reform, including learning poverty, governance and quality assurance gaps, digital transformation, education-to-employment transitions, and the adequacy and sustainability of student support systems;
- (d) Ensure meaningful, effective, and non-tokenistic student participation in education governance, institutional policy-making, quality assurance

mechanisms, and campus life, free from harassment, discrimination, intimidation, red-tagging, surveillance, or retaliation in any form;

(e) Protect students in physical and digital learning environments, including through the responsible, transparent, and ethical use of educational technologies and artificial intelligence, and through the protection of privacy, personal data, and informational self-determination;

(f) Institutionalize accessible, impartial, and timely grievance redress mechanisms, including student ombud services, and provide effective remedies, compliance measures, and administrative accountability for violations hereof; and

(g) Promote convergence, coordination, and policy coherence among the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Education (DepEd), and other concerned agencies to ensure integrated delivery of student welfare services and smooth transitions across learning pathways.

SEC. 3. Guiding Principles. – This Act shall be implemented, interpreted, and enforced in accordance with the following guiding principles, which shall inform all implementing rules, institutional policies, and administrative actions adopted pursuant hereto:

(a) **Dignity and Non-Discrimination** – Every student shall enjoy equal rights and freedoms without discrimination based on political conviction, religion, race, ethnicity, cultural origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, socio-economic status, language, disability, health condition, civil status, migration or refugee background, field or level of study, mode of delivery, or any analogous status;

(b) **Student Partnership** – Students are equal stakeholders in education whose informed participation enhances relevance, quality, accountability, and responsiveness of educational institutions;

(c) **Social Dimension of Education** – Student welfare, including housing, nutrition, health, mental health, learning resources, digital access, safety, inclusion, and support services, is integral to the realization of the right to education and academic success;

(d) **Transparency and Fairness** – Students are entitled to clear, predictable, and accessible rules, fair assessment systems, transparent fees and charges, timely information, and impartial remedies;

(e) **Restorative Discipline and Due Process** – Disciplinary measures shall be corrective, restorative, proportionate, and rights-respecting, anchored on due process and educational objectives rather than punishment alone; and

(f) **Digital and Technological Responsibility** – Students shall be protected from opaque, unfair, discriminatory, excessive, or privacy-invasive uses of technology, data systems, and artificial intelligence in educational settings.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act, the following terms shall be understood as follows:

(a) **Student** refers to any person enrolled in a public or private educational institution offering senior high school, higher education, or technical-vocational education and training (TVET), whether on a full-time, part-time, blended, or distance learning basis;

(b) **Educational Institution** refers to any public or private institution authorized, chartered, or recognized by DepEd, CHED, or TESDA to offer senior high school, higher education, or TVET programs, including satellite campuses and learning centers;

(c) **School Campus** refers to all buildings, grounds, facilities, training sites, dormitories managed by the school, and officially designated digital platforms administered or required by the institution for academic, administrative, or student welfare purposes;

(d) **Student Organization** refers to any student-initiated or student-led association recognized pursuant hereto and to reasonable institutional rules consistent herewith;

(e) **Student Council or Student Government** refers to the duly elected representative body of students at the program, college, campus, or institutional level, organized in accordance with student-approved rules;

(f) **Student Union** refers to an institutional, inter-campus, or sectoral democratic body of students organized for representation, advocacy, coordination, and the provision of student services;

(g) **Student Ombud** refers to an independent, impartial, and accessible mechanism mandated to receive complaints, provide advice, facilitate resolution, and recommend remedies for violations of this Act and related policies;

(h) **Student Welfare Services** refer to programs and services supporting student participation, retention, completion, and well-being, including guidance, counseling, mental health services, health services, disability

support, financial aid assistance, career services, safety services, and emergency support systems;

(i) **Technology-Assisted Decision-Making** refers to automated or semi-automated tools used in assessment, admissions, advising, monitoring, analytics, or discipline that materially affect academic standing or access to services;

(j) **Campus Safety Personnel** refer to duly authorized and licensed security personnel engaged by the educational institution, excluding military or police forces acting in their official state capacities; and

(k) **Red-Tagging** refers to the baseless labeling, branding, or association of students or student organizations as communists, terrorists, subversives, or enemies of the State, which exposes them to harm, discrimination, or undue surveillance.

SEC. 5. Coverage and Construction. – This Act shall apply to all students enrolled in public and private educational institutions offering senior high school, higher education, and TVET programs, regardless of mode of delivery or institutional classification.

All institutional policies, contracts, handbooks, circulars, and regulations shall be construed consistently herewith. Any provision thereof inconsistent with this Act shall be void to the extent of such inconsistency, provided finally that rights recognized herein shall be deemed minimum standards and shall not preclude the adoption of more protective measures.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

SEC. 6. *Freedom of Expression, Peaceful Assembly, and Petition.* – Students shall have the right to express views, publish materials, peacefully assemble, organize forums, and petition school authorities on matters affecting their rights, welfare, and academic life, subject only to limitations provided for by law and narrowly tailored to protect the rights of others, campus safety, and the orderly conduct of academic activities.

No school rule or administrative action shall impose prior restraint or penalize student expression merely because it is critical, dissenting, or unpopular, provided that restrictions may be imposed only where strictly necessary to prevent unlawful content, true threats, targeted harassment, or direct incitement to imminent lawless action, and provided further that such restrictions shall be subject to due process and written justification.

SEC. 7. *Protection of Lawful Online Expression.* – Students retain their constitutional and statutory rights when communicating through social media, learning management systems, or other digital platforms.

A school may take action on online conduct only upon a clear, evidence-based, and demonstrable showing that such conduct constitutes unlawful activity or results in a substantial, material, and specific disruption of school operations, provided that due process under this Act is strictly observed, and provided further that lawful dissent, advocacy, whistleblowing, and criticism shall not be suppressed under the guise of discipline.

SEC. 8. *Academic Freedom of Students.* – Students shall enjoy academic freedom consistent with institutional academic freedom, including the right to

inquiry, research, discussion, expression of reasoned views, and participation in academic discourse, provided that legitimate academic standards, curricular requirements, and professional norms are respected.

No student shall be compelled to adopt political or ideological beliefs unrelated to academic merit.

SEC. 9. *Right to Privacy and Confidentiality.* – Students shall have the right to privacy and to the confidentiality of their personal, academic, health, counseling, and disciplinary records.

Such records shall be accessed only by authorized personnel on a strict need-to-know basis, and shall be protected through appropriate technical, organizational, and administrative safeguards consistent with data privacy laws and ethical standards.

SEC. 10. *Student Records and Disclosures.* – Educational institutions shall provide students timely access to their academic records and allow reasonable correction of inaccurate, misleading, or incomplete information through transparent procedures.

Disclosure of student information shall require consent, provided that disclosures authorized by law or necessary to address emergencies may be made, provided further that such disclosures are limited in scope, documented thereafter, and subject to audit and accountability.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL DIMENSION, ACCESS, AND STUDENT WELFARE SERVICES

SEC. 11. *Right to Access, Progress, and Completion Support.* – Every student shall have the right to meaningful access to education and to reasonable opportunities to progress through and complete quality education within the prescribed or appropriate period of study.

To this end, educational institutions, in coordination with concerned government agencies where applicable, shall design, adopt, and implement student success and retention systems intended to identify, prevent, and address barriers to access, retention, progression, and completion.

SEC. 12. *Student Success Systems and Support Mechanisms.* – Such barriers may include, but are not limited to, academic underpreparedness, learning difficulties, financial hardship, health and mental health conditions, disability-related needs, family responsibilities, digital access limitations, language barriers, and psychosocial challenges.

Student success systems may include, but shall not be limited to, diagnostic assessments, academic advising and mentoring, tutoring and learning support services, bridging or remediation programs, flexible learning arrangements, early-alert and referral mechanisms, and coordination with student welfare services, provided that such systems shall be implemented in a supportive, confidential, and non-stigmatizing manner.

SEC. 13. *Non-Stigmatization, Standards, and Periodic Assessment of Student Success Systems.* – Participation in such support mechanisms shall not be construed as evidence of academic deficiency or misconduct, nor shall it be used

as a basis for discrimination, exclusion, or adverse academic action, provided further that reasonable academic standards and program requirements shall be maintained.

Educational institutions shall periodically assess the effectiveness of such systems and make reasonable adjustments thereto, taking into account student feedback, equity considerations, and institutional capacity.

SEC. 14. *Right to Non-Discriminatory Admission, Participation, and Access to Services.* – Admissions, enrollment, participation in academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, access to student welfare services, and eligibility for institutional opportunities shall be conducted without discrimination, consistent with the Constitution and applicable laws.

Educational institutions shall adopt clear, written policies prohibiting discrimination and exclusion, and shall designate responsible officers or units tasked with monitoring compliance, receiving complaints, and coordinating appropriate responses.

SEC. 15. *Grievance Accessibility and Interim Protective Measures in Non-Discrimination Compliance.* – Such officers or units shall ensure that grievance procedures are accessible, confidential, timely, and impartial, provided that students shall be informed of available remedies and procedures in clear and understandable language, and provided further that interim protective measures may be adopted where necessary to prevent further harm or prejudice.

Nothing in this section shall prevent educational institutions from implementing reasonable admission standards or academic requirements, provided finally that such standards are applied fairly, transparently, and without discriminatory intent or effect.

SEC. 16. *Right to Adequate and Accessible Student Welfare Services.* – Educational institutions shall provide, or ensure access to, adequate, accessible, and responsive student welfare services appropriate to their mandate, size, geographic location, and student population.

Such services shall include, at a minimum:

- (a) guidance, career development services, and academic advising to assist students in educational planning and transition to employment or further study;
- (b) health services or formal referral systems, including access to preventive care and health information consistent with law and policy;
- (c) mental health and psychosocial support services, including counseling, referral pathways, and crisis response mechanisms;
- (d) disability support services, including assistive technologies, reasonable accommodations, and accessible physical and digital infrastructure;
- (e) safety and protection services addressing harassment, violence, exploitation, abuse, and online harms; and
- (f) information and referral services for scholarships, financial aid, internships, and student opportunities.

SEC. 17. *Training, Capacity-Building, and Resource Considerations for Welfare Services.* – Educational institutions shall ensure that personnel assigned to student welfare services are adequately trained in non-discrimination, safeguarding, trauma-informed response, data privacy, and mental health first aid, provided that continuous capacity-building shall be undertaken where feasible.

Resource limitations shall not be used to justify the total absence or denial of essential welfare services, provided further that institutions may adopt phased

implementation, partnerships, or referral arrangements consistent with law and available funding.

SEC. 18. *Right to Mental Health Support, Crisis Intervention, and Suicide Prevention.* – Educational institutions shall establish, maintain, and periodically review comprehensive mental health support systems that are accessible, confidential, and responsive to student needs.

Such systems shall include:

- (a) clear protocols for the identification, referral, and response to students at risk of self-harm, suicide, or harm to others;
- (b) access to trained mental health professionals or formal referral partnerships with qualified external providers;
- (c) readily available information, in both physical and digital formats, on mental health services, support mechanisms, and emergency contacts; and
- (d) policies ensuring that students who seek mental health support are not subjected to punitive treatment, discrimination, or academic disadvantage.

SEC. 19. *Standards for Crisis Response Measures and Mental Health Promotion.* – Crisis response measures shall prioritize safety, dignity, confidentiality, and the least-restrictive intervention, provided that any temporary academic or administrative adjustments shall be support-based, time-bound, and subject to periodic review.

Educational institutions shall integrate mental health promotion, awareness, and prevention strategies into student orientation and welfare programs, where practicable.

SEC. 20. *Right to Adequate Learning Necessities and Digital Access.* – Students shall have the right to reasonable and equitable access to learning necessities essential to the completion of their programs of study, including textbooks, instructional materials, laboratories, libraries, equipment, connectivity, and required digital platforms.

Where educational institutions require the use of specific paid software, platforms, devices, or digital tools as part of academic requirements, they shall ensure the availability of affordable alternatives, institutional licenses, shared access, or subsidy mechanisms, particularly for financially disadvantaged students, provided that no student shall be academically penalized solely on account of inability to procure such tools.

SEC. 21. *Cost Minimization and Transparency in Required Learning Tools.* – Educational institutions shall take reasonable steps to minimize unnecessary costs and shall provide timely notice of required materials and expenses, provided further that transparency in the selection and use of required learning tools shall be observed.

SEC. 22. *Right to Safe, Accessible, and Inclusive Learning Spaces.* – Educational institutions shall ensure that physical, virtual, and hybrid learning environments are safe, accessible, and inclusive, and conducive to learning and student well-being.

This shall include compliance with applicable safety standards, reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, safeguards against discrimination and harassment in digital platforms, and the adoption of inclusive and universal design principles in facilities and learning systems.

SEC. 23. *Reporting, Response, and Anti-Retaliation for Safety and Accessibility Concerns.* – Institutions shall establish procedures for reporting safety and accessibility concerns and shall act promptly thereon, provided that students who raise such concerns shall be protected from retaliation.

SEC. 24. *Right to Basic Needs Support and Referral Mechanisms.* – In coordination with relevant government agencies, local government units, and accredited service providers, educational institutions—particularly public higher education institutions and TVET institutions—shall establish mechanisms to support students experiencing housing insecurity, food insecurity, or other unmet basic needs.

Such mechanisms may include emergency assistance pathways, referral systems to social services, dormitory access policies, meal or food assistance partnerships, and information services on available government programs, provided that assistance shall be provided in a dignified, non-stigmatizing manner.

SEC. 25. *Availability, Capacity, and External Referral for Basic Needs Support.* – The provision of support under this section shall be subject to existing laws, institutional capacity, and funding availability, provided finally that the absence of immediate assistance shall not preclude referral to appropriate external services.

CHAPTER IV

QUALITY EDUCATION, ACADEMIC RIGHTS, AND STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

SEC. 26. *Right to Transparent Academic Programs, Requirements, and Policies.* – Every student shall have the right to clear, accurate, complete, and timely information concerning academic programs, curricular requirements, learning outcomes, course content, assessment methods, grading systems, attendance policies, internship or practicum requirements, retention standards, and all other academic rules governing their enrollment and progression.

Educational institutions shall ensure that such information is formally documented, regularly updated, and made readily accessible to students through official handbooks, program guides, course syllabi, institutional websites, and official digital platforms administered by the institution.

SEC. 27. *Publication, Notice, and Non-Retroactivity of Material Academic Rules.* – No material academic requirement, rule, or policy shall be enforced against a student unless it has been duly published, communicated, or made reasonably accessible prior to its application, provided that emergency or interim academic measures may be adopted where necessary to protect academic continuity or public safety, provided further that students shall be promptly informed thereof in writing.

Educational institutions shall provide advance notice of substantial changes in academic requirements, program structures, or assessment systems, and shall adopt reasonable transition arrangements to avoid undue prejudice to currently enrolled students, provided finally that such changes shall not be applied

retroactively in a manner that impairs vested academic rights without compelling justification.

SEC. 28. *Right to Fair, Reasonable, and Pedagogically Sound Assessment and Feedback.* – Students shall have the right to be evaluated solely on the basis of academic performance using assessment methods that are fair, reasonable, transparent, pedagogically sound, and aligned with declared learning outcomes.

Assessment criteria, grading rubrics, performance standards, and evaluation methods shall be clearly communicated at the commencement of each course or learning activity, and shall be applied consistently and without arbitrariness or discrimination.

SEC. 29. *Feedback, Consultations, and Grade Review or Appeal.* – Students shall be entitled to timely, constructive, and meaningful feedback on their academic performance, including access to grade consultations, review procedures, and clarification of evaluation results, provided that such consultations shall be conducted in a respectful and non-intimidating manner.

Educational institutions shall establish formal procedures for grade review or appeal, which shall be impartial, time-bound, and accessible, provided further that the exercise of such right shall not subject the student to retaliation, academic disadvantage, or prejudicial treatment.

SEC. 30. *Reasonable Individual Circumstances in Assessment and Attendance Rules.* – In the application of attendance rules, deadlines, and assessment requirements, educational institutions shall take into account documented and reasonable individual circumstances, including health conditions, mental health concerns, disability-related needs, family emergencies, and force majeure events, consistent with academic standards and program integrity.

SEC. 31. *Right to Recognition of Prior Learning, Microcredentials, and Flexible Learning Pathways.* – Consistent with national education reform goals, lifelong learning principles, and education-to-employment pathways, students shall have the right to fair and transparent recognition of prior learning, including competencies acquired through non-formal, informal, work-based, or experiential learning, where program standards and regulatory frameworks allow.

Educational institutions shall adopt policies and procedures for the assessment and recognition of prior learning that are objective, evidence-based, and aligned with applicable frameworks issued by CHED, TESDA, or other competent authorities.

SEC. 32. *Quality Assurance and Information Standards for Microcredentials and Flexible Units.* – Institutions offering microcredentials, short courses, stackable learning units, or modular programs shall ensure that such offerings meet quality assurance standards, are transparently described, and are designed to support mobility, credit transfer, and progression within or across institutions.

Students shall be provided clear information on the academic value, credit equivalence, portability, and limitations of microcredentials and flexible learning units, provided that such offerings shall not be misleading as to their recognition or applicability, provided further that access thereto shall be non-discriminatory.

SEC. 33. *Non-Compulsion and Written Explanation in Refusal of Recognition of Prior Learning.* – Nothing in this section shall be construed to compel an educational institution to recognize prior learning inconsistent with essential academic or professional standards, provided finally that refusal to recognize prior learning shall be accompanied by written explanation.

SEC. 34. *Right to Safe, Fair, and Educational Internships, Practicum, and Work-Integrated Learning.* – Students shall have the right to internships, practicums, on-the-job training, and other work-integrated learning experiences that are safe, educational, and oriented primarily toward learning outcomes rather than labor substitution.

Educational institutions shall ensure that such learning experiences are governed by written agreements or memoranda of understanding clearly specifying learning objectives, duration, supervision arrangements, workload, assessment methods, and grievance mechanisms.

SEC. 35. *Due Diligence, Reporting, Compensation Transparency, and Reasonable Adjustments in Work-Integrated Learning.* – Institutions shall exercise due diligence in the selection and monitoring of partner establishments to ensure compliance with safety standards, labor and child protection laws, and policies against harassment, abuse, and exploitation. Students shall be informed of their rights and responsibilities prior to placement and shall have access to clear and confidential mechanisms for reporting unsafe conditions, harassment, coercion, or exploitative practices, provided that reports shall be acted upon promptly and without retaliation.

Where internships or practicums involve compensation, allowances, or subsidies, educational institutions shall ensure transparency in terms, conditions, and deductions, provided further that unpaid placements shall not impose unreasonable financial burden on students. Educational institutions shall provide reasonable alternatives, adjustments, or accommodations when placements are inaccessible due to disability, health concerns, safety risks, or other justified hardship, provided finally that students shall not be penalized academically for circumstances beyond their control.

CHAPTER V

DIGITAL RIGHTS, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

SEC. 36. *Right to Ethical, Transparent, and Accountable Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence.* – Students shall have the right to the fair, ethical, transparent, and accountable use of digital technologies, data-driven systems, and artificial intelligence in educational settings, particularly where such technologies materially affect academic standing, access to learning opportunities, retention, discipline, or eligibility for institutional services.

Educational institutions shall ensure that students are clearly informed, in advance and in accessible language, when technology-assisted decision-making systems are used in admissions within the institution, assessment, grading, monitoring of academic activity, learning analytics, advising, retention interventions, or disciplinary processes.

SEC. 37. *Human Review, Contestability, and Governance Standards for Educational Technologies.* – No student shall be subjected to an adverse academic or disciplinary decision solely on the basis of automated or algorithmic outputs, provided that meaningful human review shall be conducted by a competent and impartial authority, and provided further that the student shall be afforded the opportunity to understand, contest, and seek correction of the basis of such decision.

Educational institutions shall adopt written and consultative policies governing the procurement, deployment, and use of educational technologies and artificial intelligence systems, which shall include, at a minimum: (a) clearly defined

purposes and permissible uses; (b) safeguards to prevent bias, discrimination, or disparate impact; (c) data minimization, security, and retention standards consistent with law; (d) accountability mechanisms for errors, misuse, or abuse; and (e) procedures for student notice, feedback, and redress.

SEC. 38. *Prohibition of Political Profiling, Surveillance, and Suppression of Lawful Activity Through Technology.* – The use of technology and artificial intelligence shall not be employed for political profiling, surveillance of lawful student activities, intimidation, coercive monitoring, or suppression of lawful expression or association, provided finally that any monitoring tools used for academic integrity or security purposes shall be proportionate, narrowly tailored, and subject to oversight.

Educational institutions shall, where appropriate, integrate age- and level-appropriate education on digital literacy, data rights, and responsible artificial intelligence use into student orientation and support programs.

SEC. 39. *Access to Academic Integrity Frameworks, Tools, and Due Process in Enforcement.* – Educational institutions shall maintain clear, written, and publicly accessible academic integrity policies that define prohibited conduct, standards of integrity, corresponding sanctions, and procedural safeguards, consistent with principles of fairness, proportionality, and educational development.

Such policies shall be framed primarily as educational and corrective mechanisms, emphasizing learning, ethical formation, and academic honesty, rather than as purely punitive instruments.

SEC. 40. *Student Support, Procedural Safeguards, and Proportionality in Academic Integrity Enforcement.* – Students shall be provided reasonable access to academic integrity tools, guidance materials, and instructional support designed to help them understand citation standards, avoid plagiarism, responsibly use artificial intelligence tools where permitted, and comply with integrity requirements.

Enforcement of academic integrity policies shall be subject to due process, which shall include:

- (a) timely and written notice of the alleged violation and factual basis thereof;
- (b) reasonable access to relevant evidence and documentation;
- (c) the opportunity to be heard and to present explanations or defenses;
- (d) impartial evaluation by a designated authority or body; and
- (e) a written decision stating the findings, applicable rules, and reasons.

SEC. 41. *Sanction Determination and Prohibition Against Sole Reliance on Automated Indicators.* – In determining sanctions, educational institutions shall consider the nature of the violation, the student’s intent, prior conduct, academic level, and opportunities for remediation, provided that sanctions shall be proportionate and educational in character, provided further that first-time or minor violations may, where appropriate, be addressed through corrective or learning-oriented measures.

No student shall be sanctioned for academic dishonesty on the sole basis of similarity scores, automated flags, or algorithmic indicators without human assessment and contextual evaluation.

SEC. 42. *Standards for Device Use Policies, Monitoring Tools, and Digital Wellbeing.* – Educational institutions may adopt policies regulating the use of digital devices, online platforms, and monitoring tools in order to protect learning outcomes, mental health, safety, and academic integrity.

Such policies shall be clear, reasonable, consultative, and non-arbitrary, and shall be formally adopted and communicated prior to enforcement.

SEC. 43. *Minimum Standards for Monitoring and Digital Wellbeing Measures; Dispute Coverage.* – In the implementation of device use and monitoring policies, educational institutions shall observe the following minimum standards:

- (a) respect for student dignity, privacy, and personal data;
- (b) prohibition of humiliating practices, public shaming, or coercive access to private accounts or personal devices;
- (c) reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, health conditions, or emergency needs; and
- (d) proportionality between the purpose of the policy and the degree of restriction imposed.

Monitoring technologies, including proctoring software and surveillance tools, shall be used only where demonstrably necessary, and shall be configured to collect the least amount of data required to achieve legitimate educational objectives, provided that students shall be informed of the nature, scope, and duration of such monitoring. Educational institutions shall adopt complementary digital wellbeing measures, including guidance on responsible device use, screen time management, online safety, and healthy engagement with digital platforms,

provided finally that such measures shall support, rather than penalize, student wellbeing. Any dispute arising from the enforcement of device use or monitoring policies shall be subject to the grievance and due process mechanisms provided for under this Act.

CHAPTER VI

STUDENT PARTICIPATION, REPRESENTATION, AND GOVERNANCE

SEC. 44. *Right to Organize and Form Student Organizations.* – Students shall have the right to freely form, join, and participate in student organizations, associations, formations, or alliances of their choosing for academic, cultural, social, civic, religious, advocacy, or other lawful purposes, consistent with the Constitution and applicable laws.

Educational institutions shall adopt reasonable, content-neutral, transparent, and uniformly applicable rules governing the recognition, registration, operation, and dissolution of student organizations.

SEC. 45. *Standards for Recognition, Registration, and Protection Against Ideological Discrimination.* – Such rules shall be designed solely to ensure accountability, safety, financial responsibility, and the orderly conduct of campus life, and shall not be used, directly or indirectly, to suppress lawful expression, advocacy, dissent, organizing, or issue-based engagement. Recognition and registration procedures shall be clearly defined, time-bound, and appealable, and shall specify objective requirements relating to membership thresholds, officers, constitutions or by-laws, financial reporting, and compliance with lawful institutional regulations, provided that such requirements shall be proportionate to the nature and scale of the organization and shall not impose undue burdens on student initiative or participation.

No student organization shall be denied recognition, suspended, deregistered, or otherwise sanctioned on the basis of political belief, issue advocacy, ideology, or lawful participation in public discourse, provided further that recognized

organizations shall comply with reasonable rules on transparency, non-violence, respect for the rights of others, and lawful use of institutional resources.

SEC. 46. *Non-Discriminatory Access to Facilities, Platforms, and Institutional Support.* – Educational institutions shall ensure that duly recognized student organizations are afforded reasonable and equitable access to campus facilities, communication platforms, and institutional support consistent with available resources, provided finally that such access shall be granted on a non-discriminatory basis and subject to clear, published guidelines.

SEC. 47. *Student Councils, Student Unions, Autonomy, and Independence from Undue Institutional Interference.* – Student councils and student unions, whether at the program, college, campus, institutional, or inter-campus level, shall be recognized as the legitimate representative bodies of the studentry, vested with the authority to articulate student interests, engage institutional leadership, and participate in governance processes affecting student welfare and academic life.

Such bodies shall enjoy organizational autonomy and independence from undue institutional interference, reasonable financial autonomy, and the freedom to manage their internal affairs, including the conduct of elections, formulation of platforms, adoption of internal rules, deliberative processes, and management of funds, consistent with transparent and student-approved procedures.

SEC. 48. *Prohibition on Institutional Installation of Student Leaders and Retaliatory Conditioning of Support.* – Educational institutions shall not install, appoint, endorse, or impose student leaders, nor shall they directly or indirectly interfere with student elections, electoral processes, platforms, campaigns, internal deliberations, or lawful activities, provided that institutions may adopt

neutral and proportionate oversight measures solely to ensure electoral integrity, financial accountability, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Institutional recognition, access to resources, or administrative support shall not be conditioned on alignment with institutional policies or administrative positions, provided further that disagreement, criticism, opposition, or advocacy expressed by student councils or student unions shall not constitute a ground for sanction, withdrawal of recognition, diminution of privileges, or adverse administrative action.

SEC. 49. *Affiliation Freedom of Student Councils and Student Unions.* –

Student councils and student unions shall have the freedom to determine their affiliations with local, regional, national, or international student formations, networks, or federations, provided finally that such affiliations are lawful, transparent to their membership, and consistent with duly adopted internal rules.

SEC. 50. *Right to Co-Governance and Representation in Institutional Decision-Making Bodies.* –

Students shall have the right to meaningful, effective, and non-tokenistic representation in institutional decision-making bodies that substantially affect student rights, welfare, learning conditions, and campus life.

Such representation shall include, but shall not be limited to, participation in:

- (a) student discipline boards or equivalent adjudicatory bodies;
- (b) consultations, committees, or councils concerning tuition, fees, and other student charges;
- (c) quality assurance, accreditation, program evaluation, and curriculum review processes;

(d) policy formulation, handbook review, and rule-making mechanisms affecting students; and

(e) campus safety, security, student welfare, and crisis response committees.

SEC. 51. *Selection, Access to Information, and Protection of Student Representatives.* – Student representatives shall be selected through transparent, democratic, and student-determined processes and shall be afforded timely access to relevant information, records, and materials necessary for informed and meaningful participation, provided that confidentiality obligations applicable to all members of such bodies are observed.

No student representative shall suffer academic, financial, disciplinary, or other forms of retaliation, discrimination, intimidation, or disadvantage by reason of lawful participation in governance bodies or by reason of positions taken in good faith in the course of deliberations, provided further that good faith participation shall be presumed in the absence of clear and convincing evidence to the contrary.

SEC. 52. *Capacity-Building for Student Representatives Without Compromising Independence.* – Educational institutions shall adopt reasonable measures to capacitate student representatives, including orientation, procedural guidance, and access to information, provided finally that such measures shall not compromise the independence, representational mandate, or accountability of student representatives to the student body.

SEC. 53. *Right to Access Institutional Information Affecting Student Life.* – Students shall have the right to timely, meaningful, and reasonable access to institutional regulations, policies, resolutions, decisions, minutes, circulars, and other official records that directly affect student rights, welfare, obligations, or campus life.

Educational institutions shall adopt clear procedures to ensure transparency and accessibility of such information, including publication through official websites, digital platforms, student handbooks, or other appropriate means, and shall ensure that information is presented in clear, understandable, and accessible language.

SEC. 54. *Limitations, Written Denials, and Protection Against Adverse Treatment in Information Requests.* – Access to institutional information may be subject only to lawful limitations based on confidentiality, privacy, or security, provided that such limitations are narrowly construed and justified, and provided further that any denial or restriction of access shall be accompanied by a written explanation and information on available remedies.

No student shall be disadvantaged, sanctioned, or subjected to adverse treatment for requesting or accessing information in good faith under this section, provided finally that the exercise of this right shall be without prejudice to other transparency, disclosure, or freedom of information mechanisms provided by law.

CHAPTER VII

FEES, FINANCIAL RIGHTS, AND STUDENT ECONOMIC WELFARE

SEC. 55. *Transparency, Accountability, and Consultation on Tuition and Other Fees.* – Educational institutions shall ensure full transparency, accountability, and meaningful student consultation in the imposition, adjustment, and utilization of tuition and other school fees.

To this end, educational institutions shall provide students and their duly recognized representatives with a clear, itemized, and comprehensible breakdown of tuition and all other mandatory and optional fees, including the purpose, legal basis, and intended use thereof, prior to collection.

SEC. 56. *Consultation Standards and Conditions for Fee Increases.* – Any proposal to increase tuition or other fees shall be subject to meaningful consultation with duly recognized student councils or student unions, conducted in good faith and in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations governing tuition and fee adjustments, provided that consultation shall include adequate notice, access to relevant financial information, and reasonable opportunity for students to raise concerns and submit recommendations.

No tuition or fee increase shall be implemented unless supported by lawful authority, justified by legitimate institutional needs, and accompanied by a transparent explanation of how additional collections will be utilized to improve educational quality, facilities, or student services, provided further that consultation shall not be treated as a mere formality.

SEC. 57. *Monitoring of Fee Utilization and Availability of Reports.* – Educational institutions shall establish internal mechanisms for monitoring the use of collected fees and shall make available to students, upon request, periodic

reports or summaries on the utilization of such fees, provided finally that confidential or proprietary financial information may be protected in accordance with law.

SEC. 58. *Right to Take Examinations, Continue Studies, and Obtain Records Despite Unpaid Fees.* – No student shall be barred from taking periodic, midterm, or final examinations, or from continuing participation in academic activities, solely by reason of unpaid tuition or other school fees, subject to reasonable institutional arrangements consistent with law.

Educational institutions may adopt policies allowing the withholding of certain clearances or certifications in cases of unpaid obligations, provided that such policies are reasonable, proportionate, and duly published, and provided further that they do not result in undue prejudice to the student.

SEC. 59. *Release of Records and Reasonable Settlement Arrangements for Financial Difficulty.* – In no case shall an educational institution unreasonably withhold the release of a transcript of records, certificates of enrollment, diplomas, or other documents required for transfer, employment, licensure, scholarship application, or further study, where such withholding would effectively deprive the student of educational or livelihood opportunities.

Educational institutions shall establish reasonable settlement arrangements, installment plans, or referral mechanisms for students experiencing financial difficulty, provided finally that the exercise of this right shall not extinguish legitimate financial obligations lawfully incurred by the student.

SEC. 60. *Scholarships, Grants, Subsidies, and Student Financial Support Navigation.* – Educational institutions shall establish and maintain student-facing mechanisms to assist students in navigating scholarships, grants, subsidies,

financial aid programs, and other forms of educational assistance available from institutional, government, private sector, or international sources.

Such mechanisms may include designated financial aid offices or focal persons, information desks, digital platforms, orientation programs, and referral systems, and shall provide timely, accurate, and accessible information on eligibility requirements, application procedures, deadlines, and documentary requirements.

SEC. 61. *Equity Measures, Cooperation with Agencies, and Non-Entitlement Clause.* – Educational institutions shall take reasonable steps to ensure equitable access to financial assistance opportunities, including outreach to financially disadvantaged, marginalized, or at-risk students, provided that selection processes for scholarships and grants shall be transparent, merit-based or need-based as applicable, and free from favoritism or discrimination. Where government-funded or institutionally administered financial assistance programs are involved, educational institutions shall cooperate with concerned agencies in facilitating student access thereto, provided further that delays, administrative burdens, or documentation requirements shall be minimized to the extent practicable.

Nothing in this section shall be construed as creating an automatic entitlement to financial assistance, provided finally that the absence of available aid shall not preclude referral to appropriate external programs or support services.

CHAPTER VIII

DUE PROCESS, DISCIPLINE, AND PROTECTION FROM HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

SEC. 62. *Restorative, Proportionate, and Educational Discipline.* – Disciplinary measures imposed upon students shall be corrective, restorative, proportionate, and educational in character, and shall be designed primarily to promote accountability, learning, rehabilitation, and the well-being of the school community, rather than punishment for its own sake.

Educational institutions shall ensure that disciplinary policies and sanctions are clearly defined, publicly accessible, and consistently applied, and that they take into account the nature and gravity of the offense, the circumstances under which it was committed, the student’s intent, academic level, prior conduct, and the potential impact of the sanction on the student’s right to education.

SEC. 63. *Restorative Approaches and Prohibited Punishments.* – Discipline shall, whenever appropriate and practicable, incorporate restorative approaches, including mediation, dialogue, community service, reflection activities, or other learning-oriented interventions that seek to repair harm, restore relationships, and reintegrate the student into the academic community, provided that participation in restorative processes shall be voluntary and shall not be used to compel admissions of guilt.

Collective punishment, humiliating penalties, degrading treatment, public shaming, penalties involving physical or psychological harm, and sanctions that arbitrarily or disproportionately restrict constitutional or statutory rights are hereby prohibited.

SEC. 64. *Last Resort Standard for Expulsion and Severe Sanctions.* – No disciplinary measure shall be imposed where lesser, non-punitive interventions would reasonably suffice to address the conduct, provided further that expulsion, exclusion, or permanent separation shall be imposed only as a measure of last resort and only for grave offenses, subject to the strict observance of due process.

SEC. 65. *Right to Due Process in Disciplinary Proceedings.* – No student shall be subjected to disciplinary sanction without due process of law. Due process in disciplinary proceedings shall, at a minimum, include the following:

(a) **Written Notice** – timely written notice of the charge or charges, stating the specific acts complained of, the rules allegedly violated, and the possible sanctions;

(b) **Access to Information** – reasonable access to relevant evidence, documents, and records relied upon by the institution, subject to lawful confidentiality and safety considerations;

(c) **Opportunity to be Heard** – the right to be heard, to submit written explanations, and to present evidence or witnesses through fair and orderly procedures;

(d) **Assistance or Counsel** – the right to be assisted by counsel or an adviser of the student's choice, including a representative from a student council, union, or organization;

(e) **Impartial Adjudication** – determination of the case by an impartial and properly constituted disciplinary body, which shall include student representation where provided for under this Act or institutional rules;

(f) **Reasoned Decision** – a written decision stating the facts established, the rules applied, the reasons for the decision, and the sanction imposed, if any; and

(g) **Right to Appeal** – the right to appeal the decision to a higher institutional authority and, where applicable, to the appropriate government agency in accordance with implementing rules.

SEC. 66. *Timeliness, Confidentiality, and Preventive Suspension Standards.* – Disciplinary proceedings shall be conducted within reasonable periods and in a manner that minimizes unnecessary delay, intimidation, or prejudice to the student, provided that proceedings shall respect confidentiality and the dignity of all parties.

Preventive suspension shall be imposed only as a measure of last resort, and only when the continued presence of the student poses a clear and present danger to persons or a specific and immediate risk of serious disruption. Such suspension shall be time-bound, subject to periodic review, and accompanied by reasonable academic support measures, provided further that preventive suspension shall not be used as a substitute for prompt resolution of the case.

SEC. 67. *Protection Against Discrimination, Harassment, Red-Tagging, and Violence.* – Educational institutions shall adopt, implement, and strictly enforce comprehensive policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, hazing, violence, intimidation, abuse, and red-tagging, whether committed online or offline, within campus premises or in connection with school-related activities.

Such policies shall be consistent with existing laws and shall include, at a minimum: (a) clear definitions of prohibited acts and behaviors; (b) accessible and confidential reporting channels; (c) procedures for prompt, impartial, and

victim-centered investigation; (d) interim protective and safety measures to prevent further harm; (e) safeguards for confidentiality and data privacy; (f) explicit anti-retaliation provisions; and (g) administrative accountability for officials, employees, or agents who commit, tolerate, or fail to act upon violations.

SEC. 68. *Survivor Support, Express Prohibition of Red-Tagging, and Capacity-Building.* – Educational institutions shall ensure that victims and survivors of prohibited acts are provided with appropriate support services, including counseling, academic accommodations, referral to medical or legal assistance, and other protective measures, provided that such support shall not be conditioned on the filing of a formal complaint. Red-tagging, as defined under this Act, is hereby expressly prohibited within educational institutions. Any act of red-tagging by school officials, employees, security personnel, or persons acting under institutional authority shall constitute a grave violation of this Act and shall be subject to appropriate administrative sanctions, provided further that such acts may give rise to civil or criminal liability under existing laws.

Educational institutions shall conduct regular information campaigns, training programs, and capacity-building activities for administrators, faculty, staff, security personnel, and students to promote awareness of rights, prevention of abuse, and the creation of safe and inclusive learning environments, provided finally that failure to adopt or enforce policies under this section shall itself constitute a violation of this Act.

CHAPTER IX

CAMPUS SAFETY AND SECURITY

SEC. 69. *Campus Safety Standards, Preparedness, and Visitors Management.*

– Educational institutions shall establish, maintain, and periodically review comprehensive campus safety and preparedness standards designed to protect life, property, and the educational environment, while respecting academic freedom, student rights, and the open character of educational institutions.

Such standards shall be embodied in a written campus safety plan, duly approved by the appropriate institutional authority and communicated to the school community, which shall include protocols for emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction, fire safety, health emergencies, violence prevention, and coordination with local emergency responders.

SEC. 70. *Visitor Management Protocols and Participatory Review of Safety Standards.* – Educational institutions shall adopt reasonable, non-discriminatory, and proportionate visitor management protocols, which may include sign-in procedures, identification requirements for campus personnel, access controls for sensitive facilities, and reporting mechanisms for suspicious behavior, provided that such protocols shall not encourage profiling, discrimination, or arbitrary restriction of lawful access to campus spaces.

Campus safety standards shall be reviewed at reasonable intervals, and after major incidents where applicable, with the participation of student representatives and other stakeholders, provided further that feedback from the school community shall be considered in improving safety measures.

SEC. 71. *Protocols for Engagement with Outside Agencies and Law Enforcement.* – Educational institutions shall adopt clear and rights-respecting protocols governing engagement with law enforcement agencies, military units, or other outside authorities within campus premises.

When outside agencies request access to campus or seek to interview a student during school hours or within campus grounds, educational institutions shall, to the extent permitted by law: (a) verify the identity, authority, and purpose of the requesting personnel; (b) inform the student of the nature and voluntary or compulsory character of the request, as applicable; (c) advise the student of their rights, including the right to counsel or a support person where allowed by law; (d) endeavor to notify the parent or legal guardian in the case of minor students, or a designated support person for adult students, unless prohibited by law; and (e) ensure that interviews are conducted in a manner and setting that minimizes intimidation, coercion, or undue pressure.

SEC. 72. *Documentation and Non-Obstruction Clause in Outside Agency Engagements.* – All requests and engagements under this section shall be properly documented, subject to lawful confidentiality requirements, provided that nothing herein shall be construed to obstruct lawful investigations or the execution of valid court orders, provided further that compliance shall at all times be consistent with constitutional rights and due process.

SEC. 73. *Right Against Unreasonable Searches and Seizures; Standards and Documentation.* – Students shall enjoy the constitutional right against unreasonable searches and seizures within campus premises and in connection with school-related activities.

Educational institutions may conduct searches of school property or personal effects only when there exists a reasonable, individualized, and articulable basis related to safety or the enforcement of clearly defined institutional rules.

SEC. 74. *Reasonableness, State Agent Rule, Exclusion, and Records of Searches.* – Any search conducted by school authorities shall be reasonable in scope, manner, and intrusiveness, shall respect the dignity and privacy of the student, and shall, whenever practicable, be conducted in the presence of the student and a witness, provided that searches shall not be conducted as a form of punishment or intimidation. Searches by state agents shall be governed by the Constitution and applicable jurisprudence. Evidence obtained in violation of this section shall not be used as the sole basis for disciplinary action under this Act, provided further that such exclusion shall be without prejudice to lawful proceedings conducted in accordance with due process.

All searches conducted by school authorities shall be properly documented, indicating the basis, scope, time, and results thereof, provided finally that such records shall be subject to review through grievance or oversight mechanisms.

SEC. 75. *Crisis Response Teams, Emergency Referrals, and Use of Force Standards.* – Educational institutions shall establish trained crisis response teams or designate responsible personnel to respond to emergencies involving threats to safety, mental health crises, violence, or disasters.

Such teams or personnel shall be trained in de-escalation, trauma-informed response, mental health first aid, and emergency coordination, and shall operate under clear protocols emphasizing safety, proportionality, and respect for rights.

SEC. 76. *Police Assistance as Last Resort and Prohibition on Suppression of Lawful Activity.* – Requests for assistance from police or other state security forces shall be made only as a measure of last resort, when there is an imminent threat to life or serious harm that cannot be adequately addressed through internal mechanisms, provided that such requests shall be guided by necessity and proportionality.

Educational institutions shall ensure that any use of force by campus safety personnel is strictly limited, lawful, proportionate, and subject to clear rules and accountability mechanisms, provided further that the use of force shall never be employed to suppress lawful student activities or expression.

SEC. 77. *Rights-Based Standards on Security Presence, Non-Intimidation, and Oversight.* – Educational institutions shall ensure that campus security arrangements preserve campuses as spaces of learning, inquiry, and democratic engagement. Accordingly: (a) intimidation, harassment, coercion, surveillance, or disruption of lawful student activities by campus security personnel or any persons acting under institutional authority are hereby prohibited; (b) the presence of armed state forces within campus premises shall be limited to circumstances authorized by law and justified by necessity, such as emergencies involving imminent threats to life or serious public safety concerns; (c) any coordination with state security forces shall be governed by clear protocols that respect institutional autonomy and student rights; and (d) safeguards shall be adopted to prevent profiling, red-tagging, or abuse arising from security operations.

Educational institutions shall establish oversight and accountability mechanisms for campus security, including complaint procedures, investigation processes, and appropriate sanctions for violations, provided that students shall have access

to such mechanisms without fear of retaliation. Regular orientation and training programs on rights-based campus safety shall be conducted for administrators, faculty, staff, and security personnel, provided finally that failure to adopt or enforce standards under this Chapter shall constitute a violation of this Act.

CHAPTER X

IMPLEMENTATION, COMPLIANCE, AND ENFORCEMENT

SEC. 78. *Student Rights and Welfare Office and Student Ombud.* – Every public and private educational institution covered by this Act shall establish a Student Rights and Welfare Office, or designate an equivalent permanent and adequately resourced unit, which shall serve as the primary institutional mechanism for the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of compliance with this Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Student Rights and Welfare Office shall function as a focal point for student rights and welfare concerns and shall, among others: (a) disseminate information to students, faculty, and staff regarding the rights, obligations, and protections provided for herein, including through orientation programs, student handbooks, and official digital platforms; (b) coordinate with academic units, administrative offices, student services, and campus security to ensure that institutional policies, procedures, and practices are aligned with this Act; (c) receive referrals of student concerns, grievances, or systemic issues and facilitate access to appropriate institutional remedies or support services; (d) assist in the periodic review and assessment of institutional rules, handbooks, contracts, and practices affecting student life; and (e) maintain records, in a privacy-protective manner, of complaints, resolutions, and compliance measures for monitoring and reporting purposes.

SEC. 79. *Student Ombud Mechanism: Independence, Mandate, and Reporting.* – In addition to the foregoing, every educational institution shall establish an independent, impartial, and accessible Student Ombud mechanism, which shall be functionally independent from disciplinary offices, academic departments, and

security units, and which shall operate in accordance with the principles of neutrality, confidentiality, accessibility, and fairness.

The Student Ombud shall have the mandate to: (a) receive complaints, inquiries, and requests for assistance from students or other concerned persons relating to alleged violations of this Act or of institutional policies affecting student rights and welfare; (b) provide confidential advice, information, and guidance on rights, procedures, and available remedies; (c) facilitate informal or alternative resolution of disputes where appropriate and with the consent of the parties, without prejudice to formal proceedings; (d) recommend interim or protective measures to prevent continuing harm, retaliation, or prejudice to any party; (e) refer cases to the appropriate institutional offices or to competent government agencies when jurisdiction so requires; and (f) identify recurring issues or systemic concerns and recommend corrective or preventive measures.

The Student Ombud shall submit periodic reports, in aggregated and anonymized form, to the head of the institution and to such oversight bodies as may be provided for in the Implementing Rules and Regulations, provided that no personally identifiable information shall be disclosed and that confidentiality shall be strictly observed. The independence, security of tenure, and operational autonomy of the Student Ombud shall be safeguarded by institutional rules, provided further that the Ombud shall not be subject to instructions or interference in the performance of its functions, provided finally that such independence shall not exempt the Ombud from accountability under applicable laws and ethical standards.

SEC. 80. *Students' Rights and Welfare Council.* – There is hereby created a Students' Rights and Welfare Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, which shall serve as the primary national policy coordination, advisory, and monitoring body for the effective and coherent implementation of this Act.

The Council shall be convened and chaired by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as the lead agency, in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Department of Education (DepEd), insofar as senior high school students are concerned, as may be further provided in the Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Council shall be composed of representatives from CHED, TESDA, DepEd, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the National Youth Commission (NYC), and representatives of associations of public and private educational institutions.

The Council shall include at least three (3) student representatives, consisting of one (1) representative from higher education, one (1) representative from technical-vocational education and training (TVET), and one (1) representative from senior high school. Such student representatives shall be elected or nominated by duly accredited national student formations corresponding to their respective sectors.

No student representative shall be appointed solely by an educational institution or government agency. The Implementing Rules and Regulations shall provide for the accreditation of national student formations and the orderly nomination or election process, consistent with the principles of independence, inclusivity, and democratic representation.

SEC. 81. *Functions and Limitations of the Council.* – The Council shall have the following functions:

(a) provide authoritative policy guidance on the interpretation and implementation of this Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations;

- (b) recommend minimum standards, indicators, and benchmarks on student rights, welfare services, participation, and campus safety;
- (c) coordinate national and sectoral capacity-building programs for educational institutions, student leaders, and relevant stakeholders;
- (d) monitor national compliance trends, identify systemic gaps or emerging issues, and propose appropriate policy or regulatory responses;
- (e) facilitate inter-agency coordination and information-sharing relevant to student welfare; and
- (f) submit periodic reports and policy recommendations to Congress and concerned agencies for legislative, regulatory, or administrative action.

The Council shall not exercise adjudicatory, prosecutorial, or disciplinary powers, provided that its findings and recommendations may inform oversight, rule-making, program development, and legislative review, provided further that its operations shall be guided by transparency, inclusivity, respect for institutional autonomy, and meaningful student participation.

SEC. 82. *Mandatory Student Handbook Harmonization and Consultation.* – All educational institutions covered by this Act shall conduct a comprehensive review, revision, and harmonization of their student handbooks, codes of conduct, enrollment contracts, and related policies to ensure full conformity with the provisions hereof.

Such harmonization shall be undertaken through a meaningful, inclusive, and documented consultative process with duly recognized student councils, student unions, or student organizations, and with other relevant stakeholders, including faculty and administrative representatives, as may be appropriate.

SEC. 83. *Standards for Harmonized Handbooks; Effect of Inconsistencies; Non-Compliance.* – Educational institutions shall ensure that revised handbooks and policies:

- (a) clearly reflect the rights, obligations, procedures, and remedies provided for under this Act;
- (b) are written in clear, accessible, and non-technical language, without prejudice to legal accuracy; and
- (c) are made available to students in both physical and digital formats.

Any handbook provision, rule, or policy inconsistent with this Act shall be void to the extent of such inconsistency and shall not be enforced, provided that rights recognized herein shall be deemed minimum standards and shall not preclude the adoption of more protective institutional measures. Failure to undertake timely harmonization as required under this section shall constitute non-compliance with this Act and may be subject to appropriate administrative action, provided finally that the timeline, procedures, and transitional arrangements shall be specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations.

SEC. 84. *Complaints, Remedies, and Protection Against Retaliation.* – Any student, student organization, student council or union, parent or legal guardian of a minor student, or any concerned person with direct knowledge of a violation may file a complaint for violations of this Act or its Implementing Rules and Regulations. Complaints may be filed before the appropriate institutional office, the Student Ombud, or the concerned government agency, in accordance with procedures to be provided for in the Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Available remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (a) cessation, modification, or correction of unlawful policies, practices, or actions; (b)

restoration of denied access, status, or benefits; (c) correction, annotation, or expungement of records; (d) interim or permanent protective measures; (e) restitution, accommodation, or other equitable relief where appropriate; and (f) administrative accountability measures against responsible officials or personnel.

SEC. 85. *Anti-Retaliation Rule and Protective Measures Pending Resolution.*

– Retaliation against any person who files a complaint, participates in an investigation, provides information, or asserts rights under this Act is hereby strictly prohibited.

Any act of retaliation shall constitute a separate and independent violation of this Act and shall be subject to administrative sanctions, provided that the filing of a complaint in good faith shall not give rise to liability even if the complaint is ultimately dismissed, provided finally that protective measures may be ordered pending resolution of the case.

SEC. 86. *Administrative Accountability, Institutional Liability, and Sanctions.*

– Any violation of this Act, its Implementing Rules and Regulations, or lawful orders issued pursuant hereto by school officials, employees, security personnel, or persons acting under the authority of an educational institution shall subject the responsible persons to administrative accountability under applicable civil service, labor, education, or professional regulations.

Administrative sanctions may include, as appropriate: (a) reprimand, warning, or censure; (b) suspension or removal from student-facing or supervisory functions; (c) disqualification from holding positions involving student welfare, discipline, or governance; (d) mandatory corrective action plans, training, or supervision; and (e) such other penalties as may be authorized by law or implementing rules.

SEC. 87. *Institutional Sanctions, Due Process, and Non-Prejudice Clause.* –

For educational institutions found to have committed willful, repeated, systemic, or egregious violations, the appropriate government agency may impose graduated institutional sanctions, including compliance orders, monitoring requirements, directives for corrective measures, or other regulatory actions consistent with due process. Any recommendation affecting permits, recognition, accreditation, or authority to operate shall be made only in accordance with existing education laws and regulations, provided that institutional sanctions shall be proportionate and corrective in nature, provided further that due process shall be strictly observed.

The imposition of administrative sanctions under this section shall be without prejudice to the filing of civil, criminal, or other administrative actions under existing laws.

SEC. 88. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, CHED, TESDA, and DepEd, insofar as senior high school students are concerned, in coordination with CHR, NYC, representatives of public and private educational institutions, duly recognized national student formations, and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of this Act.

The IRR shall: (a) provide clear, detailed, and operational guidelines for the implementation of the rights, duties, standards, mechanisms, and safeguards provided for herein; (b) prescribe differentiated and context-sensitive standards appropriate to senior high school, higher education, and TVET institutions; (c) define institutional responsibilities, timelines, reporting requirements, and compliance indicators; (d) establish coordination mechanisms among concerned agencies and institutions; (e) specify procedures for complaints, remedies,

monitoring, and enforcement consistent with due process; and (f) adopt measurable indicators aligned with national education reform priorities and student welfare outcomes.

SEC. 89. *Consultation Requirement and Non-Diminution Rule in the IRR.* – *In the formulation of the IRR, concerned agencies shall ensure meaningful consultation with students and stakeholders, provided that student participation shall be substantive and documented, provided further that the IRR shall not diminish, restrict, or dilute the rights guaranteed under this Act, provided finally that any ambiguity in the IRR shall be resolved in favor of the protection and promotion of student rights and welfare.*

SEC. 90. *Administrative Sanctions.* – The CHED, DepEd, and TESDA are hereby vested with powers necessary to investigate and impose administrative penalties to ensure the enforcement of this Act, consistent with the complaint, remedies, accountability, and due process mechanisms provided under this Act.

Any student, member of a student council or student government, or a national organization of student councils or student governments, or youth organization may file written complaints before the CHED, DepEd, and TESDA. The CHED, DepEd, and TESDA may impose graduated sanctions on schools violating this Act: (a) Warning and compliance order; (b) Fines from P200,000 to P500,000; (c) Suspension of programs; (d) Revocation of permit or license for grave, repeated violations.

SEC. 91. *Penal Provisions.* – Any person who willfully and maliciously obstructs the exercise of rights under this Act shall be liable to imprisonment of one (1) to five (5) years, or a fine of P50,000 to P100,000, or both.

If the offender is a juridical entity, responsible officers shall be held liable. Public officials found guilty shall, in addition, be dismissed from service.

SEC. 92. *Interpretation.* – All doubts in the implementation and interpretation of this Act, including its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), shall be resolved in favor of upholding students' rights and welfare.

SEC. 93. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, invalid, or unenforceable, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect, it being the intent of Congress that this Act be given the fullest possible effect consistent with the Constitution.

SEC. 94. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances, and parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Such repeal or modification shall be construed only to the extent of the inconsistency, provided that existing laws and regulations affording equal or greater protection to student rights and welfare shall remain in force, provided further that nothing herein shall be construed to diminish rights already recognized under the Constitution or other special laws.

SEC. 95. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,