

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 10352

Introduced by: **REP. ELMER V. CATULPOS**
(I Tahanan Partylist)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The family is the foundation of the nation, yet we ask no one to prepare for its hardest and most important work. We require a license to drive a car, but a couple may begin raising a child with no preparation at all — not for handling money, not for caring for a newborn, not for settling disagreements without harm. When that preparation is missing, the cost is paid quietly and heavily: in household debt, in quarrels that turn into violence, in neglected children, and in homes that break under strain that guidance could have eased.

The State already recognizes this need in part. Republic Act No. 10354 requires pre-marriage counseling, and the Family Code already obliges both parents to support and rear their children. This measure builds upon that foundation by adding the practical, everyday skills of parenting and partnership — managing a household budget, caring for a mother during pregnancy and for a baby after birth, disciplining a child with firmness but never with cruelty, and disagreeing as a couple without fear or harm.

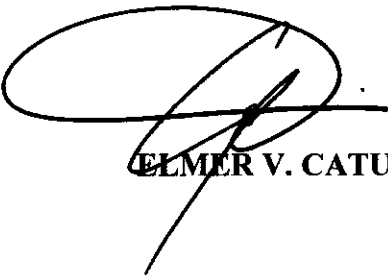
These lessons shall reach Filipinos through two doors that already stand open. First, through our schools: woven into subjects that already exist — values education and homeroom guidance — at each grade's proper level, adding no new subject and no new burden upon our teachers. And rightly so, for these are not lessons about marriage alone; budgeting a household, caring for a newborn sibling, and settling disagreement without harm are life skills every learner will need, whatever path their life takes. The classroom, moreover, is the one place where the nation can reach every future parent without exception — for pre-marriage counseling reaches only those who marry, and only at the threshold of marriage, often too late; while many who most need preparation become parents young, or outside marriage, and are reached by no program at all. Today's students are tomorrow's mothers and fathers, and many are already helping raise their younger brothers and sisters. Second, through the pre-marriage orientation and counseling that existing law already requires: enriched with these same practical competencies, so that every couple standing at the door of marriage receives not only the counsel the law now gives, but the everyday skills a home actually runs on.

Let there be no misunderstanding about what this Act is, and is not. This is not sex education. It neither introduces nor expands reproductive-health or sexuality instruction, which remains governed by Republic Act No. 10354 and its safeguards; this Act does not touch it. What this Act teaches is how to run a home, raise a child, and keep a family whole and safe. It fully respects the primary right and duty of parents to rear their children according to their own moral and religious convictions: any school content shall be age-appropriate, values-based, and developed together with parents, teachers, and the community.

Neither does this Act promote or normalize separation. It recognizes the plain reality that, for many reasons — work abroad, abandonment, the death of a parent, or the breakdown of a relationship — parents sometimes live apart, and it insists that when they do, the children must never be the ones who pay. Consistent with the parents’ existing legal duty to support their children, this Act teaches that both parents remain responsible, and that conflict between adults must never be waged through, or in front of, a child.

This measure answers, in statute, the very summons the President issued in his State of the Nation Address of July 27, 2026: “Kailangang mamulat ang buong lipunan at akuin ang responsibilidad. Pag-ibayuhin natin ang ating paggabay at pag-aruga sa ating kabataan. Magkakasama tayong lahat sa misyong ito: ang pamahalaan, pamilya, paaralan, simbahan, industriya, at komunidad.” Paggabay is the very name and the very method of this Act: it equips the family — the first and greatest school — with the practical skills that keep a home whole and safe, and it enlists the school, the community, and the State beside the family, exactly as the President called for.

This is a pro-family, pro-child measure. Its aim is fewer broken homes, less violence within them, and children who are cared for and protected whatever befalls their parents. In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ELMER V. CATULPOS

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HOUSE BILL NO. 10352

Introduced by Representative ELMER V. CATULPOS

AN ACT STRENGTHENING FILIPINO FAMILIES BY INSTITUTIONALIZING PRACTICAL RESPONSIBLE-PARENTING AND FAMILY-LIFE EDUCATION IN BASIC EDUCATION AND IN PRE-MARRIAGE ORIENTATION AND COUNSELING, WHILE UPHOLDING THE PRIMARY RIGHT OF PARENTS TO REAR THEIR CHILDREN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the “Gabay Magulang Act” or the “Responsible Parenting Education Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to protect and strengthen the family as the foundation of the nation, and to equip Filipinos with the practical knowledge and skills to build stable homes, raise children well, and resolve conflict without violence. The State shall provide responsible-parenting and family-life education through the basic-education curriculum and through pre-marriage orientation and counseling, always in a manner that is age-appropriate, values-based, and respectful of the primary right and duty of parents to rear their children in accordance with their moral and religious convictions. Nothing in this Act shall diminish that primary parental right, nor shall it introduce or expand reproductive-health or sexuality education.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act:

- (a) *Responsible-parenting and family-life education* refers to instruction in the practical knowledge and skills of running a household and raising children, as enumerated in Section 5, and expressly excludes reproductive-health and sexuality education.
- (b) *Pre-Marriage Orientation and Counseling (PMOC)* refers to the pre-marriage education required under existing law and delivered by local government units, the DSWD, POPCOM, and accredited providers, including faith-based providers.
- (c) *Positive discipline* refers to methods of guiding a child’s behavior that are firm and consistent but never involve physical, psychological, or humiliating harm.

SECTION 4. Scope and Relationship to Existing Laws; Non-Expansion of Sexuality Education. — This Act shall be implemented in harmony with, and shall not amend or expand, Republic Act No. 10354 (Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act), whose provisions on reproductive-health and adolescent education, together with their parental-consultation safeguards, shall continue to govern that subject exclusively. This Act shall likewise operate consistently with Executive Order No. 209 (the Family Code), Republic Act No. 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act), Republic Act No. 7610 (Special Protection of Children Against Abuse), and

Republic Act No. 11861 (Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act). For the avoidance of doubt, this Act does not introduce, require, or expand any sexuality or reproductive-health instruction.

SECTION 5. Core Content of Responsible-Parenting and Family-Life Education. — The responsible-parenting and family-life education under this Act shall cover, at minimum, the following practical competencies, taught at an age-appropriate level:

- (a) Family financial management, including budgeting, saving, and the shared management of household finances according to the couple's own agreement;
- (b) Maternal and prenatal care awareness, including the importance of check-ups and proper nutrition during pregnancy, consistent with the Libreng Panganak and First 1,000 Days measures;
- (c) Newborn and child care, including feeding, hygiene, health, and the ordinary demands of caring for an infant;
- (d) Positive child discipline that guides without cruelty, and never through physical or psychological abuse;
- (e) Healthy conflict resolution between partners, teaching that disagreement is normal but that abuse of any kind is never acceptable and must never occur in the presence of children; and
- (f) Shared parental responsibility, including the continuing duty of both parents to support and care for their children even when the parents live apart, as required by the Family Code.

SECTION 6. Integration into Basic Education. — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education shall integrate responsible-parenting and family-life education into appropriate existing subjects, such as values education and homeroom guidance, at a level appropriate to each grade, without adding undue burden to the curriculum.

The content, scope, and methodology shall be developed and periodically reviewed in consultation with parents, teachers, and community and faith-based organizations, and shall respect the moral and religious convictions of families. Such consultation shall be meaningful, and consistent with the consultation safeguard recognized in existing law on age- and development-appropriate education; Provided, That DepEd shall retain final authority over curriculum standards consistent with law.

SECTION 7. Strengthening Pre-Marriage Orientation and Counseling. — The pre-marriage orientation and counseling required under existing law shall be enriched to include the practical competencies enumerated in Section 5. The DSWD, POPCOM, and local government units, together with accredited providers including faith-based providers, shall update the PMOC modules accordingly. Compliance with the enriched PMOC shall follow existing procedures and shall not create any new barrier to marriage.

SECTION 8. Primacy of Parents and Right of Consultation. — The State recognizes parents as the first and primary educators of their children. Accordingly, schools shall inform parents of the content of the responsible-parenting and family-life education, shall accommodate the reasonable exercise of parental and religious conscience, and shall implement the parental-and-community consultation required under Section 6. Nothing in this Act shall be used to compel instruction contrary to the moral or religious convictions of a family. Conscience-based concerns, when raised in good faith, shall be reasonably accommodated through pedagogically appropriate alternatives (such as alternative activities or supplemental home modules), without defeating minimum learning competencies prescribed by DepEd pursuant to this Act and other existing laws.

SECTION 9. Protection of Children From Abuse. — Consistent with Republic Act No. 9262 and Republic Act No. 7610, the education under this Act shall clearly teach that discipline is not

abuse, that violence against a spouse or child is unlawful and harmful, and shall include information on where and how to seek help. Teachers and counselors who, in the course of this education, learn of abuse shall observe existing mandatory-reporting and child-protection rules.

SECTION 10. Continued Parenting When Parents Live Apart. — Recognizing that children must never bear the cost of an adult separation occurring for any reason, this Act shall teach that both parents remain legally and morally responsible for the support, care, and upbringing of their children, consistent with the Family Code and the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act. This provision shall not be construed to promote, encourage, or facilitate separation, annulment, or the dissolution of marriage.

SECTION 11. Teacher Training and Instructional Materials. — The Department of Education, in coordination with the DSWD and relevant experts, shall train teachers and develop age-appropriate, culturally sensitive instructional materials for the education under this Act, and shall ensure that teachers are supported rather than burdened in delivering it.

SECTION 12. Implementing Agencies. — The Department of Education shall lead the integration of this education into basic education; the DSWD, POPCOM, and local government units shall lead the enrichment and delivery of the PMOC; and the Council for the Welfare of Children shall assist in safeguarding child-protection standards. These agencies shall coordinate to avoid duplication and ensure consistency with existing law.

SECTION 13. Appropriations. — The amount necessary to carry out this Act shall be provided as a distinct line item under a new appropriation in the annual General Appropriations Act, and shall not be sourced by diminishing existing education or social-welfare programs.

SECTION 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education, in coordination with the DSWD, POPCOM, DILG, the Council for the Welfare of Children, and representatives of parents' and faith-based organizations, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations. Failure to promulgate the same shall not prevent the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 15. Congressional Oversight. — A Congressional Oversight Committee, composed of the chairpersons and members of the appropriate committees of both Houses, shall monitor the implementation of this Act and review its effectiveness within three (3) years from its effectivity.

SECTION 16. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 17. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 18. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.