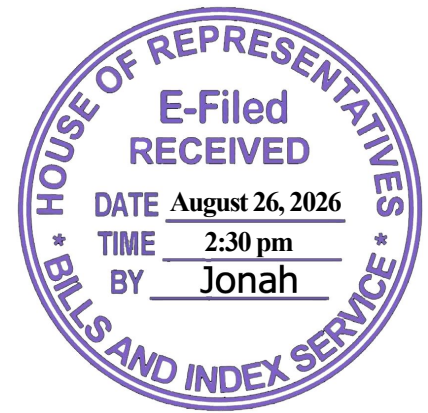


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10972



Introduced by REP. EMILIO BERNARDINO L. YULO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Schools and other educational institutions must remain safe spaces where learners and students can learn and grow without fear of violence. However, recent incidents of gun violence in schools have emphasized the urgent need for stronger and coordinated measures to protect learners, students, teachers, faculty members, school administrators, and school personnel.

On June 22, 2026, a shooting at San Jose National High School in Tacloban City left three students dead and several others injured. Two minors were taken into custody in connection with the incident. ¹ Police investigation later revealed that one of the firearms used was a police-issued handgun belonging to a relative of one of the minors, which raised serious concerns over access of minors to firearms. ²

Barely two months later, on August 18, 2026, another fatal shooting occurred at the Ateneo de Zamboanga University Junior High School, where two students died. Authorities recovered two firearms and it was found out that the student brought the firearms inside the school premises by taking them from his father's car and bypassing the main security entrance.³ The occurrence of two fatal school shootings within such a short period is a call to strengthen measures for the prevention of and preparedness for gun violence in schools across the country.

An effective response must begin with prevention and early intervention by addressing factors that may place learners and students at risk of violence, providing appropriate mental health and psychosocial support, strengthening positive relationships, and establishing accessible mechanisms for reporting credible threats and unauthorized access to firearms.

¹ Bonzo, L. T. (2026, June 22). Two minors allegedly linked to Tacloban school shooting now in police custody. *GMA News Online*.

² Bonzo, L. T. (2026, June 22). 40 bullet shells, 1 police-issued handgun recovered at Tacloban school shooting. *GMA News Online*.

³ Casimiro, Q., De Guzman, K., Punzalan, J., & Villaruel, J. E. (2026, August 18). Two dead in Ateneo de Zamboanga shooting. *ABS-CBN News*; Consulta, J. (2026, August 23). The bag, the bullets, and the wake-up call: The moments before Ateneo de Zamboanga school shooting. *GMA News Online*.

Likewise, schools and educational institutions must have appropriate measures to prevent and detect the unauthorized entry of firearms and other deadly weapons. Schools and their personnel must be equipped to recognize and report warning signs, coordinate with law enforcement and emergency responders, and implement appropriate protective measures during an armed threat.

This bill seeks to establish a Comprehensive School Gun Violence Prevention Program applicable to public and private basic education institutions and public and private higher education institutions throughout the country. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), within their respective jurisdictions, shall oversee the implementation of the Program. The Program shall strengthen school-based prevention and early intervention strategies, firearm-related threat reporting, school and community partnerships, appropriate school safety infrastructure, personnel training and capacity building, emergency preparedness and response, and crisis and post-incident recovery.

Every learner and student has the right to pursue education in a safe and secure environment. The recent tragedies serve as a reminder that the State must act proactively to strengthen the capacity of schools and educational institutions to prevent gun violence and protect the lives and well-being of learners and school personnel.

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



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HOUSE BILL NO. 10972

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM FOR THE
PREVENTION OF GUN VIOLENCE AND OTHER FORMS OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE
AMONG LEARNERS AND STUDENTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the “*Safe Schools Act of 2026.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect learners and students from gun violence and other forms of serious violence and to promote safe and supportive educational environments conducive to their learning, development, and well-being.

Towards this end, the State shall adopt and strengthen evidence-based, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and developmentally responsive school-based strategies that prevent and reduce gun violence, address factors that place learners and students at risk of involvement in violence, strengthen protective factors, and promote partnerships among schools, families, communities, and government agencies.

The State shall likewise ensure that educational institutions adopt appropriate and proportionate protective measures to prevent the unauthorized entry and possession of firearms, ammunition, deadly weapons, and other threats to the safety of learners, students, and school personnel.

SEC. 3. *Comprehensive School Gun Violence Prevention Program.* The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall establish a Comprehensive School Gun Violence Prevention Program, hereinafter referred to as the

“*Program*,” for the implementation and strengthening of school-based strategies to prevent and reduce gun violence and other forms of serious violence among learners and students.

The Program shall apply to public and private basic education institutions and public and private higher education institutions. DepEd shall be responsible for the implementation of the Program in basic education institutions, while CHED shall be responsible for its implementation in higher education institutions, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Philippine National Police (PNP), local government units (LGUs), and other concerned agencies and stakeholders.

DepEd and CHED shall, within their respective jurisdictions, provide educational institutions with appropriate standards, guidance, technical assistance, and resources necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. *School-Based Gun Violence Prevention Strategies.* The Program shall promote and implement evidence-based, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and developmentally responsive strategies designed to prevent and reduce gun violence and other forms of serious violence among learners and students. Such strategies shall include:

(a) *Strengthening Protective Factors.* — Programs and activities that strengthen factors known to reduce the risk of learners’ and students’ involvement in violence, including positive relationships with family members, peers, teachers, mentors, and other trusted adults;

(b) *Social and Emotional Skills.* — Programs that develop interpersonal and emotional skills, including communication, empathy, problem-solving, conflict management, and peaceful resolution of disputes;

(c) *Trauma-Informed Intervention.* — Appropriate interventions for learners and students who have experienced violence, trauma, bullying, abuse, or other adverse experiences that may increase their vulnerability to violence;

(d) *Mental Health and Support Services.* — Connecting learners and students, when appropriate, with guidance counselors, mental health professionals, social workers, mentors, trained educators, and other qualified professionals who may provide appropriate support and intervention;

(e) *Early Identification and Intervention.* — Identification and appropriate intervention for learners and students who may be at heightened risk of involvement in gun violence or other serious violence, whether as victims, perpetrators, or otherwise affected persons;

(f) *Reporting of Threats.* — Accessible and confidential mechanisms through which learners, students, parents or guardians, teachers, school personnel, and other members of the school community may report credible threats of gun violence, possession of or unauthorized access to firearms, and other circumstances indicating a serious risk of violence; and

(g) *Other Evidence-Based Strategies.* — Other school-based strategies shown to be effective in preventing or reducing gun violence and serious violence among learners and students, as may be identified by DepEd and CHED, within their respective jurisdictions, in consultation with concerned agencies and appropriate experts.

SEC. 5. *School and Community Partnerships.* The Program shall promote partnerships among educational institutions, families, local government units, community-based organizations, health and social welfare service providers, law enforcement authorities, and other relevant stakeholders. Such partnerships shall seek to:

(a) Connect learners and students at risk of violence with appropriate community-based services and support;

(b) Strengthen communication and cooperation among schools, families, and communities in identifying and addressing risks of violence;

(c) Facilitate appropriate referrals to mental health, psychosocial, social welfare, mentoring, and other intervention services;

(d) Strengthen coordination between educational institutions and law enforcement and emergency response authorities in addressing credible or imminent threats of gun violence; and

(e) Promote meaningful participation of learners, students, parents or guardians, teachers, faculty members, and communities in the development and implementation of school gun violence prevention strategies.

SEC. 6. *Prevention and Reporting of Firearm-Related Threats.* As part of the Program, educational institutions shall establish appropriate procedures for the prompt reporting, assessment, and referral of credible threats involving firearms or ammunition, including information that a learner or student possesses, has unauthorized access to, or intends to bring a firearm or ammunition into school premises.

Educational institutions shall provide accessible and confidential means through which learners, students, parents or guardians, teachers, school personnel, and other persons may report such threats or concerns.

Where a reported threat presents a credible or imminent danger to the school community, the school shall immediately coordinate with the appropriate law enforcement and emergency authorities.

All reports and interventions involving children shall be handled in a child-sensitive manner and in accordance with applicable laws on privacy, child protection, and juvenile justice.

SEC. 7. *School Safety Infrastructure and Protective Measures.* As part of the Program, educational institutions shall adopt appropriate school safety infrastructure and protective measures for the prevention and early detection of firearms, ammunition, deadly weapons, and other threats of serious violence within school premises.

Such measures shall be based on the size, enrollment, location, physical configuration, available resources, and assessed security risks of the school and may include:

(a) *Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV).* — CCTV cameras shall be installed, as may be appropriate, in strategic areas, particularly entrances and exits, perimeter areas, common areas, and other locations identified through the school's security risk assessment. CCTV cameras shall not be installed in areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. The collection, storage, access, use, and disposal of CCTV footage shall comply with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the “*Data Privacy Act of 2012*,” and other applicable laws and regulations;

(b) *Screening Equipment.* — Schools shall have access to appropriate screening equipment, including handheld metal detectors, where warranted by the school's security risk assessment. Screening shall be conducted only by authorized and appropriately trained personnel in a reasonable, proportionate, non-discriminatory, and age-appropriate manner, and, where minors are involved, in a child-sensitive manner;

(c) *Visitor Management and Access Control.* — Schools shall establish appropriate systems to regulate and monitor the entry and movement of visitors within school premises, including procedures for visitor identification, registration, verification, and access control;

(d) *Security Personnel and Protective Presence.* — Schools shall ensure appropriate security and protective presence based on their size, enrollment, location, and assessed security risks. Such protective presence may include licensed security guards, coordinated assistance from the PNP, and other duly authorized personnel; and

(e) *Perimeter and Access Security.* — Schools shall maintain appropriate physical measures to secure school boundaries and regulate access, including, as may be appropriate, gates, fencing, adequate lighting, locks, barriers, and other protective infrastructure.

DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the DILG, PNP, LGUs, and other concerned agencies, shall prescribe minimum standards and guidelines for the implementation of this Section, taking into consideration the varying security risks, physical conditions, and resources of

educational institutions.

SEC. 8. *Training and Capacity Building.* DepEd and CHED, in coordination with concerned agencies, shall provide appropriate training and technical assistance to teachers, faculty members, school heads or administrators, guidance counselors, security personnel, and other relevant school personnel on:

- (a) Evidence-based school gun violence prevention strategies;
- (b) Recognition and appropriate reporting of warning signs and credible threats of violence;
- (c) Trauma-informed, age-appropriate, and, where applicable, child-sensitive approaches;
- (d) Appropriate referral of learners and students to mental health, psychosocial, social welfare, and other support services;
- (e) Coordination with families, communities, law enforcement authorities, and appropriate government agencies; and
- (f) Appropriate implementation of school safety and protective measures under this Act.

SEC. 9. *School Preparedness and Response.* Educational institutions shall integrate appropriate procedures for incidents involving firearms or other serious threats of violence into their existing school safety, child protection, and emergency preparedness mechanisms. DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the DILG, PNP, DOH, DSWD, LGUs, and other concerned agencies, shall issue minimum guidelines on:

- (a) Immediate reporting and communication of credible or imminent threats;
- (b) Coordination with law enforcement authorities and emergency responders;
- (c) Appropriate lockdown, evacuation, shelter-in-place, or other protective measures;
- (d) Protection and accounting of learners, students, and school personnel;
- (e) Emergency medical response;
- (f) Communication with parents or guardians; and
- (g) Post-incident mental health and psychosocial support.

Preparedness activities involving learners and students shall be age-appropriate, as applicable, and trauma-informed, and shall be conducted in a manner that avoids unnecessary fear, panic, or psychological distress.

SEC. 10. *School Safety Handbook.* Every educational institution shall prepare, maintain, and regularly update a School Safety Handbook, as part of the institution's existing learner or student handbook, as applicable, to communicate essential school safety information to learners, students, parents or guardians, school personnel, visitors, and other members of the school community. The School Safety Handbook shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Procedures for reporting gun violence, credible threats of violence, possession of or

unauthorized access to firearms or ammunition, bullying, abuse, harassment, and other school safety concerns that may pose a risk of serious violence;

- (b) Available learner and student support and intervention services, including guidance and counseling, mental health and psychosocial support, and appropriate referral services;
- (c) Emergency procedures and appropriate protective actions during incidents involving firearms or other serious threats of violence, including lockdown, evacuation, shelter-in-place, and other applicable safety measures;
- (d) Procedures for emergency communication and coordination with parents or guardians, law enforcement authorities, and emergency responders; and
- (e) Such other information as may be necessary to promote awareness, preparedness, and safety within the school community.

The Handbook shall be presented in an age-appropriate, accessible, and child-sensitive manner and shall be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changes in school safety protocols, identified risks, and relevant guidelines issued by DepEd or CHED, as applicable.

SEC. 11. *Crisis and Post-Incident Recovery.* DepEd, CHED, DOH, and DSWD shall establish a coordinated mechanism for the rapid provision of crisis intervention and psychosocial support following an incident of gun violence in an educational institution.

Such response shall include, as appropriate, psychological first aid, counseling, referral for continuing mental health services, support for affected families and school personnel, continuity of education, and assistance in the safe reopening and recovery of the affected school or educational institution.

SEC. 12. *Evaluation of School Gun Violence Prevention Strategies.* DepEd and CHED, within their respective jurisdictions, in coordination with concerned agencies and appropriate academic and research institutions, shall periodically evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of strategies and interventions under the Program. Such evaluation shall determine, among others:

- (a) The effectiveness of strategies in preventing or reducing gun violence and other forms of serious violence among learners and students;
- (b) The effectiveness of interventions for learners and students identified as being at risk of violence;
- (c) The effectiveness of school and community partnerships established pursuant to this Act;
- (d) The effectiveness and appropriateness of school safety infrastructure and protective measures;

- (e) The effectiveness of training and preparedness measures; and
- (f) Areas requiring improvement, further research, or additional intervention.

SEC. 13. *Collection and Use of Data.* DepEd and CHED, within their respective jurisdictions, shall establish appropriate mechanisms for the collection and analysis of data necessary to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Program.

Such data may include, to the extent appropriate and permitted by law, reported threats involving firearms, incidents involving firearms or other deadly weapons in educational institutions, interventions undertaken, and other information necessary to assess the effectiveness of the Program.

Data collected pursuant to this Section shall be used to improve gun violence prevention strategies, identify emerging concerns and risk factors, determine effective practices that may be adopted or replicated by educational institutions, and guide future policies and interventions.

The collection, processing, storage, and disclosure of personal information shall comply with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012,” and other applicable laws on privacy and the protection of personal information.

SEC. 14. *Identification and Dissemination of Best Practices.* Based on the implementation and evaluation of the Program, DepEd and CHED, within their respective jurisdictions, shall identify evidence-based and effective practices for preventing and reducing gun violence and other serious violence among learners and students.

DepEd and CHED shall make such practices, model policies, guidance materials, training resources, and other appropriate information available to educational institutions, LGUs, families, communities, and other stakeholders.

Such best practices shall be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect new evidence, emerging risks, lessons learned from implementation, and developments in school gun violence prevention.

SEC. 15. *Coordination with Existing Programs and Laws.* The Program established under this Act shall, whenever appropriate, be integrated with and supplement existing programs and mechanisms on child protection, anti-bullying, mental health, guidance and counseling, disaster risk reduction and management, school safety, and crime prevention.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish the responsibilities of educational institutions, firearm owners, law enforcement authorities, or government agencies under Republic

Act No. 10591, otherwise known as the “Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act,” Republic Act No. 10627, otherwise known as the “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013,” as amended, Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the “Mental Health Act,” and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 16. *National Guidelines and Technical Assistance.* Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the concerned agencies, shall issue the National Guidelines on School Gun Violence Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.

The Guidelines shall include model school plans, threat assessment procedures, reporting mechanisms, emergency protocols, training standards, referral pathways, minimum security standards, and post-incident recovery procedures.

DepEd and CHED shall provide technical assistance to educational institutions in adapting the Guidelines to their respective circumstances and available resources.

SEC. 17. *Periodic Evaluation and Congressional Report.* Based on the evaluations conducted pursuant to Section 12 of this Act, DepEd and CHED shall submit a joint report to Congress every three (3) years containing:

- (a) Available national data and trends;
- (b) Assessment of implementation by educational institutions;
- (c) Identified gaps and challenges;
- (d) Effective and evidence-based practices; and
- (e) Recommendations for appropriate legislative, administrative, or policy action.

SEC. 18. *Protection of the Rights of Learners and Students.* All measures, interventions, assessments, and proceedings under this Act involving minors shall be implemented consistent with the best interests of the child, due process, confidentiality, and the rights of children under Republic Act No. 9344, as amended, Republic Act No. 7610, Republic Act No. 10173, and other applicable laws.

No learner or student shall be stigmatized, discriminated against, or subjected to punitive measures solely on the basis of a request for mental health or psychosocial assistance.

SEC. 19. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of DepEd, CHED, and other concerned agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 20. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the DOH, DSWD, DILG, PNP, and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

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

SEC. 22. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, executive orders, administrative orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 23. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,