

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11049



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004 (RA 9258) was passed more than two decades ago, but until now, the need for guidance counselors still remains a problem in schools. In a feature article from 2018,¹ the story of a “guidance teacher” was shown where a licensed teacher had to practice guidance and counseling due to the lack of registered guidance counselors in the public school system. This and many similar incidents happening in the country shows that it is almost impossible for the State to enforce RA 9258 at present and in the near future because the number of registered guidance counselors fall too short compared with the number of institutions and schools which are supposed to retain their services.

While we are thankful for the teachers who are willingly undertaking to do this task, it is imperative that we do something to actually address the problem and not rely on band-aid solutions. We need to attract and retain guidance counselors. We need to make sure that students will see the profession of guidance and counseling as lucrative and fulfilling so that more will be encouraged to undertake the rigorous studies and training to become registered guidance counselors. We need to make sure that the young generation will have qualified persons who can help them in times of emotional distress so we can prevent incidents of dropping out from school, bullying, self-harm, and even death.

Thus, this representation drafted the Magna Carta for Public Counselors and their Practice in response to the growing need for better access to counseling and psychological aid. It is our bounden duty to ensure that the youth are safe, secure, and holistically healthy, and we can only help them by making sure that the resources and people that they need are within

¹ Lack of registered guidance counselors forces schools to keep unlicensed ones (Part 1), <https://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/01/14/18/lack-of-registered-guidance-counselors-forces-schools-to-keep-unlicensed-ones-part-1>, retrieved on February 19, 2020.

their reach. As the sad events in the past months have shown us², prioritizing counselors in schools is not only imperative, but necessary.

Hence, this bill seeks to improve the current entry level salary for guidance counselors in order to attract more applicants to move into public service, and to create an enhanced guidance and counseling program, through the aid of concerned government agencies and organizations, that will target the needs of school children and teenagers.

It is hoped that through this legislative policy, the state of guidance and counseling practice in the Philippines will improve not for us, but for our children.



ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS
Representative, Ang Probinsyano Party List

² tty. Gilberto Lauengco, J.D., "School shootings: authority, online influence, mental health," Philippine News Agency, August 19, 2026, available at: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/opinion/pieces/1216-school-shootings-authority-online-influence-mental-health>

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THE MAGNA CARTA FOR PUBLIC COUNSELORS AND THEIR PRACTICE

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Magna Carta for Public Counselors and Their Practice.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure the health and well-being of its citizens, as well as uplift the practice of counselling in the country. The State recognizes the importance of the services that counselors provide to the people, and thus it is imperative for the State to adopt and implement measures that will lead to the development and improvement of the practice of counseling, as well as the improvement of the career paths for guidance counselors in the country.

SECTION 3. *Purpose.* – The purposes of this law are as follows:

- (a) To re-calibrate and standardize the qualifications and corresponding salary grades for counselor positions;
- (b) To boost the hiring process of counselors and close the gap between the counselor to student ratio in schools;
- (c) To improve the delivery of services to pupils and students through a more developed guidance counseling program integrated into the education system;
- (d) To encourage counselors to join the government service and retain the existing counselors in the public school system through better benefits and privileges; and
- (e) To appropriate sufficient allocation for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 4. *Definitions.* – For the purposes of this Act, the terms below are defined as follows:

(a) **“Guidance and Counseling”** refers to the profession that involves the use of an integrated approach to the development of a well-functioning individual primarily by helping a person utilize his or her potentials to the fullest and plan his or her future in accordance with his or her abilities, aptitudes, interests and needs;

(b) **“Public Counselor”** refers to a natural person who: (1) is registered and issued a valid Certificate of Registration and a valid Professional Identification Card by the Professional Regulatory Board of Guidance and Counseling and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC); (2) is a holder of at least a Master’s Degree in Guidance and Counseling, Guidance, or Counseling without prejudice to those granted with licenses under the grandfather clause of Republic Act No. 9258 otherwise known as the Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004; (3) has the necessary competence and training in using a variety of integrated approaches to help individuals utilize his or her maximum potential based on his abilities, aptitudes, interests, and needs; and (4) is employed in a public school or other vocational educational institutions, including educational institutions and offices owned and operated by the government or its political subdivisions which engages in the delivery of mental health and support services;

(c) **“Client”** refers to the person receiving the services and assistance of a public counselor; and

(c) **“Counseling”** is the dynamic face to face personal interaction between the counselor and the client where the former employs various methods approaches, methods, or techniques geared towards enhancing the client’s intrapersonal and interpersonal development and competencies.

SECTION 5. *Recalibration and standardization of qualifications for public counselors.* – The Civil Service Commission (CSC), in cooperation with the Department of Health (DOH), Secretary of Education, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), in consultation with the Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association (PGCA) and other relevant non-government organizations and civil society organizations shall within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, convene, formulate, and issue the necessary guidelines for the recalibration and standardization of qualifications for public counselors vis-à-vis the salary grade. The convened body shall consider Republic Act Nos. 9258, 6758, and 5789 as amended by Republic Act No. 10691.

After finalizing the changes to be made with regard to the salary and qualifications for public counselors, the pertinent government agencies shall

take the necessary steps to translate the framework which they formulated into policy through appropriate issuances and orders as the case may be.

SECTION 6. *Inclusion of plantilla positions for guidance counselors on each public school.* – The Department of Education (DEPED), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA), in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), shall ensure that plantilla positions are available for guidance counselors and that each public school, state college or university, and government educational institutions shall have at least one (1) registered guidance counselor in its roster of employees.

SECTION 7. *Minimum Salary Grade.* – The entry level monthly salary for public counselors shall not be lower than Salary Grade 13.

SECTION 8. *Privileges and benefits for public counselors.* – The following benefits and privileges shall be granted to public counselors appointed to regular plantilla positions in public schools and other public institutions:

(a) Public counselors shall have study leave benefits similar to existing CSC policies on study leave benefits for government employees;

(b) Public counselors shall receive hazard allowance equivalent to twenty percent (20%) of their monthly basic salary for public counselors receiving a monthly salary of SG 18 and below, and ten percent (10%) for public counselors receiving a monthly salary of SG 19 and above;

(c) Public counselors who shall occupy entry level positions shall be entitled to avail of medical examinations, psychological and psychiatric assessments, and drug tests free of charge from any government hospital; *Provided*, that the need for a medical examination psychological and psychiatric assessments, and drug tests, are in relation to the completion of requirements for newly hired employees; *Provided further*, that the public counselor shall first secure a medical examination or laboratory request form from a government physician;

(d) Public counselors who shall be assigned to occupy positions in remote or isolated areas shall be given a remote assignment allowance in the amount of five thousand pesos (PhP 5,000.00) every month as long as the counselor is actually occupying and discharging the functions of the position in the assigned remote location. The benefit shall cease once the public counselor is assigned to a non-remote or non-isolated area; and

(e) Local Government Units (LGUs) of remote or isolated areas shall assist public counselors in securing a temporary residence during their assignment in such locale.

SECTION 9. Ratio of counselor to student in public schools, state or local colleges, state and local universities, local government units, and government branch, agencies, instrumentalities, including government owned and controlled corporations. – There shall be at least one (1) school counselor for every five hundred (500) pupils or students in every public elementary school, high school, learning centers, and vocational institutions.

There shall be at least one (1) school counselor for every seven hundred fifty (750) students in every state or local college, and state or local universities.

There shall be at least one (1) public counselor for every local government unit, government branch, agency, instrumentality, including government owned and controlled corporations.

SECTION 10. Enhanced Guidance Counseling System. – The Department of Education (DEPED), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall, in coordination with the Philippine Guidance and Counselling Association (PGCA), and other relevant non-government organizations and civil society organizations, formulate a program for the enhanced guidance and counseling system for elementary, secondary, tertiary, and vocational schools.

The said program shall be used as the organizational framework for the availability, conduct, and delivery of guidance and counseling services in all public schools and educational institutions. This provision shall not be construed as a restriction on the methodology and techniques which shall be used by the counselors and shall be construed as primarily pertaining to the logistics and other organizational matters, unless the constituted body shall deem it necessary or beneficial to formulate a set of standard methodology and techniques for the delivery of guidance and counseling services.

SECTION 11. Appropriation. – The sum of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated to the government agencies leading the initial implementation of the provisions of this Act. Thereafter, the succeeding appropriation for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 12. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts unaffected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 13. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 14. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,