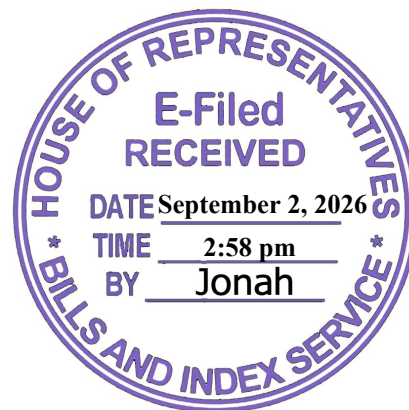




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **11083**



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

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A VARSITY SPORTS AND PARA-SPORTS
PROGRAM IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS,
STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVITY IN BASIC EDUCATION, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 19 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall promote physical education and encourage sports programs, league competitions, and amateur sports, including training for international competitions, to foster self-discipline, teamwork, and excellence for the development of a healthy and alert citizenry. It further mandates all educational institutions to undertake regular sports activities in cooperation with athletic clubs and other sectors.

Consistent with this mandate, Republic Act No. 9155, otherwise known as the “*Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001*,” recognizes school sports and physical fitness as integral components of the basic education curriculum. Likewise, Republic Act No. 5708, otherwise known as the “*Schools Physical Education and Sports Development Act of 1969*,” underscores the importance of providing opportunities for the athletic development of children and youth. Complementarily, Republic Act No. 7277, otherwise known as the “*Magna Carta for Disabled Persons*,” as amended, affirms the State’s duty to promote the rehabilitation, self-development, and full participation of persons with disabilities in society, including through sports and physical development programs.

Despite these policy directives, opportunities for systematic and sustained athletic and para-athletic development at the basic education level remain limited. While competitions such as the *Palarong Pambansa* and other school-based meets provide exposure, they do not fully address the need for continuous training, early talent identification, accessibility support, and structured development pathways for young athletes and para-athletes.

Many student-athletes and student-para-athletes lack access to organized varsity sports and para-sports programs, competent coaching, adaptive training systems, accessible facilities, adequate equipment, and regular competition at the elementary and secondary levels. This results in missed opportunities to nurture athletic potential at an early stage, which is critical in building a strong pipeline of athletes and para-athletes for higher-level competition, including collegiate, national, and international tournaments.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize varsity sports and para-sports programs in public and private elementary and secondary schools by encouraging the organization of varsity teams, strengthening coaching systems, and improving access to facilities, training, competitions, and adaptive sports support systems. It also establishes mechanisms for athlete and para-athlete identification, performance profiling, and the creation of a national registry of student-athletes and student-para-athletes to support long-term athletic development.

The bill likewise promotes collaboration among schools, local communities, local government units, and national sports institutions, including the Philippine Sports Commission, National Sports Associations, the Philippine Olympic Committee, and the Philippine Paralympic Committee, to ensure that training programs align with national, international, and adaptive sports standards. It further recognizes disparities in institutional resources and establishes mechanisms for inter-school clustering and resource-sharing to expand opportunities for learners from underserved and marginalized communities.

Ultimately, this measure aims to expand the base of Filipino student-athletes and student-para-athletes, strengthen grassroots sports and para-sports development, and enhance the country's competitiveness in international sporting events. By institutionalizing varsity sports and para-sports programs in basic education, the State invests in the development of disciplined, healthy, resilient, and high-performing youth, while promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities in sports participation.

Similar bills have been filed since the 17th Congress and were primarily referred to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture.

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



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:

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Varsity Sports and Para-Sports Program in Basic Education Act.*”

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote physical education and to ensure the development and promotion of the health of the youth. It is also hereby declared the policy of the State to encourage sports programs to foster self-discipline, teamwork, and excellence for the development of the youth.

Towards this end, the State shall provide opportunities for the development of Filipino athletes and para-athletes by expanding the base of student-athletes and student-para-athletes, increasing the time and frequency for their early exposure, training, and competition through the institutionalization of varsity sports and para-sports programs in the basic education sector.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined:

- a. *Adaptive Sports* refers to sporting disciplines and physical activities that are modified or re-engineered to accommodate the unique functional abilities and needs of individuals with disabilities;
- b. *Student-Athlete* refers to a K-12 learner officially enrolled in a basic education institution who actively participates in an organized, competitive school varsity sports program;
- c. *Student-Para-Athlete* refers to a K-12 learner with a verified physical, orthopedic, visual, speech, intellectual, or sensory impairment as defined under Republic Act No. 7277, otherwise known as the “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons,” as amended, who is officially enrolled in a basic education institution or the Alternative Learning System (ALS), and who actively participates in an organized school varsity para-sports or adaptive sports program;
- d. *Varsity Para-Sports* refers to competitive, structured adaptive sporting disciplines organized by a school administration for student-para-athletes, patterned after national and international paralympic standards;
- e. *Varsity Sports* refers to the official, structured, and competitive sports programs and teams organized, managed, and sanctioned by a basic education institution to represent the school in inter-scholastic leagues, tournaments, and meets.

Section 4. *Organization and Development of Varsity Sports and Para-Sports Programs and Teams.* – To ensure the optimal and long-term development of Filipino athletes, public and private elementary and secondary schools shall, as far as practicable, organize and develop varsity sports and para-sports programs and teams.

The school shall endeavor to gradually expand the number of sporting events that it holds in accordance with its after-school sports program and the interests of the students, coaches, and the community.

Sports events that may be considered in the establishment of varsity teams in elementary and secondary levels may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1. Archery;
- 2. *Arnis*;

3. Badminton;
4. Baseball;
5. Basketball;
6. Boxing;
7. Chess;
8. Football;
9. Gymnastics;
10. *Sepak Takraw*;
11. Softball;
12. Swimming;
13. Table Tennis;
14. Taekwondo;
15. Tennis;
16. Volleyball;
17. Billiards;
18. *Futsal*;
19. Wrestling;
20. *Wushu*;
21. Aerobics Gymnastics;
22. Dance Sports;
23. *Pencak Silat*;
24. 3x3 Basketball;
25. Para-sports and adaptive sporting disciplines including, but not limited to, Para-athletics, Boccia, Goalball, Wheelchair Basketball, Para-swimming, and Para-badminton.

The establishment of varsity teams in traditional and indigenous games, dances, and sports shall also be encouraged.

The organization of varsity teams shall consider the presence of competent and committed teacher-coaches, the availability of standard facilities and equipment, adequate administrative support, and the active involvement and support of the community.

Section 5. National Varsity Sports and Para-Sports Selection and Identification Framework. – The Department of Education (DepEd) shall formulate a National Varsity Sports and Para-Sports Selection and Identification Framework to systematically scout, map, and identify athletic and para-athletic

talent in the basic education sector. The implementation of this framework shall be categorized as follows:

- a. Public Basic Education Institutions – SDOs and public schools shall mandatorily implement the identification framework across all elementary and secondary levels, executed progressively based on local fiscal capacity, available infrastructure, adaptive facility accessibility, and regional sports specializations as determined by DepEd; and
- b. Private Basic Education Institutions – Private elementary and secondary schools shall retain administrative autonomy to adopt, modify, or integrate the identification framework within their respective institutional sports scouting and recruitment policies.

Section 6. *Baseline Qualification Requirements for Student-Athletes and Student-Para-Athletes.* – All K-12 learners officially enrolled in public or private educational tracks, including Junior High School, Senior High School, Open High School, and the Alternative Learning System (ALS), who meet the minimum criteria set under the National Varsity Sports and Para-Sports Selection and Identification Framework outlined in Section 5 of this Act, shall be eligible to qualify for their school’s varsity or para-sports teams: *Provided*, That they satisfy the following baseline requirements:

1. Successful completion of standardized physical fitness, adaptive fitness, and sport-specific skill tests;
2. Written parental or legal guardian consent; and,
3. Maintenance of good academic standing, in accordance with the scholastic standards set by DepEd or the private school's academic policy.

Section 7. *Selection and Deployment of Competent Coaches.* – It shall be the responsibility of the school administration to secure the services of competent coaches. Teachers, including sports coordinators, trained in sports coaching, shall be the priority in the selection of coaches.

Former outstanding athletes and para-athletes from among the parents or community residents may be tapped to serve as volunteer coaches in the sports where they excel and gain national or international recognition. Students and graduates of the Sports Track in the Senior High School (SHS) may also be tapped to provide assistance in the training of varsity and para-sports teams.

The varsity teams may also serve as a venue for the practicum and/or immersion of students in the Sports Track.

Section 8. *Recognition and Training of Coaches.* – The DepEd shall develop a mechanism to provide incentives and recognition to volunteer coaches. It shall also establish a system of accreditation for coaches deployed to schools.

The DepEd, in consultation with the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC), National Sports Associations (NSAs), Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), Philippine Paralympic Committee (PPC), and the private sector shall develop programs to train varsity and para-sports coaches to become certified trainers based on international and adaptive sports standards.

Section 9. *Time and Frequency of Training.* – The implementing school has the discretion to determine the time and frequency of training of the varsity teams: *Provided*, That the training is conducted after the regular class hours and shall not interfere with relevant academic activities of the students.

Section 10. *Competitions.* – Aside from the calendar of regular sports competitions conducted by the DepEd, private and public schools shall organize varsity matches with neighboring schools. A league may be composed of public and private schools.

Elementary and secondary schools may also partner with existing stadiums and sports centers in the community to host varsity matches.

Section 11. *Equipment and Infrastructure Support for Varsity Sports and Para-Sports.* – It shall be the responsibility of the respective school administrations to secure the equipment necessary to sustain the training of their varsity teams.

For public schools, procurement of standard sports equipment shall be supported by the regular budget of the DepEd, local school board funds, and alternative public-private partnerships. Private schools shall source their athletic equipment through internal institutional funds, tuition allocations, and private donations.

The DepEd, in consultation with the PSC and the PPC, shall maintain an open-access databank of standard sports facilities, accessible infrastructure specifications, and adaptive sports and equipment technical specifications to guide both public and private schools in their procurement and safety management.

Section 12. *Inter-School Clustering and Resource-Sharing Mechanism.*

– To address disparities in sports infrastructure and fiscal capacity among basic education institutions, the DepEd, through its Schools Division Offices (SDOs) and in coordination with respective LGUs, shall establish a Varsity Sports Clustering Mechanism. Under this mechanism, neighboring public and private schools may be organized into localized sports clusters to maximize the utilization of limited resources.

The operationalization of sports clusters shall be governed by the following guidelines:

- a. **Shared Training Facilities and Equipment** – Schools within a designated cluster that lack standard athletic facilities, accessible infrastructure, or specialized sports and adaptive equipment may, through formal memoranda of agreement, utilize the training grounds, sports complexes, gymnasiums, swimming pools, and athletic equipment of better-equipped partner schools within the same cluster;
- b. **Optimization of Local Government Assets** – SDOs shall actively partner with their respective provincial, city, or municipal LGUs to secure priority, rent-free access to civic sports centers, community gymnasiums, and public stadiums for the training and competitive matches of clustered school varsity teams, in accordance with Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the “*Local Government Code of 1991*;”
- c. **Pool of Itinerant Cluster Coaches** – To mitigate the shortage of specialized sports trainers, certified coaches and sports coordinators assigned to a specific school may be designated as itinerant cluster coaches to provide technical training and oversight across multiple schools within the same cluster; and
- d. **Collaborative Sports Leagues** – Clusters may form internal sports leagues or combine talent pools to field unified teams in higher-level regional meets, ensuring that student-athletes from smaller or marginalized schools are provided an avenue for competitive exposure.

Section 13. *Performance Profiling of Student Athletes and Student Para-Athletes.* – There shall be a school-based profiling of student-athletes and student-para-athletes. In case a student-athlete or student-para-athlete transfers to another school, it shall be the responsibility of the former coaches to transmit the student’s

athletic or para-athletic profile, as the case may be, to the new school to ensure proper recognition and continuous training and development, subject to applicable data privacy laws and regulations. The performance profile shall show results of previous competitions and improvement in clocking or classification metrics in the case of measurable sports.

All elementary and secondary schools shall register and update the profiles of all student-athletes and student-para-athletes from time to time.

Section 14. *Registry of Student Athletes and Student Para-Athletes.* – The DepEd shall maintain a registry of student-athletes and student para-athletes and shall make this accessible to colleges and universities, PSC, NSAs, POC, PPC, and other private sport groups and organizations, subject to the requirements of Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the “*Data Privacy Act of 2012*.”

The registry shall be used solely for identification of potential inclusion to varsity teams in colleges and universities, or in the case of the PSC and PPC, for the selection of national athletes and para-athletes who shall represent the Philippines in international sporting events.

Section 15. *Recognition.* – Recognitions shall be awarded to school coaches and school heads for their support of the organization and registration of their school varsity teams.

Teacher-coaches shall be given service credits and/or additional compensation or overtime pay for work performed in excess of eight (8) hours, in accordance with the law.

Section 16. *Appropriations.* – The funding necessary to implement the provisions of this Act in public elementary and secondary schools, including the progressive procurement of sports equipment and development of standard training facilities, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act under the budget of the DepEd.

Private basic education institutions shall bear the costs of their respective varsity programs independently: *Provided*, That the DepEd and the PSC may provide technical training, coaching accreditations, and institutional recognitions to private schools free of charge to incentivize participation.

Section 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd and PSC, upon consultation with

relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations needed for the implementation of this Act.

Section 18. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 19. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, issuances, decrees, rules, and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are deemed amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

Section 20. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,