Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 920

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO,
Gabriela Women's Party Rep. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO,
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RENEE LOUISE M. CO**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION AND CULTURE, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE WORKING CONDITIONS AND SAFETY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS ASSIGNED IN BAY SCHOOLS AND OTHER SCHOOLS IN GEOGRAPHICALLY CHALLENGING AREAS, WITH THE END VIEW OF INSTITUTIONALIZING THE GRANT OF TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCE, HAZARD PAY, SPECIAL HARDSHIP ALLOWANCE, LIFE AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COVERAGE, AND ADEQUATE SAFETY PROTECTION TO ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND PERSONNEL ASSIGNED IN SUCH AREAS

WHEREAS, Section 18, Article II of the 1987 Constitution declares it a policy of the State to protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare;

WHEREAS, Section 1, Article III of the 1987 Constitution provides that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws;

WHEREAS, Section 4, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution mandates the State to assign the highest budgetary priority to education and ensure that teaching will attract and retain its rightful share of the best available talents through adequate remuneration and other means of job satisfaction and fulfillment;

WHEREAS, apart from the lack of adequate learning materials, technology and facilities, public school teachers assigned in bay schools face dangers and challenges, and incur significant personal expenses daily in their dedication to deliver quality education to the youth;

WHEREAS, among the actual dangers and hardships these teachers face every day are the following:

- Crossing slippery bamboo bridges;
- Exposure to sudden rain, lightning, and other extreme weather conditions;
- Risk of boat capsizing and other water-related accidents;
- Danger of falling while boarding the boat or traversing waterways;
- Prolonged exposure to extreme heat during summer months;
- During high tide and floods, passing through deteriorated dikes and roads; and
- During high tide, having to lie flat in the boat to pass under low-clearance bridges;

WHEREAS, in Paombong, Bulacan, public school teachers assigned to bay schools are compelled to shoulder boat fares amounting to ₱150 per day for boat rides lasting forty (40) minutes to one (1) hour without adequate safety equipment, such as life jackets. Amid the ongoing oil crisis, the boat fare further increased to ₱180 per day. This is in addition to other necessary modes of transportation to reach their assigned schools—all without any government assistance or additional compensation;

WHEREAS, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the relevant local government units (LGUs) have failed to provide bay school teachers with the support they are entitled to, including transportation allowance, special hardship allowance, hazard pay, life and accident insurance coverage, and basic safety equipment;

WHEREAS, under DepEd Order No. 70, s. 2023, a monthly transportation allowance of ₱3,200 was granted only to Alternative Learning System (ALS) teachers, literacy volunteers and DepEd-engaged Community ALS Implementors to offset their expenses from reaching learners in underserved and unserved communities—leaving out regular public school teachers who similarly traverse dangerous terrain and waterways to reach their assigned schools;

WHEREAS, under the DepEd Order No. 39, s. 2021, only the following DepEd personnel are qualified to receive the special hardship allowance:

- All teachers in elementary and secondary schools located in hardship posts as determined by the hardship index (HI);

- Multi-grade teachers in pure multi-grade schools;
- Mobile teachers, and ALS Coordinators concurrently handling ALS classes; and
- School heads assigned in hardship posts or pure multi-grade schools.

WHEREAS, under DepEd Order No. 39, s. 2021, the HI is defined as "any number from 0 to 1 representing the degree of hardship of a particular school combining all the variables identified as hardship factors: time and cost of transportation from school to Schools Division Office (SDO), human violence, availability of temporary learning spaces, level of poverty, and availability of basic amenities (e.g. telecommunication, water and electricity services). The closer the value of the index to 1, the higher the degree of difficulty of the school situation";

WHEREAS, teachers assigned to schools with an HI of 0.33 and above, as classified under Annex A of DepEd Order No. 17, s. 2023, are eligible to receive the special hardship allowance;

WHEREAS, Annex A of DepEd Order No. 017, s. 2023 lists only schools located in the municipality of Doña Remedios Trinidad as hardship post schools within the province of Bulacan. Bay schools in the Paombong District—Masukol Elementary School, Sta. Cruz National High School, Sta Cruz Elementary School, Lantad Elementary School, and Binakod Elementary School—were not included; thereby excluding its teachers from eligibility for special hardship allowance despite the objectively dangerous and costly conditions they face daily;

WHEREAS, the current guidelines on qualifications of teachers for special hardship allowance, including the HI formula and classification system, appear to be inadequate in capturing the full extent of hardship experienced by teachers in bay schools, particularly the dangers of water-based commuting, the risk of drowning, and the financial burden of daily boat fares;

WHEREAS, there is a pressing need for an official government policy that clearly establishes the duties, responsibilities, and accountability of both DepEd and LGUs in ensuring the safety of teachers and school personnel in bay schools and other schools in similar situations. It should also clearly define the liability of responsible parties in the event of injury, death, or other tragedy arising from a teacher's work-related travel;

WHEREAS, public school teachers serving in bay schools must not be left without protection or recourse in the face of dangers that arise directly from the performance of their official duties. The continued failure of the State to protect and compensate

them represents a grave injustice against those who sacrifice daily in service for the public good;

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Congress to safeguard the welfare and ensure the just compensation of all government personnel, particularly those serving in the most difficult and dangerous conditions, and to enact the necessary legislation to address systemic gaps in existing policy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the House of Representatives, through the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, conduct an immediate inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the following:

1. The actual working conditions, safety situation, and daily hardships experienced by public school teachers assigned in bay schools in Paombong, Bulacan, and in other similarly situated communities across the Philippines;

2. The adequacy and inclusiveness of the existing Hardship Index (HI) framework and school classification system under DepEd Order No. 017, s. 2023, and its failure to recognize bay schools as hardship post schools;

3. The lack of transportation allowance, special hardship allowance, hazard pay, life and accident insurance coverage, and basic safety equipment extended to teachers in bay schools;

4. The feasibility of providing free transportation service to teachers and students in bay and island communities;

5. The issuance of a clear policy defining the State responsibility and accountability in the event of accidents, injuries, or fatalities during teachers' work-related travel; and

6. The institutionalization of the grant of transportation allowance, hazard pay, special hardship allowance, life and accident insurance coverage, and physical safety equipment to all public school teachers and personnel assigned in bay schools and in other geographically challenging areas.

Adopted,

REP. ANTONIO L. TINIO
ACT Teachers Party-List

REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Gabriela Women's Party

REP. RENEE LOUISE M. CO
KABATAAN Party-List