

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

5 MAR -3 1946

SENATE  
S.B. No. 1946

RECEIVED BY

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

Filipinos committing or attempting to commit suicide are getting younger over the years. A 2001 WHO Report revealed that in 53 countries worldwide, "suicide is a leading cause of death for young adults."


In the US, suicide is the third leading cause of death of young people aged 15-24. Studies show that more teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from a combination of cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, and chronic lung diseases taken together.

A 1993 World Health Organization (WHO) study on suicide prevention showed that out of the 848 suicides reported that year, an alarming 68.9% was committed by people aged 15 to 34. In the Philippines, unfortunately, no concrete steps have been taken to determine the causes of suicide among the Filipino youth.

Psychiatrists point out that children and young adults are prone to depression which sometimes leads to suicide. This is caused by the children's separation from their parents when the latter go to work; the restrictive, abusive, punitive, or highly critical parenting style their elders adopt; the breaking of close relationships, and the oppression of society.

The government, through the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), should take steps to raise awareness of student suicide as a serious public health program.

Suicide is not a crime, as most media reports tend to portray it. It is a serious problem that must be addressed.

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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AN ACT  
TO EMPOWER THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED), THE  
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED), AND THE TECHNICAL  
EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TESDA) TO REQUIRE  
ALL THE SCHOOL HEADS TO REPORT ALL THE INCIDENTS OF STUDENT  
SUICIDE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE SCHOOLS, WHETHER CONSUMMATED,  
FRUSTRATED, OR ATTEMPTED, AND TO PROVIDE A PROGRAM FOR STUDENT  
SUICIDE EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

*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 “Student Suicide Prevention Act of 2005.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is recognized that student suicide is a public health tragedy linked to underlying academic oppression, and that early intervention and prevention programs relating to student suicide are national priorities.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* — As used in this Act, the following terms:

- (1) “Student” – refers to any person enrolled in the primary, secondary, college or vocational levels;
- (2) “School” – refers to any public or private educational institution that offers either primary, secondary, college or vocational education.
- (3) “School Head” – refers to the chief operating officer or the chief administrator of a school.
- (4) “DepEd” – refers to the Department of Education.
- (5) “CHED” – refers to the Commission on Higher Education.
- (6) “TESDA”- refers to the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.
- (7) “Secretary” – refers to the DepEd Secretary.

- (8) "Chairperson" – refers to the CHED Chairperson.
- (9) "Director" – refers to the TESDA Director-General.
- (10) "Office" – refers either to DepEd, CHED, or TESDA.
- (11) "Task Force" – refers to the Task Force on Student Suicides.

SECTION 4. *Establishment of Task Force on Student Suicide.* —

(1) IN GENERAL. — The Secretary, the Chairperson, and the Director shall establish a Task Force within the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA to carry out the following:

- (a) Collect information from every school head regarding incidence of student suicides;
- (b) Study that information and make findings, conclusions, and recommendations regarding that information; and
- (c) Submit reports to Congress in accordance with this Section.

(2) INFORMATION INCLUDED. — The information referred to in subsection (1) shall include the following:

- (a) The prevalence of incidents of student suicide;
- (b) The demographics of students who committed or attempted to commit suicide;
- (c) The factors that influence the decision of students to commit or attempt to commit suicide;
- (d) The circumstances surrounding student suicide, including the age, sex, time, place, manner or instrument used to commit suicide, and whether consummated, frustrated, and attempted;
- (e) Trends and variations in the matters set forth in paragraphs (a) through (d).

SECTION 5. *Student Suicide Early Intervention and Prevention Strategies.* —

(1) IN GENERAL. — The DepEd, CHED, and TESDA, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), shall:

- (a) Develop and implement nationwide student suicide early intervention and prevention strategies in various schools;
- (b) Collect and analyze data on nationwide student suicide early intervention and prevention services that can be used to monitor the effectiveness of such services and for research, technical assistance, and policy development;

(c) Assist the school heads through nationwide student suicide early intervention and prevention strategies, in achieving their targets for student suicide reductions.

(d) Assist the school heads for the timely assessment of students who are at risk for emotional disorders which may lead to suicide;

(e) Assist the school heads in providing timely referrals for appropriate community-based mental health care and treatment of students who are at risk of committing suicide;

(f) Assist the school heads in providing immediate support and information resources to families of students who are at risk of emotional behavioral disorders which may lead to suicide attempts;

(g) Assist the school heads in offering equal access to services and care to youth with diverse social and economic backgrounds;

(h) Assist the school heads in offering appropriate services, care, and information to families and friends of students who recently committed suicide;

(i) Provide continuous and up-to-date information and awareness campaigns that target parents, family members, child care professionals, community care providers, and the general public and highlight the risk factors associated with student suicide and the life-saving health and care available from early intervention and prevention services;

(j) Ensure that information and awareness campaigns on student suicide risk factors and early intervention and prevention services use effective communication mechanisms that are targeted to and reach the students, families, and schools;

(k) Provide a timely response system to ensure that guidance counselors and teachers are properly trained in student suicide early intervention and prevention strategies and that guidance counselors and teachers involved in early intervention and prevention services are properly trained in effectively identifying students who are at a risk for suicide;

SECTION 6. *Mandatory Reports.* — Not later than five (5) months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA shall require all the school heads to report all the incidents of student suicide, whether consummated, frustrated, or attempted, within their respective schools, from the date of the establishment of the school up to the present time.

Subsequently, the school heads shall submit an annual report of student suicide incidence, whether consummated, frustrated, or attempted, if there is any, to the Task Force.

Not later than one (1) year and annually thereafter, the Task Force shall submit a report to the proper committees in the Senate and the House indicating the schools with the most and least number of student suicides, whether consummated, frustrated, or attempted. The Task Force shall further report its methodologies, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the assessment of student suicide.

SECTION 7. *Registration of Student Suicide.* —Not later than one (1) year and annually thereafter, the Task Force shall also submit to the Civil Registrar a database of incidence of student suicide. The Civil Registrar shall maintain the database of student suicide incidence according to age, sex, manner or instrument used to commit the suicide, and whether consummated, frustrated, or attempted.

SECTION 8. *Failure of the School to Report.* — In case the school failed to report any incident of student suicide, the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA are hereby authorized to fine the concerned school, without prejudice to the filing of the administrative and criminal charges against the school and/or the school head under existing laws.

SECTION 9. *Scholarship Fund.* — The fine to be imposed by the DepED, CHED, and TESDA shall be constituted as a scholarship fund under a program to be established by their Office.

SECTION 10. *Authorization of Appropriation.* — To carry out the provisions of this Act, such sums as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

SECTION 11. *Rules and Regulations.* — Not later than ninety (90) days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, the Chairperson, and the Director shall establish within their Office the Task Force and issue such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

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