

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



'22 AUG -4 A9 :41

SENATE

RECEIVED BY

S. No. 1031

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A CENTER FOR AUTISM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Autism is defined as a developmental disability that appears during the first three years of life. It is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain. The characteristics may be detected in early childhood, but autism is often not diagnosed until much later. The abilities and needs of people with autism vary and can evolve over time. While some can live independently, others have severe disabilities and require life-long care and support.

It is a known fact that every person, including person with autism, have the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Unfortunately, autistic people are often subject to stigma and discrimination, including unjust deprivation of health care, education, and opportunities to engage and participate in their communities.

In recent years, cases of autism have risen worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that about one in 100 children worldwide has autism. The World Population Review reported the increase in autism rates by country in

2022. It shows that the Philippines has autism rates of 81.8 per 10,000 people or 1 in 122 people. The figures are alarming.

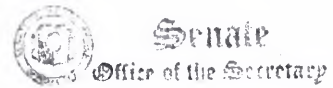
Recognizing the need to strengthen and promote the optimal health and well-being of people with autism, this proposed measure seeks the establishment of a center for autism which will focus on improving the quality of life of children and adults with autism. The national government's support and commitment are badly needed to improve the quality of life of people with autism.

In this light, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.



JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

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

1 Section 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby recognized that autism remains
2 to be unknown in the Philippines because of the lack of government support. Until
3 now, autistic individual belongs to the marginalized sectors of Philippine society,
4 preventing their total rehabilitation, self-development and self-reliance.

5 Sec. 2. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act, the terms below shall
6 be construed to mean, except where explicitly indicated or where the text clearly
7 indicates otherwise as follows:

8 a) *Autism* - is a developmental disability that appears during the first three
9 years of life; the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the
10 brain; autism and its associated behaviors occur in approximately 15 of every 10,000
11 individuals;

12 b) *Disability* - shall mean 1) a physical or mental impairment to substantially
13 limits one or more psychological, physiological or anatomical function of an individual
14 or activities of such individual; 2) a record of such an impairment; or 3) being
15 regarded as having such an impairment;

16 c) *Disabled Gifted* - persons who demonstrate superior performance
17 capabilities in intellectual, creative, specific academic areas, leadership, or in the arts
18 in spite of physical, sensory or psychological disabilities;

1 d) *Disabled Worker* - means a worker whose earning capacity is impaired by
2 mental, physical, or sensory deficiency or injury;

3 e) *Handicap* - refers to a disadvantage for given individual, resulting from an
4 impairment or disability that limits or prevents the function of activity, that is
5 considered normal given the age and sex of the individual;

6 f) *Impairment* - is any loss, diminution or aberration of psychological,
7 physiological, or anatomical structure or function;

8 g) *Indigent patient* - a disabled person whose level of income falls below the
9 poverty threshold;

10 h) *Rehabilitation* - an integrated approach to physical, psychological, cultural,
11 spiritual, educational, or vocational, measures that create conditions for individual to
12 attain the highest possible level of functional ability; and,

13 i) *Special Education (SPED)* - that type of education specifically designed for
14 learners with special needs who cannot profit maximally from regular education such
15 that they require trained personnel, modifications in the curricula, teaching methods,
16 instructional materials and adaptations in facilities equipment.

17 Sec. 3. *Creation of a Center for Autism.* - There is hereby created a Center for
18 Autism which shall be tasked to perform the following functions:

- 19 1. Formulate and implement an integrated and comprehensive master
- 20 2. Create a diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitation clinic;
- 21 3. Provide vocational training programs for autistic adults;
- 22 4. Provide free diagnosis and rehabilitation services to indigent autistic;
- 23 5. Provide continuing training programs for teachers, therapists, medical;
- 24 6. Provide other services such as counseling, orientation and referral;
- 25 7. Increase public awareness and concern on autism by spearheading
26 advocacy programs.

27 Sec. 4. *Governing Board, Composition, Term, Functions.* - There is hereby
28 created a National Autism Board referred as to the Board, which shall be under the
29 Office of the President. The Board shall govern the Center for Autism and shall be
30 composed of the following:

- 31 1. One (1) representative from the Department of Health, who shall sit as
32 Chairperson;

- 1 2. One (1) representative from the Department of Education who shall sit as
2 the Vice-Chairperson;
- 3 3. One (1) representative from the Department of Social Welfare and
4 Development as Member;
- 5 4. Two (2) representatives from the National Council for the Welfare of
6 Disabled Persons as Members;
- 7 5. Two (2) representatives from the Autism Society of the Philippines as
8 Members;
- 9 6. Two (2) representatives from the Parents of Children and Adults with
10 Autism as Members.

11 Sec. 5. *Secretariat.* - The Board shall have a Secretariat under an Executive
12 Officer who shall be appointed by the President. The Executive Officer shall manage
13 the day-to-day operations of the Board and shall be assisted by a Deputy Executive
14 Officer who shall likewise be appointed by the President. The Executive Officer shall
15 have the following powers and functions:

- 16 1. Execute, administer and implement the policies and measures approved by
17 the Board;
- 18 2. Direct and supervise the affairs and operations of the Board;
- 19 3. Submit within thirty (30) days after the close of every calendar year an
20 annual report to the Board and such other reports it may require;
- 21 4. Submit an annual budget and such supplementary budgets as may be
22 necessary to the Board for its consideration and approval;
- 23 5. Represent the Board in all transactions with other offices, agencies,
24 instrumentalities of government and with all persons and other entities,
25 public or private, domestic or foreign; and,
- 26 6. Appoint, subject to confirmation of the Board, and discipline in accordance
27 with Civil Service laws, rules and regulations, the officers and personnel
28 below the level of Deputy Executive Officer.

29 The Deputy Executive Officer shall perform the following functions:

- 30 1. Assist the Executive Officer in the discharge of his powers and functions;
- 31 2. Act as the Executive Officer during the Executive Officer's absence; and ,

1 3. Discharge such other powers and functions as may be required by the
2 Executive Officer and the Board.

3 *Sec. 6. Appropriations.* - For the initial operating expenses of the Center, the
4 amount of Five Million Pesos (5,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated from the
5 available funds of the Office of the President. Thereafter, it shall submit to the
6 Department of Budget and Management, its proposed budget for inclusion in the
7 General Appropriations Act.

8 *Sec. 7. Transitory Provisions.* -Within the period of one hundred and eighty
9 (180) days after the approval of this Act, the Board constituted shall start its
10 operation. All other government offices having functions similar to the Board shall
11 then cease to perform such functions. Henceforth, these functions shall be deemed
12 transferred to the Board.

13 *Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Board in consultation with
14 appropriates agencies from the private and government sectors
15 shall issue guidelines and prescribe rules and regulations within one hundred (120)
16 days after the effectivity of this Act which shall be published in two (2) newspapers
17 of general circulation. A copy of such guidelines, rules and regulations shall be
18 furnished the Congress of the Philippines.

19 *Sec. 9. Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations
20 and other issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are
21 hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

22 *Sec. 10. Separability Clause.* - Should any provision of this Act, be declared
23 invalid or unconstitutional, no other provisions hereof be affected thereby.

24 *Sec. 11. Effectivity.* -This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,