

23 MAR -8 P5:39

**SENATE**  
S. No. 1986

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Introduced by **Senator Raffy T. Tulfo**

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**AN ACT PROMOTING GENDER-NEUTRAL UNIFORMS IN SCHOOLS,  
COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Providing gender-neutral uniform options is an important aspect of creating a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students. It allows them to move and express themselves freely and authentically without fear of discrimination or harassment.

Skirts for women and trousers for men have been used as identifiers to differentiate the two genders from one another for decades. In today's social climate, it is imperative that young women are given another alternative to the traditional skirted-uniform in order for them to feel comfortable and promote a gender-neutral environment.

While school uniform policy may seem relatively innocuous, it does have potential to fuel gender inequality. Uniform policies need to be developed in such a way that does not foster gender disadvantage and discrimination but encourages equity by extending gender-neutral options to students. In doing so, we ensure students and their parents are fully aware of the choices available and we increase the likelihood that students will wear what they feel most comfortable in. This too can boost self-esteem for girls facing body challenges and emulate psychological well-being.

Moreover, this is also in correlation with the yearly dengue outbreak in the country. Over 220,000 dengue cases were reported in the Philippines in the previous year. Our students require greater safety as classes also coincide with the rainy season where

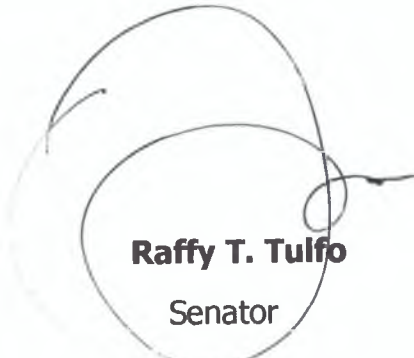
dengue cases are at peak. With all the other efforts the educational institutions take such as regular search and eradication of mosquito-breeding sites, self-protection is also a must. To save lives and mitigate infection, wearing long sleeves and pants is one of the easy precautions one may take to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes that spread dengue.

Riding a motorcycle can be an efficient mode of transportation for anyone, regardless of gender. After all, it can be an entirely different experience for girl students to ride a motorcycle wearing a skirt. To ease and ensure safety and comfort, wearing pants could be helpful. Wearing pants is a convenience that should also be available to women for ease of movement in all the activities that they do.

The right of young women to wear trousers to school needs to be a given, and not a privilege that needs to be argued for in each individual case. This act is an important step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment for all students. Therefore, this bill proposes to allow female students to wear trousers or pants in addition to or instead of skirts through the mandate to offer gender-neutral school uniform options in all public and private schools, at all levels. This will address a fair society demonstrating that female students wearing pants is acceptable whilst promoting both freedom of choice, gender equality and safety amongst the students.

In this regard, wearing a skirt as a girl's school uniform shall not be required in both public and private schools. All schools from elementary to college, shall make equal and flexible choices of school uniform for everyone.

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



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1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Pants for Her Act"

2 Sec 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote gender  
3 equality and to eliminate discrimination in all forms, including in the choice of uniforms  
4 in schools and universities. The convenience of wearing pants or trousers should be  
5 available for all. Women should not be restricted to wearing skirts as their choice of  
6 uniform in schools, colleges, or universities.

7 Sec 3. *Option to wear pants for female students.* – All schools, colleges, and  
8 universities shall provide female students a pants option for their uniform, in addition to  
9 the traditional skirt.

10 Sec 4. *Implementation.* – The Department of Education and the Commission on  
11 Higher Education, in coordination with school and university administrators, shall issue  
12 the necessary rules and guidelines for the implementation of this Act within six months  
13 from the effectivity of this Act.

14 Sec 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or  
15 unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected shall remain valid and in force.

16 Sec 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, executive order, or rules and regulations that  
17 are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

1            Sec 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication  
2 in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*