

23 MAY 23 A9:57

**SENATE**

S. No. 2228

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by **SENATOR CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

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**AN ACT**  
**REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE**  
**STUDENTS TO PLANT TWO (2) TREES EACH AS A CIVIC DUTY FOR**  
**ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION, AND APPROPRIATING**  
**FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Constitution, at its heart, recognizes the fundamental roles that both the youth and the environment play in the nation's present and future. It outlines the youth's crucial role in nation-building and their holistic development<sup>1</sup>, alongside the State's commitment to secure a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature<sup>2</sup>.

To fulfill the said constitutional mandates, the bill seeks to require all graduating senior high school and college students to plant two (2) trees each as a civic duty for environment protection and preservation. This promotes a unique synergy between these two core constitutional mandates by involving the youth - our nation's future - in tangible efforts towards environmental conservation. With an estimated 2 million students graduating from senior high school and college annually, the Act could potentially add about 4 million trees to our forest cover each year, fostering an environment-conscious mindset in our young citizens, while significantly contributing to reforestation.

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<sup>1</sup> The Philippine Constitution (1987), Article II, Section 13.

<sup>2</sup> The Philippine constitution (1987), Article II, Section 16.

Our forests, integral to the country's ecological balance, are experiencing a decline at an alarming rate, with the Forest Management Bureau reporting an annual loss of approximately 47,000 hectares. These forests shield us from natural disasters, ensure our water and food security, shelter diverse ecosystems, and preserve our rich indigenous traditions. It is, therefore, a matter of urgency that we restore our forest cover, not just for environmental integrity, but also for our survival and sustainability.

As we are now undergoing the UN Decade of Ecological Restoration, this legislation serves as a significant step in our battle against climate change and our pursuit of sustainable development. It nurtures in our youth a sense of responsibility, encouraging their active engagement in crucial environmental and sustainability initiatives.

This is a counterpart measure of HB No. 978 filed by Rep. Mark Go, the Chairperson of the Committee on Higher and Technical Education in the House of Representatives.

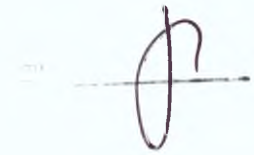
In view of the foregoing, I recommend the approval of this bill.

  
**CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

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

**ARTICLE I  
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1  
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3 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Graduating Students  
4 for Reforestation Act of 2023".

5 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to protect  
6 and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in  
7 accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Towards this end, the State shall  
8 promote and pursue reforestation programs and encourage tree plantings a means  
9 of involving the youth in public and civic affairs.

10 Sec. 3. *Tree-planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation* – All  
11 graduating students from senior high school, and college shall be required to plant  
12 at least two (2) trees as a mandatory prerequisite for their graduation. The tree-  
13 planting activity shall be their first act of public service as they enter the country's  
14 labor force.

1           Sec. 4. *Location.*- The trees to be planted under this Act shall be located in  
2 suitable lands and areas as determined by the Department of Environment and  
3 Natural Resources (DENR) and local government units, in coordination with schools,  
4 colleges and universities.

5           Sec. 5. *Preference for Indigenous Species.* – The species of trees to be  
6 planted should be appropriate to the location, climate and topography of the area  
7 with preference for the planting of indigenous species.

8           Sec. 6. *Partner Agencies and Stakeholders* – The Department of Education  
9 (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall implement the  
10 provisions of this Act, in partnership with the following agencies:

- 11           a. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- 12           b. Department of Agriculture (DA);
- 13           c. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- 14           d. Department of Science and Technology (DOST); and
- 15           e. National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCP)

16 The responsible of these agencies shall include:

- 17           1. Establishment of nursery and preparation of seedlings;
- 18           2. Site identification and preparation;
- 19           3. Technical support and extension service; and
- 20           4. Monitoring and evaluation.

21           Sec. 7. *Provision of Seedlings.* – The Community Environment and Natural  
22 Resources Office (CENRO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resource  
23 (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA), in partnership with local  
24 government units (LGUs) throughout the Philippines, shall maintain a seedling bank

1 and will serve as ready source of seedlings to be provided to senior high schools,  
2 colleges and universities for the implementation of this Act.

3        *Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DepEd and CHED, in  
4 coordination with DENR and DILG, and in consultation with other agencies, shall  
5 promulgate and issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary to  
6 implement this Act within sixty (60) days after its approval.

7        *Sec. 9. Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of  
8 this Act shall be included in the budgets of the implementing departments/agencies  
9 in the annual General Appropriations Act.

10        *Sec. 10. Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be declared  
11 unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full  
12 force and effect

13        *Sec. 11. Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,  
14 proclamations or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions  
15 of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

16        *Sec. 12. Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
17 complete publication in at least two newspapers of general publication.

*Approved,*