



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. **5834**



Introduced by Representative Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The important role of guidance counselors to the personal, social, and academic development of children, especially those enrolled in public elementary and high schools, is a fact beyond question. Guidance counseling helps students to build healthy interpersonal relationships, guides them in their career selection, and helps them to effectively manage and deal with emotional conflict and personal problems at their stage of development.

Republic Act No. 9258, otherwise known as the “Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004” recognizes the importance of advancing and protecting the guidance and counseling profession by establishing preventive regulatory mechanisms and standards of practice. However, its goal of institutionalizing measures to guarantee “world-class and internationally recognized” professional services comes at the expense of meeting the need for such services by the public.

The country suffers from a severe shortage of registered guidance counselors (RGCs). The Department of Education requires public and private elementary and high schools to hire one guidance counselor for every five hundred (500) students. But as of July 2017, the Philippines only has 3, 220 registered guidance counselors since the first batch of licensure examinees in 2008. The low number of RGCs has been attributed to the rigid standards set forth under R.A. 9258, particularly for licensure examinees. While a bachelor’s degree is enough to take the Licensure Examinations for Teachers (LET), a master’s degree is mandatory to take the licensure examination for guidance counselors.

To address this problem, there is a need to relax the requirements for examination as provided under Section 13 of Republic Act No. 9258. Furthermore, it is indispensable for empirically-based guidelines to be set for the determination of optimal guidance counselor to student ratios in public schools which can be adequately provided by the government, taking into account the need for the services as well as the availability of financial and human resources of the State.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



JOCELYN SY LIMKAICHONG



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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE PRACTICE OF GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELING, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 13 OF
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9258, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “GUIDANCE
AND COUNSELING ACT OF 2004”**

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

SECTION 1. *Qualification for Licensure Examination.* – Section 13 of Republic Act No. 9258, otherwise known as the “Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004” is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 13. *Qualification for Examination.* - In order to qualify for the examination, an applicant must, at the time of filing the application be:

- (a) a citizen of the republic of the Philippines or a foreigner whose country has reciprocity with the Philippines in the practice of Guidance and Counseling;
- (b) has not been convicted of any offense involving moral turpitude by a competent court; and
- (c) holder of a Bachelor's Degree in Guidance and Counseling or in other Allied Disciplines, **INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO PSYCHOLOGY, SOCIAL WORK, AND OTHER BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES.**

SEC. 2. *Hiring of additional school-based guidance counselors.* – The Secretary of Education shall ensure that there is sufficient number of guidance counselors in every public elementary and high school. To meet the recommended guidance counselor to student ratios, the Department of Education shall ensure the availability of adequate plantilla positions for such purpose.

SEC. 3. *Recommended Guidance Counselor to Student Ratios.* – The Secretary of Education shall, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, issue the necessary guidelines for the determination of optimal guidance counselor to student ratios for public elementary and high schools.

SEC. 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any instrumentalities or entities or circumstances is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, administrative orders or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,