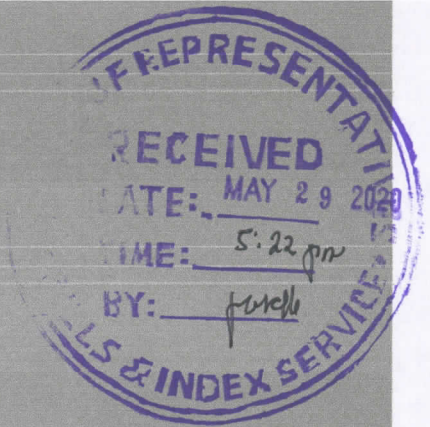


Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

House Resolution No. 928



Introduced by Hon. RONNIE L. ONG

**RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO IMMEDIATELY POSTPONE THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR DUE TO THE COVID-19 THREAT AND TO PROVIDE MECHANISM TO RETOOL TEACHERS AND SUPPORT THE "NO WORK, NO PAY" STAFF**

**WHEREAS**, it is the duty of the State to protect the people, including our students and school personnel, and to promote their health, pursuant to Sections 5, 13 and 15 of Article II of the 1987 Constitution;

**WHEREAS**, at the same time, it is the duty of the State to:

- 1) protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels (Article XIV, Section 1);
- 2) take into account regional and sectoral needs and conditions [Article XIV, Section 5 (1)]; and
- 3) enhance the right of teachers to professional advancement and protect non-academic personnel [Article XIV, Section 5 (4)];

**WHEREAS**, under the Learning Continuity Plan (LCP) of the Department of Education (DepEd), which was approved by the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force, classes shall be conducted on August 24, 2020 to April 30, 2021, with learning delivery options such as but not limited to face-to-face, blended learnings, distance learnings, and homeschooling and other modes of delivery being implemented depending on the local COVID Risk Severity Classification and compliance with minimum health standards;

**WHEREAS**, the decision of DepEd to open classes, while done with the noble intent of ensuring continued learning that complies with minimum health standards, will, unfortunately, have the following dire consequences:

- 1) The urban poor and the *probinsyano* students in far-flung areas, many of whom do not have access to reliable e-learning gadgets like smartphones, tablets and laptops, and stable internet connection, will be left behind, will not be able to enroll, or will not be able to make the most of the online classes;
- 2) Parents and guardians, especially in low to middle income families, will have the unnecessary additional financial and emotional burden of supporting the academic needs of their children despite the pressing need to pay their bills and to put food on the table and despite losing their jobs or having their income significantly diminished due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 3) Teachers, who are also affected by the pandemic, are now being forced to offer online classes without the proper tools and training for the sake of having income; and
- 4) Public and private schools, which, under the previous status quo, have inadequate facilities, tools and personnel, will be forced to abruptly shift to



blended or flexible learning system without addressing the pressing factors affecting their delivery of education;

**WHEREAS**, the opening of classes this year through the one-size-fits-all blended learning approach, in other words, will be unfair to many underprivileged students and will greatly affect the overall quality of our education, not to mention that the COVID-19 threat on the safety of our students and teachers remains the biggest problem of the country and is still as real as ever without a cure and a vaccine in place;

**WHEREAS**, experiences of other countries, like France and South Korea with better health systems, showed students or teachers being infected by COVID-19 when schools reopened;

**WHEREAS**, despite the big public clamor against it, DepEd has remained steadfast in opening classes by August 24, to the detriment of many families that are confused, are fearing for the safety of their children and are now being asked to pay for tuition and fees by private schools that have already announced their enrollment despite the situation not normalizing yet;

**WHEREAS**, while Republic Act No. 7797 mandates that the School Year shall start on "first Monday of June but not later than the last day of August" (hence, the August 24 opening of classes), the current state of calamity is an exception; and

**WHEREAS**, there is enough legal basis to postpone the school year, to wit:

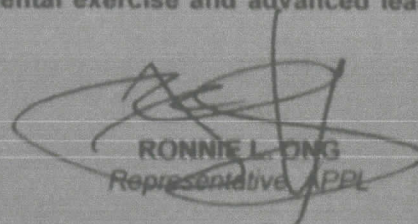
- 1) The Bayanihan To Heal as One Act authorizes the President to undertake other necessary measures, which may include the postponement of classes, to carry out the declared policies to address the emergency;
- 2) The President, pursuant to his power to proclaim a state of calamity and to his residual powers inherent to his office or connected to his oath, has the power to postpone the current school year; and
- 3) The Secretary of Education, under the Administrative Code of 1987, has the prerogative to order the closure of public and private schools nationwide by reason of public calamity or emergency.

**NOW, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the House of Representatives strongly urges the Department of Education to, once and for all, issue a pronouncement on the postponement of School Year 2020-2021, without any exception, absent a cure and vaccine for COVID-19 and in view of the economic burden on parents/guardians and the unpreparedness of the educational system nationwide for online learning.

**RESOLVED FURTHER**, that, the following recommendations should be considered and implemented by DepEd while postponement is in effect:

- 1) Retool teachers, update systems and conduct dry runs to ensure effective online classes nationwide;
- 2) Subsidize public and private school teaching and non-teaching personnel, who are under a "no work, no pay" scheme, under a special compensation or social amelioration program;
- 3) Promote and support schools, with their community of parents, to offer instead elective and non-credit courses, tutorials, or home study modules for the continuous mental exercise and advanced learning of the student.

Approved,

  
**RONNEL ONG**  
Representative APPL