

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

3495

House Bill No. _____

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
RECEIVED	
DATE:	06 SEP 2016
TIME:	2:51 PM
BY:	REM
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Introduced by Honorable FREDERICK W. SIAO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to mandate swimming as a subject in the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum and an integral part of the overall strategy to reduce the incidence of death from drowning during natural calamities or recreational aquatic activities.

The Philippines is an archipelago consisting of an estimated 7,107 islands with a coastline of about 36,289 kilometers. Besides the different bodies of water surrounding the country, different types of natural water forms within the Philippines such as rivers, lakes, bays and waterfalls collectively known as inland waters. Moreover, the country is often visited by typhoons at an average of 20-25 annually causing floods, flooded areas and flash floods.

"Global Report on Drowning: Preventing a Leading Killer" is a report published by the World Health Organization (WHO) that is dedicated exclusively to drowning. It contains information about drowning and drowning prevention and emphasizes that drowning is a serious and neglected public health threat claiming the lives of 372,000 people a year worldwide.

The report says that wherever there is water, there is a threat of drowning. The Philippines as an archipelago with waters within and around and frequently visited by typhoons is indeed a place where there is a high risk of drowning. Hence, drowning prevention measures is a must.


On the Lifesaving Position Statement published by the International Life Saving Federation entitled "Swimming and Water Safety Education," it cited the study made by UNICEF Bangladesh revealing that possessing a basic level of water safety knowledge coupled with a basic level of swimming skill is sufficient to prevent most drowning incidents.

The United Nations Children's Fund survey disclosed that drowning is the second leading cause of death among Filipino children aged 14 years and below, and the fourth leading cause of death from injury in the Philippines. Acknowledging these facts, the bill proposes that the K-12 basic education curriculum must include swimming lessons, water safety and safe rescue skills.

The global report suggests that all countries must develop a national water safety plan. This bill seeks to develop a drowning prevention plan that will serve as the master plan for schools and government agencies in formulating the different programs and projects that will help reduce the risk of drowning.

The global report further says that an effective drowning prevention programs and policies may only be achieved through understanding the way communities live around water, thus, it is necessary to take into consideration the circumstances in the locality where the programs and policies shall be implemented. In line with this, the bill seeks to develop a community action plan for each local government units.

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



FREDERICK W. SIAO
Lone District, Iligan City

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **3495**

Introduced by Honorable FREDERICK W. SIAO

AN ACT
MANDATING SWIMMING AS A SUBJECT IN THE K-12 BASIC EDUCATION
CURRICULUM AND AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE OVERALL STRATEGY TO
REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF DEATH FROM DROWNING DURING NATURAL
CALAMITIES OR RECREATIONAL AQUATIC ACTIVITIES

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act may be cited as the "*Drowning Prevention Act.*"

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the right to life and health of every Filipino and hence it shall protect the life as well as instill health consciousness among them through an overall strategy to reduce the incidence of drowning during natural calamities like coastal floods, river floods and flash floods and recreational aquatic activities.

Sec. 3. *Swimming as Mandatory Subject.* – The Department of Education shall, in coordination with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), include swimming lessons in the K-12 basic education curriculum of all private and public elementary and secondary schools in the core academic area of Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) as mandatory subject. The Department of Education shall determine the length and in which grade the swimming lessons must be undertaken by the children as part of their academic requirement.

Sec. 4. *Water Safety and Safe Rescue Skills.* – A trained instructor or certified lifeguard shall conduct the swimming lessons which shall include water

safety and safe rescue skills. The swimming lessons shall be conducted in a safe and controlled environment.

Sec. 5. Drowning Prevention Plan. – Pursuant to the mandate of Republic Act No. 10121, also known as the "*Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010*," to integrate disaster risk reduction education into the school curricula, the NDRRMC shall develop a drowning prevention plan framework which shall serve as a guide for all private and public elementary and secondary schools, government agencies, including local government units, in formulating their programs and projects to reduce the risk of drowning incidents in the country.

The drowning prevention plan shall contain, among others, the drowning risk factors and the corresponding preventive measures. The information and data contained in the plan must be updated regularly. The drowning prevention plan shall be issued within one hundred eighty (180) days from the approval of this Act. The amount necessary to cover the formulation and publication of the plan shall be charged against the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund.

Sec. 6. Additional Mandate of NDRRMC. – In addition to its existing mandate, the NDRRMC shall exercise the following:

- a. Formulate and regularly update a comprehensive drowning prevention plan;
- b. Promulgate rules and regulations as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act without prejudice to any existing regulations on water safety;
- c. Monitor and oversee the strict implementation of this Act;
- d. Coordinate the programs and projects of all government agencies to effectively prevent drowning;
- e. Conduct information dissemination to prevent drowning;
- f. Assist the LGUs in crafting the community action plan through its Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office;

g. Inspect the premises of any establishment, including condominiums and subdivisions, offering water recreational activities through its duly authorized representatives;

h. Research relevant information on drowning to understand the full extent and circumstances of drowning, the risks involved and best practices in the world to prevent drowning and all other information necessary for the updating of the drowning prevention plan; and

i. Exercise the powers and perform the functions necessary to attain the objectives of this Act.

Sec. 7. Community Action Plan. – Each local government unit (LGU) shall formulate and design a community action plan in accordance with the drowning prevention plan. The action plan shall identify the circumstances surrounding the drowning in the locality, if any, or the areas in the locality where there is a risk of drowning. The action plan shall include training on first aid and basic life support and seminar on drowning prevention.

The chief executive of each LGU shall ensure that the action plan shall be formulated and implemented in the respective locality.

Sec. 8. Reportorial Requirements. – The NDRRMC shall submit to the President of the Philippines and to Congress an annual report of the policies, programs, activities and projects relative to the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the NDRRMC shall promulgate the rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act. The implementing rules and regulations issued pursuant to this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Sec. 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,