

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6574



Introduced by Representatives
MACNELL M. LUSOTAN and ROLANDO A. UY

AN ACT
INTEGRATING MANDATORY SWIMMING AND SURVIVAL LESSONS AND
WATER SAFETY IN K-12 BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Children are the most important population group in Philippines, and likely to be the most vulnerable. When typhoon Yolanda struck the Philippines in 2013, it affected the lives of six million children, leaving thousands of helpless children traumatized and worse, dead.¹

To date, the Philippines remains highly susceptible to natural hazards, including typhoons, storm surges and flash floods and more than 35 million children² remain exposed to these natural hazards increasing the risk of losing their lives.

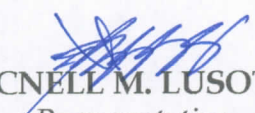
The importance of protecting our children cannot be overemphasized. The 191 natural hazard events in the Philippines between 2003 and 2013, placed the Philippines to have the highest frequency of natural hazards in Southeast Asia in the past decade.³ Moreover, children are exposed to accidental drowning due to the simple fact that the Philippines is an archipelagic country.

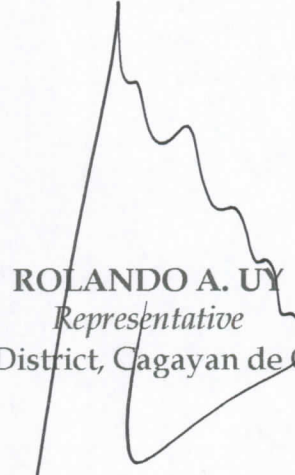
From 2006 to 2013, an annual average of 3,276 incident of drowning was reported in the Philippines. Of these incidents, 40% involved or equivalent to about 160 children are losing their lives to drowning every year.⁴ Indeed, there is a need to look after the safety and survival of no less than 35 million children in the Philippines.

Therefore, our children must be equipped with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to survive calamities and prevent accidental drowning, for it is not only the duty of our country to protect all children, but every children's right as well.

This proposed Act seek to integrate mandatory swimming and survival lessons and water safety in K-12 basic education curriculum.

¹ Protecting Children in Emergencies by Law in the Philippines, GADRRRES Comprehensive School Safety Policy Case Studies Series, 2017 available at www.gadrrres.net/resources
² An estimate of total number of children under 15 years old as January 2020, available at CIA Fact Book.
³ *Id.*, at 1.
⁴ Drowning Data from 2006-2013, Philippine Statistics Authority.


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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

6574
HOUSE BILL NO. _____

Introduced by Representatives
MACNELL M. LUSOTAN and ROLANDO A. UY

AN ACT
INTEGRATING MANDATORY SWIMMING AND SURVIVAL LESSONS AND
WATER SAFETY IN K-12 BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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

Section 1. *Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “2020 Mandatory Children Swimming and Survival Lessons and Water Safety.”

Section 2. *Declaration of State Policy and Principle.* — It shall be the policy of the State to provide every child education on child safety, including survival, swimming lessons and water safety. The State shall establish and implement a comprehensive and strategic program of action to provide all children with education on child swimming and survival lessons and water safety consistent with the principles on survival and development on child participation and the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) on prevention of drowning as well as with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, t.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* — For the purposes of this Act, the following shall refer to:

(a) *Child* – refers to a person below eighteen (18) years of age or those over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition as defined in Republic Act No. 7610 or the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.

(b) *Child with Special Needs* – refers to a child with a developmental or physical disability as defined in Republic Act No. 10165 or the Foster Care Act of 2012.

(c) *Child-Friendly Spaces* – refer to spaces where communities create nurturing environments for children to engage in free and structured play, recreation, leisure and learning activities. The child-friendly space may provide health, nutrition, and psychosocial support, and other services or activities which will restore their normal functioning.

(d) *Basic Education* — as defined in Republic Act No. 10533, basic education is intended to meet basic learning needs of children which provides the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based. It encompasses kindergarten, elementary and secondary education as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs.

(e) *Enhanced Basic Education Program* – as defined in Republic Act No. 10533, the enhanced basic education program encompasses at least one (1) year of kindergarten education, six (6) years of elementary education, and six (6) years of secondary education, in that sequence. Secondary education includes four (4) years of junior high school and two (2) years of senior high school education.

Kindergarten education shall mean one (1) year of preparatory education for children at least five (5) years old as a prerequisite for Grade I.

Elementary education refers to the second stage of compulsory basic education which is composed of six (6) years. The entrant age to this level is typically six (6) years old.

Secondary education refers to the third stage of compulsory basic education. It consists of four (4) years of junior high school education and two (2) years of senior high school education. The entrant age to the junior and senior high school levels are typically twelve (12) and sixteen (16) years old, respectively.

(hereinafter referred to as “K-12”)

(f) *Disasters* – as defined in Republic Act No. 10121, refer to a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic, or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of: the exposure to a hazard; the conditions of vulnerability that are present; and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences. Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and other negative effects on human, physical, mental and social well-being, together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, social and economic disruption, and environmental degradation.

(g) *Emergency* – refers to unforeseen or sudden occurrence, especially danger, demanding immediate action as defined in Republic Act No. 10121.

(h) *Hazard* – refers to a dangerous phenomenon, substance, human activity or condition that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihood and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage as defined in Republic Act No. 10121.

(i) *State of Calamity* – refers to a condition involving mass casualty and/or major damages to property, disruption of means of livelihoods, roads, and normal way of life of people in the affected areas as a result of occurrence of natural or human-induced hazard as defined in Republic Act No. 10121.

Section 4. *Comprehensive Swimming, Survival and Water Safety Education for Children* – The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination and consultation with National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall formulate a Comprehensive Swimming, Survival and Water Safety Education for Children (“Program”). The Program shall be used as the basis for integrating the same to K-12 curriculum.

The DepEd shall engage all relevant government agencies and stakeholders for the implementation of the Program. Local government units (LGUs) shall integrate the same in their local development and education program.

Section 5. *Adoption of World Health Organization's Guidelines on Prevention of Drowning* – In formulating and implementing the Program, the DepEd, in coordination and consultation with the NDRRMC, TESDA and relevant government agencies, shall adopt, when applicable, WHO's implementation guide on Prevention of Drowning.

Section 6. *The Program as Mandatory Subject* - The DepEd shall include and integrate the Program, as a mandatory subject, in the K-12 curriculum of all private and public elementary and secondary schools. The DepEd shall determine the length and in which grade the Program must be undertaken by the children as part of their academic requirement.

Section 7. *Training of Children Swimming, Survival and Water Safety Instructors* – The TESDA in coordination and consultation with DepEd shall formulate, conduct and provide child-responsive training program dedicated to develop instructors specialized on children swimming and survival lessons and water safety.

The training program shall include, but not limited to:

- (a) Skills on teaching children on proper procedures and measures on swimming and survival lessons and water safety; and
- (b) Skills on training children on swimming skills, survival competencies and basic rescue skills.

Section 8. *Appropriations* – The Secretary of Education shall include in the DepEd program the operationalization of the Program, the initial funding of which shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued implementation of the Program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in consultation and coordination with NDRRMC and TESDA shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 10. *Interpretation Clause*. – The provisions of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations shall be liberally construed in favor of the best interest of the child.

Section 11. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 12. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 13. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,