

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1696**



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**Introduced by HONORABLE LUIS RAYMUND F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

There is a constant and pressing need to improve the status of our education sector. Recently, the State has undertaken aggressive steps in pursuit of an education sector that is at par with the rest of the world. For instance, we have adopted the K-12 program to ensure job-ready and internationally competent graduates. We have also synced our academic calendar with that of the international community's. Currently, bills proposing to increase the salary of our public school teachers are now pending in both Houses, as well as measures to set a fixed number of students per public classroom for easier class management and a more conducive learning environment.

This Representation now invites us to pay attention on an equally important, but often neglected aspect of education - the holistic well-being of our teachers. Teachers serve as the second parents of our children. They do not only impart academic lessons; they supervise the social interactions of our children, ingrain traditional Filipino values in our youth, and influence their character development.

The unfortunate truth is that teachers in our jurisdiction are often underpaid and overworked, potentially contributing to high levels of stress, burnout, and even depression. Additionally, stress has physical manifestations such as high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcer, stroke, migraine, inflammation, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, low immunity, skin problems, headaches, back pain, and joint problems that can all be attributed - either directly or indirectly — to the stress hormone cortisol.

The Philippines has not conducted a comprehensive survey on the mental wellness of our teachers. The absence of localized data prevents us from effectively addressing this issue. Hence, this bill proposes the immediate conduct of a five-year pilot study that looks extensively into the well-being of our teachers. From the results of such study, the Department of Health (DOH) is mandated to up with innovative solutions to teachers' stress. These may include programs on workplace wellness, social emotional learning, and stress management, among others.

We cannot expect unhappy, stressed, and professionally dissatisfied teachers to provide a responsive, caring, and conducive learning environment to our children. The State must undertake necessary steps to ensure that its youth are in safe hands. In consideration of the foregoing premises, the swift passage of this bill is humbly sought.



**LUIS RAYMUND F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.**

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**AN ACT**  
**PROMOTING TEACHER HEALTH AND WELLNESS BY REQUIRING THE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO CARRY OUT A STUDY TO ADD TO THE**  
**SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE ON REDUCING TEACHER STRESS AND**  
**INCREASING TEACHER RETENTION AND WELL-BEING, AND FOR OTHER**  
**PURPOSES.**

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

**CHAPTER I**  
**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** — This Act shall be known and cited as the "Teachers' Health and Wellness Act".

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** — The State avows to promote the rights and welfare of its labor force, and to exercise sufficient powers to safeguard their dignity, health, and professional growth. The Constitution likewise provides that all citizens shall have access to quality education. In this regard, the State is compelled to ensure that its teachers are not only physically healthy, but also mentally sound to perform their tasks as educators, and to meet the rigorous demands of class management.

**SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.** — As used in this Act:

- a) **Complementary Health Approach.** — The term "complementary health approach" includes integrative health care, adjunctive health care, and functional medicine.
- b) **Secretary.** — The term refers to the Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH); and
- c) **Teachers.** — The term refers to those publicly or privately employed to teach at least one subject in primary, secondary, tertiary, post-graduate or vocational school.

SECTION 4. Mandate of the Law. — The State seeks to understand the current mental condition of our teachers and come up with measures to ensure that they are in optimal physical and mental health to provide quality education to our youth. The State also endeavors to maintain a classroom environment that is safe and most conducive to students' learning and the teachers' professional growth.

In this regard, the Department of Health (DOH) shall conduct a five-year pilot study that will add to the scientific knowledge on reducing teacher stress, teacher turnover rate, and improving their overall well-being. The study must include a national survey by the DOH to determine the stress level of teachers, and their common stressors.

The Teacher Health and Wellness Act also supports:

- 1) Mentoring and induction programs during the school year and teacher preservice that improve teacher well-being;
- 2) Organizational interventions such as principal training programs that reduce stress through supervisor/peer support and increasing opportunities for teachers to participate in professional learning communities, teacher leadership positions and decision-making regarding school interventions and management;
- 3) Teacher residency programs that provide mental health and psychological support;
- 4) Complementary health approaches, such as mindfulness meditation, that improve teacher performance;
- 5) School reorganization that creates the conditions to facilitate the transmission and sharing of knowledge among teachers; and
- 6) Other innovative evidence-based approaches that reduce stress and increase well-being in the teaching profession, which may include increased compensation.

SECTION 5. Appropriations. — Ten million pesos (PhP 10,000,000.00) is hereby allotted from the budget of the Department of Education (DepEd) every year for the first five (5) years of its implementation.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause. If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts or portions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. — All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,