

14 December 2018

SENATOR FRANCIS "CHIZ" ESCUDERO
Chairperson
Committee on Education
GSIS Building, Financial Center
J.W. Diokno Blvd., Pasay City

DSWD-CENTRAL RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MGT. DIVISION
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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Constitution Hills, Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-6033 / 931-8101 loc. 301, to 303
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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Chairperson Escudero:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development supports Senate Bill No. 2028 entitled: An Act to Improve Access to Preschool, Primary, and Secondary Education of Homeless Children and Youth or the "Educational Success for Homeless Children and Youth", introduced by Senator Nancy Binay.

To contribute to the bill's enhancement, we are recommending the following:

1. **Sec. 2 – Declaration of Policy**

To include a sentence which will be read as follows:

"It is declared the policy of the State in conformity with the mandate of the Constitution, to promote and make quality education accessible to all Filipino citizens."

2. **Sec. 3 – Definition of Terms**

2.1 On letter (c): "Homeless children and youth", Item No. 2 (i)

a. To delete the following Items:

⊕ (II) are living in emergency or transitional shelters because it will overlap with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10821 or the "Children's Emergency Relief and Protect Act" which mandated the DSWD in the formulation of a "Comprehensive Emergency Program for Children (CEPC)". The Program shall be implemented immediately after the declaration of a national or local state of calamity or occurrence of any other emergency situation.

⊕ (III) are abandoned in hospitals; and (IV) are awaiting foster care placement, as it would complicate the definition of abandoned and those waiting foster care placement in other existing laws.

b. To include the age category/distinction for children and youth as defined by Republic Act No. 7610 or the "Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act" and Republic Act No. 8044 or the "Youth in Nation-Building Act", respectively which states:

"Children" refers to 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."

"Youth shall refer to those persons whose ages range from fifteen (15) to thirty (30) years old."

c. On letter (f): Unaccompanied youth

To expand the definition of "Unaccompanied youth" based on the definition of "Unaccompanied Children" of RA 10821, Section 3 (n) which states:

"Unaccompanied Children" refer to children who have been separated from both parents and other relatives, and who are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so."

3. Sec. 4 – Grants for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

3.1 On Item (C) 2, to include that the identification process for homeless children and youth are based on the existing Protocol for Reach Out which was developed by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) as part of the social preparation process.

3.2 On Item (C) 3, to designate the Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO) instead of establishing or designating an "Office of the Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth".

The proposed function of the Office is similar to the current tasks of the LSWDO in the provision of case management and psychosocial intervention to Children and Youth at Risk.

3.3 On Item (D), to include as one of the functions of the Coordinator/LSWDO are the monitoring of attendance and evaluation of the performance of homeless children and youth.

3.4 On Item (D) 5, to adopt the Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) System of DSWD or a similar mechanism to comply with the requirements of this provision.

The Family Tracing and Reunification System is a system development project which expedites the process of identification, documentation and locating of a loss/missing child for the purpose of reunification with his/her family or caregivers during emergency situations whether natural or man-made including disasters. It has three (3) components particularly: (1) Database Development; (2) Capability Building; and (3) Establishment of a Referral System (*Project Link: Family Tracing and Reunification System, 2016*).

For the Committee's consideration.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA

Secretary

Date: January 28, 2019