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**Honorable WIN GATCHALIAN**  
 Chairperson  
 Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture  
 Senate of the Philippines  
 Pasay City

**Dear Senator Gatchalian:**

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) **strongly supports Senate Bills Nos. 55, 69, 171, 329, 338, 540 and 804** which seek to institutionalize the inclusive education for children and youth with special needs and **Senate Bill Nos. 434 and 1150** which seek to establish Special Education Centers in public school divisions. These bills will be beneficial for Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSNs) to make quality education easily accessible to them.

To contribute to the bills enhancement, we are recommending the following:

1. Consolidate all bills into one.
2. Under **Sec. 3 – Objectives**
  - 2.1. Include in the identification of CYSNs, through a Child Find System, those who are twenty-four (24) to thirty-five (35) years old with mental ages of seventeen (17) years old and below.
  - 2.2. Ensure proper compliance of schools and other learning institutions with Republic Act No. 10627 or the “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013” for CYSNs to better integrate in classes.
3. Under **Sec. 6 of SBNs 55, 329, 338, 434, 540, and 804, Sec. 7 of SBN 69, Sec. 5 of SBN 171, and Sec. 8 of SBN 1150 – Functions of the Center**
  - 3.1. Consider using the Washington Classification of Functioning Disability in categorizing CYSNs.
  - 3.2. The Centers shall serve as independent living centers which will help CYSNs develop life skills to enable them to achieve a level of independent functioning to engage with their families and their communities. Modules on livelihood and entrepreneurial skills can also be integrated in curricula to help CYSNs become employable especially for those with mild to moderate disability.
  - 3.3. Include maintenance of a database of relevant information (e.g. training conducted, participants’ profile including age, gender and type of disabilities among others) and to conduct periodic review of programs and

activities in order to update the curricula or, if possible, process and impact evaluations of the different interventions being implemented.

4. **Under Sec. 9 of SBN 55, Sec. 9, letter (f) of SBN 69, Sec. 8, letter (f) of SBNS 338 and 804, Sec. 20 of SBNS 434, 171 and 540 and Sec. 19 of SBN 1150 – Local Government Unit (LGU) Participation**

Add a section mandating LGUs to provide support services to CYSNs and their families.

5. **Under Sec. 10 of SBNS 171, 329 and 540, Sec. 9 of SBN 434, and Sec. 11 of SBN 1150 – Authority of the Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary**

We recommend that the DepEd Secretary be given authority to give grants or enter into cooperative arrangements with LGUs since they have direct mandate and capability to ensure building of Centers in their jurisdiction.

6. **Under Sec. 15 of SBNS 55, 338 and 804, Sec. 16 of SBN 69, Sec. 12 of SBNS 171, 329, 540 and 1150, and Sec. 10 of SBN 434 - Continuing Research to Identify the Needs of CYSNs**

Include the conduct of an intensive assessment of DepEd's implementation of institutionalized Special Education (SPED) since 1997 to identify policy and implementation gaps. This would be a reliable basis in recalibrating the proposed legislative measures catering to children and youth with special needs.

7. **Under Sec. 18 of SBNS 55, 338, 434 and 804, Sec. 19 of SBN 69, and Sec. 15 of SBNS 171, 329, 540 and 1150 - Special Instructional Materials**

Other instructional materials that are used by teachers such as tablets, mobile LCD projectors or other technology based applications should support inclusion and should be accessible to CYSNs.

8. **Under Sec. 19 of SBN 55, Sec. 13 of SBN 69, Sec. 7 of SBNS 171, 329, 434 and 540, Sec. 12 of SBNS 338 and 804, and Sec. 9 of SBN 1150 - Hiring of Personnel and Staff**

Centers should also have registered social worker, medical aide and developmental paediatrician as personnels.

9. **Under Sec. 21 of SBN 55, Sec. 15 of SBN 69, Sec. 9 of SBNS 171, 329 and 540, Sec. 14 of SBN 804 and Sec. 16 of SBN 1150 – In-Service Training of Teachers, Administrators, Non-Teaching Personnel**

SPED teachers should be capacitated to be able to handle different types and/or multiple disabilities in one classroom setting especially those with intellectual disabilities.

**10. Under Sec. 24 of SBN 55, Sec. 20 of SBN 69, Sec. 19 of SBNs 171, 329, 338, 540 and 804, and Sec. 17 of SBN 434 – Parent, Sibling and Caregiver Education**

The training and education to be provided should also cover Disaster Preparedness to prepare the families and guardians of CYSNs for calamities.

**11. Under Sec. 25 of SBN 55, Sec. 22 of SBN 69, Sec. 21 of SBNs 171, 329, 338, 434, 540, and 804, and Sec. 20 of SBN 1150– Public Information, Education and Communication**

The information campaign should also focus on eliminating the stigma on CYSN. In addition, the campaign should also inculcate to the public that CYSNs are capable to function productively as part of the community.

**12. Under Sec. 26 of SBN 55, Sec. 23 of SBNs 69 and 540, Sec. 22 of SBNs 171, 329, 338, 434 and 804, and Sec. 21 of SBN 1150 – Appropriations**

Funds to be appropriated for this legislation must also cover the development of necessary resources such as SPED teachers, specialized learning materials, assistive devices, continuing capacity building, among others.

**13. General Comments:**

13.1. The proposed consolidated bill should seek to mainstream the rights of CYSNs to address problems of inclusivity, discrimination and lack of opportunity of CYSNs;

13.2. The definition and scope of CYSNs should incorporate special conditions such as physical, mental, developmental, behavioural/emotional and even sensory disability among others as all of these conditions deserve care and intervention;

13.3. Aside from relevant laws and international conventions, the Committee may look into the existing frameworks and strategies that could be used as reference to develop a “universal” framework for inclusive education in the Philippines such as Sustainable Development Goals, Philippine Development Plan, ASEAN Enabling Master Plan, DepEd Inclusive Education Framework and the National Early Learning Framework;

13.4. Consider the integration of Filipino Sign Language (FSL) in grade school curriculum to allow non-SPED students to understand and be sensitive to the condition of their hearing-impaired peers;


13.5. We suggest to use the term “disability or impairment” instead of “handicapped and mental retardation” in consideration of the “Incheon Strategy to make the Right Real for persons with disabilities in Asia and Pacific”.

13.6. We recommend to include the "Non-Handicapping Environment for Persons with Disabilities" currently implemented by the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA). The project aims to put together available resources in the community and improve people's attitudes to ensure inclusion of persons with disability in all levels of community activities, particularly the CYSNs education through this project. CYSNs shall be the focus of development by changing the society to ensure the promotion, protection and fulfillment of their rights to make it clear that it is society that meet the needs of CYSNs and no the other way around.

13.7. Lastly, we recommend that to ensure attaining 'inclusive education', there should be a provision in the consolidated bill on the regular program/activity of CYSNs together with 'regular' children. This will help CYSNs be exposed and develop their abilities to its full potential towards self-sufficiency and become effective partners in building our country. Furthermore, this will teach regular children to accept, embrace, treat, and help CYSNs as regular children who deserve love and acceptance by the people around them.

For the Committee's consideration.

Very truly yours,

  
ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA  
Secretary  
Date: MAR 02 2020