

10 January 2017

REPRESENTATIVE EMMELINE Y. AGLIPAY - VILLAR

Chairperson
Committee on Women and Gender Equality
House of Representatives
Quezon City

Dear Chairperson Aglipay - Villar:

This refers to House Bill Nos. 2651, 2793 and 4543 or the "Resource Development and Crisis Assistance for Women and Children Act of 2016" filed by Representatives Luis Jose Angel N. Campos Jr., Abigail Faye C. Ferriol – Pascual and Maximo B. Rodriguez Jr., respectively.

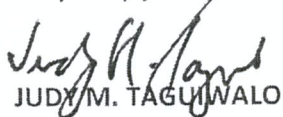
Our Department supports the intention of the bills to provide women and children with utmost support and assistance to protect their fundamental rights. However, the direct management and supervision of the centers to be established should be with the local government units (LGUs) in view of the Local Government Code of 1991. As such, the role of the DSWD should focus on the provision of technical assistance to these LGUs on the establishment and operation of these centers. Aside from this, may we also share with you these comments and recommendations:

1. Consolidate the three (3) bills into one (1).
2. If the bills propose to amend Republic Act No. 8505 or the Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998, the Resource Development and Crisis Assistance Centers to be established should also primarily serve rape victim-survivors. The other target clients of these centers as indicated in the bills are already being served by the Department thru its 25 residential care facilities which cater to women and girl-children in especially difficult circumstances. These facilities, which provide a wide range of services that promote healing, recovery and reintegration of victim-survivors, include:
 - a. Haven for Women: Provides temporary shelter and protective custody to women 18-59 years old who are victim-survivors of involuntary or forced prostitution, illegal recruitment, physical/emotional/sexual abuse and armed conflict, among others.
 - b. Marillac Hills: Provides care and rehabilitation services to young girls 7-17 years old who are abused, exploited or are in conflict with the law.

- c. Home for Girls: Provides care and rehabilitation services to abused and exploited girls below 18 years old.
 - d. Nasyon ng Kabataan: Provides alternative family care for abused, orphaned, abandoned, neglected and exploited children 7-17 years old.
3. Women in detention are covered by the mandate of the Department of Justice (DOJ) specifically the Correctional Institution for Women and not the DSWD.
 4. Harmonize the provisions on authority to accept donations with the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (CMTA).
 5. On the Composition and Functions of the Advisory Council: The Council should have a representative from the Council on the Welfare of Children (CWC). Also, its functions as a policy making body should focus more on overseeing the effective implementation of the Act rather than being involved in the centers' day-to-day operations.
 6. Others: The Committee may consider these criteria in identifying the priority provinces and cities where the centers will be established:
 - a. High incidence of rape in the area.
 - b. Full support from the local government unit (LGU) manifested through:
 - A document indicating their willingness to cooperate and participate in the establishment and operation of the center through a signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and resolution appropriating funds for its operation.
 - Existing social welfare programs responding to the needs of the victim-survivors.
 - c. Existing and functional community structures i.e. Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPCs).
 - d. Presence of active groups / associations for women and children.
 - e. Availability or access to residential care facilities within the area managed by the DSWD, LGU and/or licensed and accredited NGOs.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


JUDY M. TAGUIWALO
Secretary