

03 May 2017

SENATOR ANA THERESIA "RISA" HONTIVEROS-BARAQUEL

Chairperson
Committee on Women, Children
Family Relations and Gender Equality
Senate of the Philippines
Roxas Blvd., Pasay City

Dear **Chairperson Hontiveros-Baraquel**:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development supports **Senate Bill No. 2152** entitled: An Act Strengthening Republic Act No. 8353, Otherwise Known as the Anti-Rape Act of 1997, introduced by the Chairperson.

We believe that this proposed measure **will further strengthen the provisions of the Anti-Rape Law** by putting the **element of lack of consent at its center, increasing the minimum age of statutory rape and repealing the forgiveness clause.**

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

1. On the **Age of Statutory Rape, consider individuals who may be beyond 18 but have a disability** pursuant to Republic Act No. 7610 or the "Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act" which defines
"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."
2. The possible inclusion of these Sections in the bill:
 - ↓ Conduct and Procedure in Court and Preliminary Investigation for Judges and Prosecutors;
 - ↓ Protocol on Medical Provision and Standard Medico-Legal Examination and Reporting;
 - ↓ Training of service providers i.e. on Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocols, understanding rape and other sexual offenses in a gender-sensitive manner;
 - ↓ Counseling for victim-survivor; and
 - ↓ Roles of Government Agencies in the implementation of the Act
3. Highlight the **role of Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO)** in providing psychosocial support, counseling and debriefing sessions to victim-survivors per Republic Act No. 7160 or the "Local Government Code of 1991".

4. Consider the **development of a database system for rape cases to be managed by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW)** and shall be linked with concerned government agencies to ensure efficient and effective coordination and sharing of updated information.
5. **To include a Section for the Implementing Rules and Regulations.**

For consideration of the Committee.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


JUDY M. TAGUIWALO
Secretary