

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9464



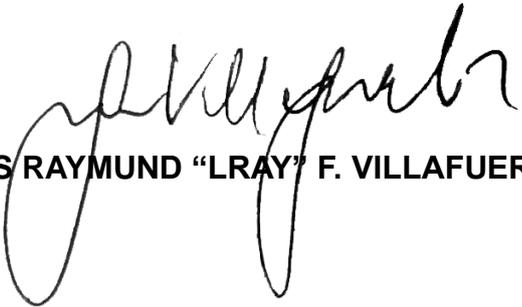
Introduced by **HON. LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.**

**AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE EYE
EXAMINATIONS TO CHILDREN**

Data from the Philippine Eye Research Institute (PERI) as of 2017 showed that one in 20 preschoolers' and one in 4 school-aged children experienced eye problems. Over 10% of Filipino children were also expected to have "visual acuity" issues or problems with their vision. This number is expected to rise with the distance learning set-up in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This proposed measure seeks to complement Republic Act No. 11358, otherwise known as the National Vision Screening Act that was enacted in July 2019. This measure aims to provide comprehensive eye examinations for children already identified at high risk of vision impairment.

In view of the foregoing the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Children's Vision Improvement and Learning Readiness Act".

SECTION 2. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act, the following terms and phrases shall mean as follows:

- A. Secretary - means Secretary of Health;
- B. Comprehensive eye examination - means an assessment of a patient's history, general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and as appropriate, binocular vision or gross visual fields, performed by an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.

SECTION 3. Grants Regarding Comprehensive Eye Examinations for Children. –

A) In General - The Secretary may make grants to cities and municipalities for the purpose of:

- 1) Providing comprehensive eye examinations for children identified or considered at high risk of vision impairment, with priority given to school-based programs for children who are under the age of nine (9);
- 2) Providing subsequent treatment or services necessary to correct vision problems; and
- 3) Developing and disseminating, to parents, teachers, health care practitioners, and the public, educational materials on recognizing signs of visual Impairment in children, and the State's vision improvement initiatives.

B) Criteria and Coordination.

- 1) Criteria. - The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate professional and consumer organizations including individuals with knowledge of age-appropriate vision services, shall develop criteria -
 - a) Governing the operation of the grant program; and
 - b) For the collection of data related to vision assessment and the utilization of follow up services.

C) Application. - A grant may be made under Paragraph (A) only if an application for the grant is submitted to the Secretary and the application is in such form, made in such manner, and contains such information as the Secretary may require. Including:

- 1) Information on existing government-funded children's vision screening programs;
- 2) a plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used to complement existing country's efforts;
- 3) a plan to determine if a grant eligible child has received an age-appropriate vision screening; and
- 4) a description of how funds will be used to provide items or services only as a secondary payer to -
 - a) any government compensation program, under an insurance policy, or under any government health benefits program; or
 - b) by any entity that provides health services on a prepaid basis.

D) Evaluations. - A grant may be made under paragraph (A) only if the municipality involved agrees that, not later than one (1) year after the date on which amounts under the grant are first received by the municipality, and annually thereafter while receiving amounts under the grant, the municipality will submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the operations and activities carried out under the grant, including:

- 1) An assessment of the utilization of vision services and the status of children receiving these services as a result of the activities carried out under the grant;
- 2) The collection, analysis, and reporting of children's vision data according to guidelines prescribed by the Secretary; and
- 3) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

SECTION 4. Authorization of Appropriations. – For the purpose of carrying out this Act, such sums as may be deemed appropriate by the Secretary are hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

SECTION 5. Separability Clause. – If any portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the portions or provisions which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 6. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 7. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,