

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
3rd Regular Session

House Bill No. 10526



Introduced by Representative ERIC GO YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) compelled the education sector to adapt with means necessary to ensure that learning isn't halted. The introduction of distance learning via Zoom, Google Meet, or equivalent was a hefty adjustment to all. For those who are financially privileged, the adjustment was limited to getting used to the interface and the new mode of learning. Unfortunately, the case is not the same for all, considering that our teachers, up to this day are still fighting for higher and more adequate pay.

The budget that was afforded to our teachers through the Bayanihan Law was noble but insufficient. Our teachers have been incurring out of pocket expenses because the stimulus given to them could only cover a few hours of data access. This appalling reality, our teachers not being able to afford having stable internet to teach or communicate with their students, is immensely unacceptable at this day and age.

As we are still in coursing through the pandemic and seemingly, are still no way near the end of the tunnel, we must establish an unremitting measure that can cover the cost of giving quality distance learning. This bill seeks to do just that—to provide communication and data accessibility and allowance to all basic education teachers during public health emergencies and other analogous cases. It is high time that we adequately support our hardworking teachers who are the guarantors of not only our children's futures but our nation's too.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ERIC GO YAP

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AN ACT
PROVIDING COMMUNICATION AND DATA ACCESSIBILITY AND
ALLOWANCE TO ALL BASIC EDUCATION TEACHERS DURING PUBLIC
HEALTH EMERGENCY AND OTHER ANALOGOUS CASES

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared as policy of the State, consistent with the constitutional provisions on education and national development, to support the unique needs of the education sector in times of public health emergencies and other similar crises. As such, school teachers whose work is essential in national development must be equipped with the appropriate tools and infrastructure for the efficient performance of their duties.

SEC. 2. Definition of Terms.

- a. “Public health emergency” is an occurrence or imminent threat of an illness or health condition, caused by bio terrorism, epidemic or pandemic disease, or (a) novel and highly fatal infectious agent or biological toxin, that poses a substantial risk of a significant number of human facilities or incidents or permanent or long-term disability resulting in a prolong closure of school facilities and other learning institutions.
- b. “Other analogous cases” means any occurrence or imminent threat of any calamity or disaster, natural or man-made, having the same effect of prolonged closure of schools and other learning institutions.
- c. “Blended learning” designates the range of learning possibilities in an education program in which content and instruction are presented by combining internet, digital media, television or radio broadcast with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students.

SEC. 3. *Provision of Computers or Other Similar Devices to all Basic Education Teachers in Public and Private Schools.* To effectively execute the blended learning implemented during a declared public health emergency and other analogous cases, the national government through the Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall provide the technologically appropriate and affordable computer or similar device to each basic education teachers, both in public and private schools.

SEC. 4. *Obsolescence.* In the provision of computers or other similar devices in Section 3 of this Act, the DICT shall determine the appropriate and affordable technological capacity to mitigate the impact of obsolescence taking into consideration the availability of funds and the length of usability, efficiency and effectiveness.

SEC. 5. *Provision of Data and Communication Allowance to all Basic Education Teachers in Public and Private Schools.* – During the period of the declared public health emergency and other analogous cases, the national government through the DepEd in coordination with the DICT shall provide data and communication allowance to all basic education teachers, both in public and private schools. The amount of the data and communication allowance shall be determined by the DepEd and the DICT considering the time of execution and amount of data needed for the full implementation of blended learning.

SEC. 6. *Subsidized Data Rates and Fiscal Incentives.* During the period of the declared public health emergency and other analogous cases, access to websites where the blended learning materials are published or posted shall be subsidized by the government and may be accessed free of charge. Moreover, the Department of Finance (DOF) through the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) shall be allowed to grant fiscal incentives to concerned suppliers or service providers to lessen cost provided that, such incentives shall not significantly prejudice revenues for the government.

SEC. 7. *Applicability of the Act to the declared public health emergency due to Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).* The provisions of this Act shall apply to the public health emergency declared by the national or local government due to COVID-19.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The DepEd, the DICT and the DOF shall promulgate the corresponding implementing rules and regulations of this Act within sixty (60) days from the date of its effectivity.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* The funds necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be sourced from the respective budgets of the DepEd and the DICT in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, and rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation or in the *Official Gazette*.

Approved,