

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 3326

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Introduced by Honorable Rosenda Ann Ocampo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Philippine Constitution under Article 2, Section 13, provides:

“The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.”

Article 14, Section 3 (2) further provides:

“All educational institutions shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline, encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency.”

Youth participation in public affairs upholds the democratic ethos of our country. It is inherent in a democratic country that all citizens participate in decision- and policy- making processes. According to a paper published by the Cambodia Development Resource Institute, youth participation is beneficial for the development of the entire community or society, and for the promotion of civic and political life of young people.

Youth participation helps develop the community primarily because the youth comprises more than one-third of our country’s population. To exclude the youth from the

democratic process is to deprive a substantial number of the population of an opportunity to decide on matters affecting not only their interests, but those of future generations as well.

Aside from contributing to the community, youth participation aids in their individual development. Involvement in public and civic affairs allows them to have a deeper understanding of the rights accorded to them and the duties expected of them. They become more critical of crucial social issues and more capable of addressing them.

It becomes incumbent upon the legislature to encourage youth participation.

Youth participation in the democratic process is promoted by educating the youth of the very foundation of democracy – the right to vote. The United Nations defines voter education as *“the dissemination of information, materials and programmes designed to inform voters about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process for a particular election. Voter education involves providing information on who is eligible to vote; where and how to register; how electors can check the voter lists to ensure they have been duly included; what type of elections are being held; where, when and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to file complaints.”*

The sad proliferation of vote buying hardly absent in our electoral process has alarming consequences.

In a background paper published by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, it stated, *“Civic education in school and universities needs to be encouraged as a central element to foster the political participation of young people.”*

Educating the youth through formal instruction of the right to vote and of the electoral system that safeguards such is one of the most effective approach to ensure that they are aware of how to contribute to nation-building, and that they act according to such knowledge.

This bill seeks to integrate voter education in the junior and senior high school curricula with the aim of encouraging our students to become active citizens and of arousing their interest in safeguarding the integrity of our electoral system.


ROSENDA ANN OCAMPO

Republic of the Philippines
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HOUSE BILL No. 3326

Introduced by Honorable Rosenda Ann Ocampo

AN ACT
INTEGRATING VOTER EDUCATION IN THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA”

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “*Compulsory Voter Education Act*”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to enlighten citizens on their right to vote and to inculcate in them the duty to preserve the integrity of the electoral process through the educational system.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:

“*Voter Education*” means dissemination of information, materials and programmes designed to inform citizens about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process. It includes providing information on the right to suffrage, its importance, and the proper exercise thereof, as well as information on who is eligible to vote; where and how to register; how electors can check the voter lists to ensure they have been duly included; what type of elections are being held; where, when and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to file complaints.

SECTION 4. *Integration of Voter Education in the Junior and Senior High School Curricula.* –Voter Education shall be integrated by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the junior and senior high school curricula, effective at the start of the school year

immediately following one year from the effectivity of this Act. The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) shall assist DepEd in preparing teachers during the one-year transition period by conducting seminars and trainings, and who is qualified to teach topics relating to the electoral system and process.

SECTION 5. *Voter Education Syllabus.* – The main syllabus shall include, but not be limited to, the following thematic areas:

- (a) *Suffrage* – This area introduces to students the right to vote accorded by the Constitution, and other rights enabling citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs;
- (b) *Electoral system and process* – This area deals with the general principles underlying the present electoral system, and legislation regulating all the phases of election namely, pre- election, election proper, and post-election. It discusses the proper conduct of elections including registration, casting of ballots, and counting of votes;
- (c) *Educated voting*- This area focuses on the attitude and behavior a voter must adopt to ensure fair, free, and honest elections. It emphasizes the importance of participating in elections in a manner that shall stimulate and strengthen democracy;
- (d) *Supplementary Topics* – This curriculum shall have additional topics and studies on the political system of the country, the contextual background of elections, current political, social, and economic issues affecting the elections, and the possible solutions to address them; and
- (e) *Other Subject Matters*- Other areas of voter education may be included in the syllabus.

SECTION 6. *Implementing Agency.* – The Secretary of DepEd is hereby authorized and directed to adopt a system to implement and carry out the provisions of this Act. The Secretary of DepEd shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the rules and regulations, including those of a disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Educational Materials.* – It shall be obligatory on all schools offering secondary education to keep in their libraries an adequate number of copies of the textbooks, primers, and leaflets on voter education to be issued by the DepEd. The DepEd shall determine the adequacy of the number of books, depending upon the enrolment of the school.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with, the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

APPROVED.