



**SENATE**

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**Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN**

**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, TO DETERMINE THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TO THE COUNTRY'S BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM, IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE GOVERNMENT IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, THE PARENTS, TEACHERS, LEARNERS, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CRAFTING LEGISLATION THAT WOULD ENSURE AN IMMEDIATE, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE, INCLUDING RECOVERY AND TRANSITION MEASURES, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THEREBY MITIGATING ITS IMPACT AND PROVIDING FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT EDUCATION SYSTEM IN EMERGENCIES**

1       **WHEREAS**, on December 31, 2019, a cluster of 27 cases of  
2 pneumonia of unknown origin was reported in Wuhan, China<sup>1</sup> and which  
3 was later on identified as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – an infectious  
4 disease caused by a new strain of the corona virus<sup>2</sup>;

5       **WHEREAS**, on January 30, 2020, with a total of 7,818 confirmed  
6 COVID-19 cases – 7,736 in China and 82 in 18 other countries – the World

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<sup>1</sup> Van Kerkhove, Maria D., World Health Organization, presentation during the UNDRR, IPU, WHO Webinar on “Lessons from the Covid-19 pandemic, parliamentary action to reduce risks, increase resilience and strengthen emergency preparedness and increase resilience”, April 28, 2020, Incheon, Korea.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.who.int/philippines/emergencies/covid-19-in-the-philippines>

1 Health Organization (WHO), declared the corona virus outbreak a Public  
2 Health Emergency of International Concern.<sup>3</sup> On the same day, the  
3 Department of Health reported the first confirmed infection case of the novel  
4 corona virus<sup>4</sup>, a 38-year-old female Chinese national<sup>5</sup>;

5 **WHEREAS**, on March 7, 2020, the first local transmission of COVID-  
6 19 in the Philippines was confirmed<sup>6</sup>;

7 **WHEREAS**, on March 8, 2020, President Rodrigo R. Duterte issued  
8 Proclamation No. 922 and declared a State of Public Health Emergency  
9 throughout the Philippines due to COVID-19;

10 **WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2020, with the alarming levels of spread and  
11 severity – 118,319 confirmed cases and a record of 4,292 deaths in China  
12 and in 113 other countries to date – WHO Director General, Dr. Tedros  
13 Adhanom Ghebreyesus, characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic<sup>7</sup>;

14 **WHEREAS**, on March 16, 2020, due to the rising number of confirmed  
15 cases of COVID-19 and pursuant to Proclamation No. 929, Series of 2020,  
16 President Duterte declared a State of Calamity throughout the country for a  
17 period of six (6) months and imposed an Enhanced Community Quarantine  
18 (ECQ) in Luzon effective midnight of April 12, 2020;

19 **WHEREAS**, since the confirmation of the first local community  
20 transmission of COVID-19 in the country, declaration of suspension of  
21 classes at all levels ensued, and on March 10, 2020, upon the  
22 recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious  
23 Diseases (IATF-EID), the President ordered the suspension of classes at all  
24 levels, both public and private, in the National Capital Region from March  
25 10, 2020 to March 14, 2020<sup>8</sup>;

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200130-sitrep-10-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=d0b2e480\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200130-sitrep-10-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=d0b2e480_2)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/basic-page/tracker\\_01\\_30\\_2020.jpg](http://www.doh.gov.ph/sites/default/files/basic-page/tracker_01_30_2020.jpg)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.who.int/philippines/emergencies/covid-19-in-the-philippines>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/covid-19>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/253912-walang-pasok-duterte-declares-class-suspensions-metro-manila-coronavirus-threat-march-10-14-2020>

1           **WHEREAS**, with the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases continuing  
2 to rise, and the consequent increasing death toll, the extension of the  
3 suspension of classes at all levels was inevitable, causing President Duterte  
4 to further suspend government work in the Executive Branch in a bid to  
5 prevent the spread of the novel corona virus in the Philippines<sup>9</sup>;

6           **WHEREAS**, with the unexpected and unprecedented suspension of  
7 classes, a total of 28,451,212 learners from the pre-primary to the tertiary  
8 level in the country were affected<sup>10</sup>, while globally, more than 1.57 billion  
9 students and youth were affected by school and university closures due to  
10 the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>11</sup>;

11           **WHEREAS**, the school closures did not only adversely affect the  
12 learners' education, they also carried high social and economic costs for  
13 people across communities with impact particularly severe for the most  
14 vulnerable and marginalized boys and girls and their families<sup>12</sup>;

15           **WHEREAS**, the resulting class disruptions not only aggravated  
16 already existing disparities within the education system but the other  
17 aspects of the lives of these most vulnerable and marginalized learners and  
18 their families, including: "interrupted learning; poor nutrition; confusion  
19 and stress for teachers; parents unprepared for distance and home  
20 schooling; challenges creating, maintaining, and improving distance  
21 learning; gaps in childcare; high economic costs; unintended strain on  
22 health-care systems; increased pressure on schools and school systems that  
23 remain open; rise in dropout rates; increased exposure to violence and  
24 exploitation; social isolation; and challenges measuring and validating  
25 learning"<sup>13</sup>;

26           **WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 pandemic moreover caused the basic  
27 education school system to culminate the 2019-2020 school year, with

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/254278-duterte-suspends-classes-government-offices-metro-manila-until-april-12-2020-coronavirus-threat>

<sup>10</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>, as of April 30, 2020

<sup>11</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition>

<sup>12</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/consequences>

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

1 schools dispensing with the giving of final examinations and conducting  
2 other student assessments and activities for the learners' completion of their  
3 requirements for the school year;

4 **WHEREAS**, the Department of Education (DepEd) has been  
5 conducting a survey on matters related to social distancing, online classes,  
6 cellphone, television or radio as alternative or complementary approaches to  
7 learning while accelerating the preparation of its Learning Continuity Plan  
8 (LCP), preparing benefits for its teaching and non-teaching staff, ensuring  
9 the readiness and cleanliness of school infrastructure, and developing  
10 alternative delivery modes of learning<sup>14</sup>;

11 **WHEREAS**, in the midst of the corona virus crisis, the DepEd further  
12 said that "(e)ducation must continue whether face-to-face or virtual, with or  
13 without physically going to school"<sup>15</sup>;

14 **WHEREAS**, private educational institutions have been expressing  
15 their concerns regarding the adjusted academic calendar, not to mention the  
16 irreversible impact of the sudden suspension of classes caused by the  
17 COVID-19 pandemic<sup>16</sup>;

18 **WHEREAS**, "majority of the private schools are focused on  
19 establishing flexible learning delivery modes that include blended learning,  
20 distance and open education, online with learning packets, and other  
21 alternative delivery modes to "provide access to all students," regardless of  
22 their economic background"<sup>17</sup>;

23 **WHEREAS**, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, measures have been  
24 taken by the DepEd such as the DepEd Commons which is an online  
25 educational platform supporting alternative learning modalities amid the

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2020/04/21/on-the-opening-of-classes-for-sy-2020-2021/>  
<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>16</sup> <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/24/private-schools-on-the-verge-of-closing-down-operations-due-to-covid-19/>  
<sup>17</sup> Part of the Press Statement of Atty. Joseph Noel Estrada, Managing Director of the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA), which serves as the unifying voice of private education in the Philippines, April 25, 2020, at <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/24/private-schools-on-the-verge-of-closing-down-operations-due-to-covid-19/>

1 ECQ period so that education can still continue at the confines of the  
2 learners' homes<sup>18</sup>;

3 **WHEREAS**, the United Nations Education and Scientific Organization  
4 (UNESCO) also launched the Global Education Coalition which seeks to  
5 facilitate inclusive online learning opportunities for children and youth  
6 affected by the sudden and unprecedented educational disruption<sup>19</sup>;

7 **WHEREAS**, limitations of Internet-based learning must however be  
8 recognized, the readiness of the educators and parents, and the capacity of  
9 learners to engage in online blended education should be taken into  
10 consideration;

11 **WHEREAS**, due to the limited reach of internet-based and online  
12 learning, television (TV) and radio-based solutions must be pursued as part  
13 of our national education response to ensure the continuity of learning  
14 amidst the pandemic school closures, given that in a 2017 National  
15 Demographic and Health Survey conducted by the Philippine Statistics  
16 Authority, 77% owned a TV, 51% of households owned a radio, while only  
17 22% of households owned a computer/laptop; and that while almost 90%  
18 owned a mobile phone, there is no indication whether this was a smart  
19 phone or if internet connectivity is available;

20 **WHEREAS**, "Learn from Home" TV and Radio Programs can provide  
21 educational programming, from early childhood education to teacher  
22 training, to both urban and non-urban areas and reach learners that have  
23 limited or no information and communications technology access and  
24 capability, especially in the Last Mile Schools where only radios may be  
25 available, given that there is adequate legal support for TV and Radio  
26 Learning in the country and the franchise terms of the biggest TV and radio  
27 stations have standard provisions regarding the grantee's responsibility to  
28 the public, including providing free time for public announcements in times

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2020/04/09/deped-commons-now-available-for-private-school-learners/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition>

1 of emergencies and calamities, and therefore must be utilized as a platform  
2 for distant learning;

3 **WHEREAS**, in a Statement to the press by Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge,  
4 WHO Regional Director for Europe, he stated that “COVID-19 is unforgiving  
5 and has the ability to overwhelm even the strongest of health systems in  
6 Europe, quickly. If countries do not have adequate all-of-society and all-of-  
7 government preparedness and response strategies in place, if your health  
8 workforce is not trained, equipped and protected, if your citizens are not  
9 informed and empowered with evidence-based information, then the  
10 pandemic will sweep through your communities, businesses and health  
11 systems, taking lives and livelihoods with it”<sup>20</sup>;

12 **WHEREAS**, on March 23, 2020, Congress convened its first Special  
13 Session in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress – a special session that lasted for around 17  
14 hours – to pass Republic Act No. 11469 or the “Bayanihan to Heal as One  
15 Act” which was signed by President Duterte into law the next day. The law  
16 declared the existence of a national emergency arising from the COVID-19  
17 situation, stated the national policy in connection therewith, and authorized  
18 the President to exercise powers necessary and proper to carry out the  
19 declared national policy “for a limited period and subject to restrictions”;

20 **WHEREAS**, the law took effect immediately upon its publication and  
21 shall continue to be in full force and effect only for three (3) months, unless  
22 extended by Congress;

23 **WHEREAS**, to implement the national policy to address COVID-19,  
24 the government has adopted measures for immediate response to the  
25 pandemic, realigned its financial resources, and continues to craft plans to  
26 revive the economy and to transition to the new normal;

27 **WHEREAS**, while the government is continuously taking control of the  
28 COVID-19 pandemic to minimize and mitigate its impact in the lives of the

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<sup>20</sup> Statement to the press by Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, April 16, 2020, Copenhagen, Denmark, at <http://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/statements/2020/statement-transition-to-a-new-normal-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-must-be-guided-by-public-health-principles?fbclid=IwAR39YXlSplh00f-19wmgUTbdVKxhDhAmtFQehcmfkOh9Q6AMhse9Gurifpl>

1 people and the economy, focus on its impact to the Philippine Education  
2 System is equally worth examining as the education system is not only  
3 about teaching the learners or determining whether it is safe to reopen  
4 schools; it is a sector in itself that highly contributes to the economy and to  
5 the social and emotional well-being of the learners;

6 **WHEREAS**, the “COVID-19 outbreak is also a major education  
7 crisis”<sup>21</sup> and the government should take remedial measures to ensure that  
8 what it had invested in the education of its learners will not be put to waste,  
9 make them stay in school, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized  
10 learners, and that effective means be adopted to put the education system  
11 back on its tracks in due time, and leaving no one behind;

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE**  
13 **PHILIPPINES**, to direct the Senate Committee on Basic Education, Arts and  
14 Culture to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, to determine the impact  
15 of the COVID-19 pandemic to the country’s basic education system, identify  
16 and address the issues and challenges confronting the government in public  
17 and private educational institutions, the parents, teachers, learners, and  
18 other stakeholders, for the purpose of crafting legislation that would ensure  
19 an immediate, effective and efficient government response, including  
20 recovery and transition measures, during the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby  
21 mitigating its impact and providing for a sustainable and resilient education  
22 system in emergencies.

Adopted,



**WIN GATCHALIAN**

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<sup>21</sup> *Supra* Note 21.