



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

'22 JUL 14 NO :45

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

S. B. NO. 570

Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

**AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7743, OTHERWISE  
KNOWN AS "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF  
CONGRESSIONAL, CITY, AND MUNICIPAL LIBRARIES AND  
BARANGAY READING CENTERS THROUGHOUT THE  
PHILIPPINES" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Republic Act No. 7743 was enacted more than thirty years ago, "to promote the moral and intellectual well-being of the people: elevate the literacy level of every Filipino to the end that illiteracy is eradicated by the end of the century; and recognize the vital role of knowledge and information in nation-building by establishing public libraries in every congressional district, city and municipality, and reading centers in every barangay throughout the Philippines."

Unfortunately, after more than two and a half decades and amidst rapid technological advances, the Philippines is even further behind in promoting literacy and e-literacy, especially in terms of adapting to, and adopting, new technologies towards the promotion of literacy. In fact, while it has already been recognized globally that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is essential to improving literacies,<sup>1</sup> our institutions remain to be suspended in time with antiquated materials, equipment and facilities. This, on top of the fact that the noble objectives of Republic Act No. 7743 remain to be fully realized, make the situation worse in terms of promoting the intellectual well-being of the people thru the provision of libraries and reading centers nationwide.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Council for Educational Research, A Global measure of digital and ICT literacy skills, 2016. *accessible at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245577>* (last accessed July 11, 2022).

For example, the results of the 2018 Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) paint a dismal picture on the state of education and over-all literacy of students in the country. Specifically, out of 79 countries assessed, the Philippines was the lowest in terms of Reading Literacy (79<sup>th</sup>), and second from the bottom for Mathematics and Science Literacy (78<sup>th</sup>), ahead only of the Dominican Republic.

	Reading Literacy	Mathematics Literacy	Science Literacy
Ranking (out of 79 countries)	79 <sup>th</sup>	78 <sup>th</sup>	78 <sup>th</sup>
PH Average Score	340	353	357
OECD Average Score	487	489	489

On the other hand, the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) reported that Filipino students ranked lowest among 58 countries in an international assessment for mathematics and science for Grade 4 students.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has not made things any better. Despite the gradual reopening of schools, the impact of long lockdowns on children’s education has become evident — studies show that less than ten percent (10%) of Filipino children can read simple text or comprehend a simple story, based on a joint report by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank.<sup>3</sup>

These are just some of the alarming situations that highlight the need to improve our library and reading center systems to pave the way for the adoption and use of new technologies that would further promote literacy among our citizens. Thus, the early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

<sup>2</sup> Inquirer.net, PH’s Grade 4 students lowest in math, science around the world, December 10, 2020, *accessible at* <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1370289/phs-grade-4-students-lowest-in-math-science-around-the-world-study> (last accessed July 11, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Inquirer.net, When 10-year-olds can’t read: The dulling of PH education, *accessible at* <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1580203/when-10-year-olds-cant-read-the-dulling-of-ph-education> (last accessed July 11, 2022).



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

1           **SECTION 1.** Section 2 of Republic Act No. 7743, otherwise known as "An Act  
2 Providing for the Establishment of Congressional, City, and Municipal Libraries and  
3 Barangay Reading Centers Throughout the Philippines," is hereby amended to read  
4 as follows:

5  
6           "Sec. 2. Establishment of Public Libraries and Reading Centers. – The  
7 National Library in coordination with the Department of the Interior and  
8 Local Government (DILG) AND ASSISTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
9 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (DICT),  
10 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED), AND THE COMMISSION  
11 ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED) shall undertake the establishment of  
12 additional public libraries to serve all congressional districts, cities and  
13 municipalities in the Philippines and reading centers in every barangay  
14 except in cities or municipalities where there are existing public libraries  
15 or in barangays where there are already existing public libraries or  
16 reading centers: *Provided*, That the establishment of such libraries and  
17 reading centers shall be based on the development program of the  
18 National Library, in coordination with the development council of each  
19 city or municipality and in the case of the barangay reading centers, in  
20 coordination with the respective barangay councils; *PROVIDED*,  
21 *FURTHER*, THAT THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE  
22 NATIONAL LIBRARY SHALL BE BASED ON THE LATEST COMPUTER  
23 AND ELECTRONIC LIBRARY TECHNOLOGIES: *Provided, further*, That



1 where these public libraries and reading centers already exist, the  
2 National Library shall continue to upgrade the facilities thereof WITH  
3 COMPLETE STANDARD SETS OF BOOKS, E-BOOKS, ONLINE  
4 RESEARCH RESOURCES AND OTHER MATERIALS, AS WELL AS  
5 THE LATEST ELECTRONIC LIBRARY SYSTEM USING COMPUTERS  
6 FOR STORING, CATALOGING, AND FILING OF DATA AND  
7 MATERIALS: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT BY 2025, ALL THE CITIES  
8 AND MUNICIPALITIES OF THE PHILIPPINES SHALL HAVE BEEN  
9 PROVIDED WITH ELECTRONICALLY-OPERATED LIBRARY  
10 SYSTEMS.

11  
12 The National Library shall continue to coordinate and organize seminars,  
13 workshops and other trainings for the professional benefit of librarians.”  
14

15 **SEC. 2. Role of the Department of Information and Communications**  
16 **Technology (DICT).** – The DICT shall assist the National Library and the DILG in the  
17 provision of cutting-edge computer and electronic library technologies, as well as fast  
18 and reliable internet connections.  
19

20 **SEC. 3. Role of Education Agencies.** – The DepEd and the CHED shall assist  
21 the National Library and the DILG in the selection of standard print and non-print library  
22 materials.  
23

24 **SEC. 4. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions  
25 of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its  
26 enactment into law, and every year thereafter, to ensure all cities and municipalities in  
27 the Philippines are provided and have access to full electronic library facilities and the  
28 latest library technologies and content and the same are upgraded periodically.  
29

30 The local government units shall continue to undertake the maintenance of  
31 public libraries and reading centers while the National Library shall continue to provide  
32 reading materials and supplies to the said libraries and reading centers.  
33

34 **SEC. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from  
35 the implementation of this Act, the National Library, in coordination with the DILG,  
36 DICT, DepEd, CHED and other relevant government agencies and stakeholders, shall  
37 promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act  
38

39 **SEC. 6. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is  
40 subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are  
41 not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.  
42

43 **SEC. 7. Repealing Clause.** – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees,  
44 executive orders, presidential proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations, or  
45 parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act  
46 are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.  
47

48 **SEC. 8. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
49 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.  
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**Approved,**