

Column for Manila Bulletin
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Of Trees and Forest

6-Hour Workday for Teachers

MANILA, Philippines — To help public school teachers in their noble task of molding the minds of our youth, I have proposed to reduce the working hours of all public school teachers to a six-hour workday or a total of a 30-hour workweek.

I was prompted to do this unprecedented move after I was informed that they have been clamoring not only for higher pay but also for shorter working hours because their work schedule leaves them stressed out and exhausted. So, reducing their number of working hours will certainly allow them to have more time to innovate and enhance classroom teaching.

There are now over 600,000 public school teachers all over the country, according to the latest statistics furnished by the Department of Education, and that 80 percent of its budget is allocated to the teachers, with each of them getting a basic monthly salary of P18,549.00. They are assigned to teach, as of last count, 18,799,950 students in elementary and high schools nationwide.

Senate Bill No. 2454 provides for a six-hour workday for public school teachers and exempts them from compliance with the eight-hour workday. It repeals Sections 13 and 14 of Republic Act No. 4670, the Magna Charta of Public School Teachers. The Department of Education has issued Memorandum 291 allowing teachers to allot six hours for actual classroom teaching a day, and the remaining two hours will be spent in teaching-related activities. Thus, they are required to render a total of eight hours a day.

The proposed bill also seeks to exempt teachers from the generally established rule on eight-hour workday under the Civil Service Rules. Book V of the Administrative Code of 1987 states that: "Officers and employees of all departments and agencies except those covered by special laws shall render not less than eight hours of work a day for five days a week or a total of 40 hours a week, exclusive of time for lunch."

The same proposed legislative measure provides that co-curricula, out-of-school activities and other activities of any teacher outside of their normal duties shall be paid an additional compensation of at least 25 percent of his/her regular remuneration after the teacher has completed at least six hours of work.

I believe that a shorter work day for our public school teachers would be a great relief to them, and certainly make their rearing the tender minds of the young a most delightful task!

(For comments/feedback email to: mbv_secretariat@yahoo.com. Readers may view previous columns at www.senatorvillar.com)

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