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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 896

Introduced by REP. PRINCESS RIHAN M. SAKALURAN

RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, THE NATIONAL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, THE COMMISSION ON
HIGHER EDUCATION, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE
TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY AND ALL APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES
TO STRONGLY IMPLEMENT THE LAWS TO GIVE ALL STUDENTS
ACCESS TO EDUCATION THROUGH DISTANCE AND ONLINE
EDUCATION BY USING ALL AVAILABLE PLATFORMS SUCH AS
THE INTERNET, TELEVISION, RADIO, MOBILE PHONES AND
OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS DURING THE PUBLIC
HEALTH EMERGENCY BROUGHT ABOUT BY COVID-19
PANDEMIC.

WHEREAS, Art. XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution provides that
"[t]he State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education
at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible
to all."

WHEREAS, to maximize the use of technology in the education sector,
Republic Act No. 10929 or the "Free Internet Access in Public Places Act" was
enacted as a recognition of the vital role of information and communications
technology in nation-building, and declares its policy to promote an environment
for the development of structures that would ensure the availability and
accessibility to reliable and secure internet access suitable to the needs and
aspirations of the nation.

WHEREAS, the second paragraph of Section 2 of RA No. 10929 provides
that "the State shall establish a program that will provide free access to internet
service in public places throughout the country, to promote knowledge-building
among citizens and enable them to participate and compete in the evolving
information and communication age."
WHEREAS, Section 4 (b) and (c) of RA No. 10929 provides for public basic education institutions, and state universities and colleges, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority technology institutions as some of the public places covered by the law.

WHEREAS, highlighting the necessity of telecommunications, Republic Act No. 7925 or the “Public Telecommunications Policy Act of the Philippines” was enacted to “develop and maintain a viable, efficient, reliable and universal telecommunication infrastructure using the best available and affordable technologies, as a vital tool to nation building and development.”

WHEREAS, the Department of Information and Communications Technology was authorized to set the standards and qualifications in determining the places to be included in the program, and shall be the lead implementing agency under RA No. 10929.

WHEREAS, the overwhelming increase in the number of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has led to a declaration of a public health emergency which led to weeks of enhanced community quarantine in the country and has become an international concern.

WHEREAS, school administrators all over the country are now in a quandary of opening the academic school year on time in an attempt to contain the spread of the disease and are in fact entertaining the idea of distance education through different platforms brought about by the advancement of technology.

WHEREAS, the parents of these students particularly those who are most vulnerable to the disease and are in disadvantaged communities are not keen on enrolling children fearing that virus might infect and expose their children to harm and danger.

WHEREAS, several health experts and members of the academe have recommended to delay the opening of the next school year until there is an assurance that the COVID-19 Pandemic has already been controlled and will not further infect people.

WHEREAS, the uncertainties of not enrolling or delay in school opening are impacting a good number of the members of the education sector for this academic year;

WHEREAS, the introduction to Online and Distance Education are the newest and most popular form of innovative education to date;
WHEREAS, Distance Learning has also its history in the Philippines with the passage of Republic Act No. 10650 with aimed at institutionalizing Open Distance Learning for tertiary education;

WHEREAS, Section 3 (a) of RA 10650 defines Distance Education as a "mode of learning in which students and teachers are physically separated from each other. It is student centered, guided independent study, making use of well-studied teaching and learning pedagogies to deliver well-designed learning materials in various media. It is also sometimes described as flexible learning and distributed learning";

WHEREAS, even UNESCO in its website is supportive of countries currently shifting to distance learning if only to mitigate the impact of COVID 19;

WHEREAS, appropriate agencies concerned are therefore urged to develop online or distance learning method in order to respond to present realities under pandemic emergencies;

WHEREAS, the Department of Information and Communication Technology, National Telecommunication Commission, Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority are urged to lead and implement, formulate and coordinate policies, plans, programs and projects in the areas of formal and non-formal basic education in all elementary and secondary institutions, higher education institutions, and technical education and skills schools.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives urges that the Department of Information and Communications Technology as the lead agency together with the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, and the National Telecommunications Commission and other appropriate government agencies to strongly implement existing laws and adopt in the interim the distance learning program availing of all the platforms available such as but not limited to the INTERNET, TELEVISION, RADIO, MOBILE PHONES AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS to help these students during the pandemic.

Adopted.

PRINCESS RIHAN M. SARALURAN
Representative
19th District, Sultan Kudarat