Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1109

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO,
BAYAN MUNA Party-List Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE,
Rep. FERDINAND GAITE and Rep. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
GABRIELA Women’s Party Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS,
and KABATAAN Party-List Rep. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION
CALLING FOR AN URGENT INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION’S GUIDELINES ON ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD OF STATE OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SAME

WHEREAS, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued on June 15, 2020 DepEd Order 11 entitled Revised Guidelines on Alternative Work Arrangements in the Department of Education during the Period of State of National Emergency Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic;

WHEREAS, ever since the Guidelines were relayed and implemented, many reports and complaints coming straight from the field—that is, public school teachers and other school personnel—pointing to the lack of readiness of the DepEd and shortages in personnel and resources of the public education system;

WHEREAS, first, various regional unions of public school teachers report that the DepEd formulated and issued DepEd Order 11 without prior consultation with them, contrary to what is laid down in the collective negotiation agreements in force as well as in various national and international laws and standards on the indispensable participation of teachers in the formulation of educational policies. Section 29 of the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers mandates that “National teachers’ organizations shall be consulted in the formulation of national educational policies and professional standards.” On the other hand, the 1966 UNESCO-ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers states that “Teachers organizations should be recognized as a force which can contribute greatly to educational advance and which therefore should be associated with the determination of educational policy”;

WHEREAS, this lack of consultation led to the insensitivity of the Guidelines to the actual working and living conditions of public school teachers nationwide, including their students, the parents, and other stakeholders. It should be stressed that such dire working and living conditions have been aggravated by the pandemic, as well as the lockdowns and restrictions in public mobility and transportation;

WHEREAS, the Guidelines leave much discretion to heads of offices. For one, it provides that “other tasks that may be assigned in support of the...COVID-19 pandemic response” and “other directives that may be assigned by the heads of offices in the CO, RO, and/or SDO.” The tasks that may be ordered for public school teachers, as well as other school personnel, therefore, are open-ended (not limited to the 13 specifically enumerated) This results in nearly no control on what they can make teachers do. Furthermore, the officials who can order tasks on teachers are also open-ended;

WHEREAS, many teachers have reported that their school heads and supervisors direct them to physically report to school, and they cannot refuse to do so, otherwise, they will risk getting charged with insubordination or any other disciplinary case;

WHEREAS, teachers also report that due to the enormous amount of tasks and the additional travel and labor connected with these, they usually end up having to work beyond eight hours and/or five days. This, to the detriment of their private and personal lives and responsibilities;

WHEREAS, teachers are also assigned to accomplish the forms, requirements, and processes under the Learner Information System (LIS), such as correction and updating of learners’ profiles and housekeeping of the database, all of which should be done by registrars and personnel who are without teaching loads. This situation highlights the persisting lack of administrative personnel and the resulting overwork of teachers;

WHEREAS, instead of the compressed workweek and staggered working hours identified by the CSC in Memorandum Circular 10, series of 2020, the many labor-intensive and grueling tasks (such as going house to house delivering modules, and the like) cause teachers to spend most of the day, oftentimes more than 8 hours, working. After working, they still have to accomplish various paperwork when they get home. Many teachers complain that “work from home” is actually just a tiny portion of their daily tasks and that the work-from-home directive has become an excuse for heads of agencies to squeeze more work out of them than is necessary and humane;

WHEREAS, many teachers have reported that some of the tasks assigned to them cannot be taken away from the school and/or cannot be done at home, or are very expensive or risky to do so, such as accomplishing hundreds of enrolment forms and other documents, and others. In such instances, they have no other choice but risk contracting the infection by physically reporting then working at school;

WHEREAS, others have reported that senior citizens and those with comorbidities and are immunocompromised are still being asked to physically report to work. The CSC MC 10
allows for this since it implies that employees may not insist on work-from-home arrangements “when their services are indispensable under the circumstances or when office work is permitted”;

WHEREAS, Congress also needs to look into complaints of teachers of additional expenses that they are made to shoulder like laptops, cellular phones, and gadgets, subscription or registration for reliable Internet connection, and like expenses. This is a vital task especially considering that this pandemic situation is projected to remain in the long-term. An indispensable part of the continuing delivery of education should take in consideration the additional financial burdens on teachers, costs which must be fully compensated them since they are due to official functions;

WHEREAS, the issue of alternative work arrangements is just one aspect of blended learning and the government’s duty to continue delivering education even in the midst of the pandemic, as ought to performed by DepEd. Hence, this must be deeply and urgently studied by Congress along with the rest of the BLE program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the House of Representatives Committee on Basic Education and Culture conduct an urgent inquiry in aid of legislation into the Department of Education’s Guidelines on Alternative Work Arrangements during the Period of State of National Emergency Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the implementation of the same.

Adopted,

[Signatures of representatives]