

ACT Teachers Party-List: Fighting for Teachers' and People's Rights in Congress

ACT TEACHERS Party-List achieved a historic victory in the May 2010 elections by garnering over 370,000 votes and gaining one seat in the House of Representatives.

In its first eight months in office, ACT Teachers has endeavored to live up to its mandate as the true voice of teachers in Congress. It has also sought to give genuine representation in behalf of the marginalized sectors whose just and legitimate demands remain unmet.

FOR BETTER SALARIES, BENEFITS, WORKING CONDITIONS

The first bill filed by ACT Teachers Representative Antonio L. Tinio was House Bill (HB) 2142, "An Act Upgrading the Minimum Salary of Public School Teachers from Salary Grade 11 to 15." If passed, it will raise the entry-level salary of a Teacher I from Php 15,649/month to Php 24,887/month.

ACT Teachers sponsored a forum in the House of Representatives to celebrate World Teachers' Day on October 5, 2010. It was attended by over 300 public school teachers from Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Prior to the forum, Rep. Tinio marched with the teachers from the Sandiganbayan to the Batasang Pambansa complex in a show of unity for the salary upgrading campaign.

As of February 2011, 95 representatives have shown their support by co-authoring the salary upgrading bill.

In solidarity with the struggle of other government employees for decent salaries, ACT Teachers co-authored HB 3746, which mandates a Php 6,000 increase in the public sector minimum pay.

Other bills authored by Rep. Tinio centered on improving the benefits and working conditions of public school teachers, such as free post-secondary education for their dependent children, a proposed



ACT Teachers Party-List members gather outside the House of Representatives before Rep. Tinio files HB 2142. August 4, 2010.

increase in the "chalk allowance" from Php 700 to Php 2,000, voluntary instead of mandatory election service for public school teachers, and a bill regulating class size

ACT Teachers is in the process of drafting a "Magna Carta for Private School Teachers."

THE GSIS PROBLEM

ACT Teachers has paid particular attention to addressing all issues relating to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), which has caused myriad hardships for teachers nationwide. Rep. Tinio led teachers in a dialogue with newly-appointed GSIS Board Chairman Daniel Lacson in July, and again in a dialogue with Malacañang in September. In August, Rep. Tinio delivered a Privilege Speech denouncing the unjust and illegal deductions imposed by the GSIS on its members. This initiated a House investigation

Continued on page 2

Uphold students' right to quality kindergarten education! No to contractualization of kindergarten teachers!

ACCESS TO FREE kindergarten education is a right that has long been denied the vast majority of Filipino children. Historically, it has only been available to children from the middle and upper income classes who could afford to pay private school providers.

In response to pressure from advocates of early childhood education, including the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, the Department of Education has, in recent years, taken steps to provide kindergarten education in the public school system. In 2009, kindergarten enrollment stood at 1,054,200 in public schools and 420,444 in private schools.

For School Year 2011-2012, the Aquino administration plans to implement universal, free, and compulsory kindergarten education. This means that starting this June, all 5-year old children will be required to complete kindergarten as a prerequisite for acceptance in Grade 1.

Given a population of 5 year-olds of 2.5 million, the Deped plan will open the public elementary school system to an influx of up to 1 million new kindergarten students this June. Deped is simply not prepared to take on this magnitude of new enrollees.

Deped estimates that they will require an additional 34,900 teachers and 26,500 new classrooms. This is apart from the massive shortages that are already plaguing the pub-

Continued on page 2

HOUSE BILLS AUTHORED BY ACT TEACHERS

HB 2142	An Act Upgrading the Minimum Salary Grade of Public School Teachers from Salary Grade 11 to 15
HB 4077	An Act Granting Free Post-Secondary Education in State Universities and Colleges and Public Technical and Vocational Schools to Dependent Children of Public Elementary and High School Teachers
HB 4096	An Act Amending Section 13 of Republic Act No. 6646, Otherwise Known as "The Electoral Reforms Law of 1987," Making Election Service Voluntary for Public School Teachers and Other Citizens
HB 4097	An Act Declaring October 5 of Every Year as "National Teachers' Day"
HB 4134	An Act Providing for a Teaching Supplies Allowance for Public School Teachers and Appropriating Funds Therefor
HB 4178	An Act Regulating Class Size in All Public Schools and Appropriating Funds Therefor

Php 35M in Projects for Teachers and Schools to be Implemented

THROUGH ITS Priority Development Assistance Fund for the second half of 2010, projects and programs worth Php 35 million, identified by ACT Teachers Party-List through its regional chapters, are now underway. Infrastructure projects include the construction of multi-purpose Teachers' Centers in Caloocan City, Davao City, Angeles, and Lucena, as well as new classrooms in Sta. Cruz, Laguna; rehabilitation of the Bacolod City PSTA-PTA Bldg., Quezon City PSTA Bldg., and the All-UP Workers Union office in the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

Graduate and undergraduate scholarships,

medical assistance, purchase of IT equipment for schools, and funding for Alternative Learning Systems account for so-called "soft" or non-infrastructure projects. These are being implemented in Abra, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Pampanga, Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Albay, Camarines Norte, Masbate, Capiz, Aklan, Antique, Iloilo, Cebu, Bohol, Leyte, Agusan del Norte, Davao City, Davao del Norte, Sarangani, General Santos City, Zamboanga City, and Metro Manila. ACT Teachers is also funding the publication of the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino's *Diksiyunaryong Filipino* for distribution to public schools. #



Privilege Speech on the unjust policies of GSIS, August 16, 2010.

Fighting for Teachers' and People's Rights...

From page 1

into GSIS policies by the Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization, which is still ongoing.

PEOPLE'S ISSUES AND THE PARLIAMENT OF THE STREETS

To date, ACT Teachers has filed six House Bills, nine House Resolutions (HR), and delivered three Privilege Speeches (PS). Together with the representatives of the progressive party-lists (Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela, and Kabataan) Rep. Tinio has also co-authored 106 other House measures. Aside from teachers' and education sector issues, ACT Teachers' legislative initiatives and advocacies include vital national and multisectoral concerns, such as genuine agrarian reform (HB 374), protection of human rights (HR 159), reproductive health rights (HB 3387), the right to water and sanitation (HR 405, 410), electoral reforms (HR 983), termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement (HJR 7), compensation for the human rights victims of the Marcos dictatorship (HB 1693), and justice for the slain botanist Leonardo Co (PS 156).

During the deliberations on the 2011 national budget, ACT Teachers actively opposed funding for the Aquino administration's flagship anti-poverty Conditional Cash Transfer program, pointing out that it did not address the roots of poverty.

ACT Teachers has also been active in exposing and opposing graft and corruption

at the highest levels of government. It has called for a House investigation into the large-scale malversation of funds in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (HR 888), which is now ongoing. Along with the other progressive party-list representatives, Rep. Tinio is one of the endorsers of the impeachment complaint against Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

ACT Teachers stands firm in its conviction that the people's collective action is the key to genuine social change. For this reason, the organization continues to be an active participant in the parliament of the streets. ACT Teachers joined mass mobilizations and campaigns, including the fight to free the "Morong 43" health workers, the "kuliglig" drivers' struggle for their livelihood, the Hacienda Luisita farmers' demand for land redistribution, and the students' strike against budget cuts in state universities and colleges.

NATIONWIDE CONSULTATIONS

ACT Teachers conducts city-wide consultations with teachers all over the country to ensure that the sector's concerns are brought to Congress.

In the last eight months, Rep. Tinio has held dialogues with teachers in Quezon City, Caloocan, Manila, Makati, Parañaque, Mandaluyong, Malabon, and Muntinlupa.

He has also attended teachers' assemblies in Masbate City, General Santos, Koronadal, Tagbilaran, Bacolod, Iloilo City, Davao City, Cotabato, Lipa City, and Lucena. #

Committee Memberships of ACT Teachers

ACT Teachers Rep. Antonio Tinio is the Vice-Chairperson of the House Committee on Basic Education and Culture. He is also a member of the following other Committees: Civil Service and Professional Regulation, Economic Affairs, Government Enterprises and Privatization, Interparliamentary Relations and Diplomacy, Human Rights, Millennium Development Goals, Population and Family Relations, Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, and Women and Gender Equality, in which he is the only male representative.

"Women comprise 80 percent of the teaching profession," noted Tinio. #

Quality Kindergarten...

From page 1

lic school system.

Deped has offered no solution to the shortage of kindergarten classrooms. Consequently, school administrators must make do with what they have. One Deped superintendent in Metro Manila remarked that they may be forced to adopt a three-shift schedule in order to accommodate the expanded kindergarten enrollment in their already overcrowded schools. In short, Deped's lack of funding and preparation could cause serious disruptions in our public elementary schools and lead to a further decline in the quality of education they provide.

Moreover, Deped's plan to rely on massive contractualization to deal with the shortage of kindergarten teachers is simply unacceptable. Deped will hire up to 34,900 teachers on a ten-month contract, who will be paid a monthly honorarium of only Php 6,000, even though they possess the same qualifications and perform the same work, including hours of service, as their regularly employed counterparts. This constitutes a serious assault on the rights of teachers to decent compensation and job security. The struggle of kindergarten teachers is therefore a struggle of the whole teaching profession.

For these reasons, ACT Teachers Party-List urges all teachers to support our calls. We demand adequate funding for quality kindergarten education. We demand regular items for kindergarten teachers. And, to avert chaos this June, we urge the deferment of *compulsory* enrolment in kindergarten. The rights of students and teachers must be protected.

If Universal Kindergarten is to be implemented, it must be done right. Otherwise, an ill-prepared, inadequately-funded program will spell more bad news for Philippine education. #

CONCERNS? QUERIES? UPDATES?

Text your ACT Teachers Representative
Antonio L. Tinio
at 0920-9220817

Visit us at

Rm. 618 South Wing, House of Representatives,
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Become a member of ACT Teachers!

Phone/Fax: 931-6193

Email: rep.antonio.tinio@gmail.com

Website: www.act-teachers.org

Twitter: @ACT_Teachers

Facebook: Act Teachers Partylist