

ACT Teachers Party-List: Reaping Victories in the Struggle for Teachers' Rights and Welfare

THE YEAR 2011 proved to be a banner year for ACT Teachers Party-List as it endeavored to carry out its mandate as the true voice of teachers in Congress. With the support of hundreds of thousands of its constituents, ACT Teachers Party-List has gained initial victories in its fight for teachers' rights and welfare.

PROVISIONS ENACTED IN THE 2012 NATIONAL BUDGET

Congress enacted several special provisions proposed by ACT Teachers Party-List Representative Antonio Tinio in Republic Act 10155, the National Budget for Fiscal Year 2012. These provisions include increasing the "chalk allowance" of public school teachers and the regularization of contractual and volunteer teachers in public elementary and high schools, as well as contractual and part-time faculty in public higher education institutions.

Previously, public school teachers received P700 for their annual chalk allowance. Following Rep. Tinio's efforts to lobby for a higher allowance, the Department of Education (DepEd) realigned funds within its budget to add P300 to the allowance. By School Year 2012, classroom teachers shall receive P1,000.

The increase in chalk allowance highlights once again the decisive role of collective actions in order to achieve concrete gains. While ACT Teachers worked within Congress, thousands of teachers participated in mass actions, including a nationwide "Chalk Holiday" last September 16.

Another special provision enacted into law mandates the regularization of qualified contractual and volunteer teachers in basic education. It states that "in the hiring of new teachers, whether to fill unfulfilled or newly created positions, priority shall be given to qualified contractual and volunteer teachers, whether employed by the DepEd or the local government units." This is intended to benefit the 49,530 locally funded teachers and 19,063 volunteer Kindergarten teachers working in public schools, most of whom receive substandard pay, have no benefits, and lack security of tenure.

A similar provision introduced by Rep. Tinio requires that State Universities and Colleges give priority to qualified contractual



MARCHING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION BUDGET. ACT Teachers Representative Antonio Tinio (second from left) joined Cebu City teachers in a "Grand World Teachers' Day Parade" last October 5, 2011.

or part-time faculty in hiring for new or unfilled teaching positions. There are currently over 13,000 contractual and part-time faculty working in the country's 110 SUCs.

UPDATES ON LEGISLATIVE WORK

House Bill 2142, "An Act Upgrading the Minimum Salary of Public School Teachers from Salary Grade 11 to 15," continued to receive growing support from representatives in the 15th Congress. Rep. Tinio's bill is now backed by 181 lawmakers who have signified their support by co-authoring the said bill. If enacted, HB 2142 will pave the way for the increase in the salaries of entry-level public school teachers from P17,099/month to P24,887/month. Counterpart bills have been filed by Senators Manuel Villar and Ramon Revilla, Jr. in the Senate.

A similar bill, HB 4523, provides for the upgrading of entry-level salaries of college professors in State and Local Universities and Colleges from Salary Grade 12 to 16. To date, 138 legislators have co-authored the bill.

Rep. Tinio is one of the authors of HB 3746, "An Act Providing for a P6,000 Increase in the Minimum Pay of Employees and Workers in the Public Sector and for Other Purposes." This will address the clamor of non-teaching personnel in DepEd, public schools, and public higher education institutions.

Rep. Tinio's HB 4097, declaring October

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Fight for salary upgrading!

Message of Rep. Antonio Tinio

This July, public school teachers and other government employees will receive the fourth and last installment of their salary increases under the Salary Standardization Law III. At long last, teachers and employees will receive in full the gains we won through collective struggle in 2008.

However, unless a new law on public sector salaries is passed by Congress soon, we can expect no further pay increases in 2013 and beyond. The last thing we want is a repeat of our experience under the Arroyo administration, when our salaries were frozen for six years, from 2002 to 2007, while the cost of living continued to skyrocket.

Therefore, the urgent challenge for public school teachers this year is to push for the enactment of a new law on salary increases. We call on you to mobilize and fight for salary upgrading! Upgrade teachers from SG 11 to 15!

Support for our House Bill 2142 has been growing. Recently, two of the largest teachers' organizations in the country, the Philippine Public School Teachers' Association (PPSTA) and the Philippine Elementary School Principals' Association (PESPA), pledged their commitment to take part in campaigning for the bill's passage.

As your true voice in Congress, we are committed to exerting all efforts toward that goal. But ultimately, the enactment into law HB 2142 depends on your participation.#

HOUSE BILLS AUTHORED BY ACT TEACHERS REP. ANTONIO TINIO

HB 2142	Upgrading Public School Teachers from Salary Grade 11 to 15	HB 4077	Free Post-Secondary Education for Dependent Children of Public Elementary & High School Teachers
HB 4096	Making Election Service Voluntary for Public School Teachers	HB 4097	National Teachers' Day Act
HB 4134	Increasing Chalk Allowance to P2,000	HB 4178	Regulating Class Size in Public Schools
HB 4523	Upgrading Public Higher Education Teaching Personnel from Salary Grade 12 to 16	HB 5661	Increasing the Tax Exemption Ceiling on Personnel Benefits to P60,000
HB 5662	Increasing Personnel Economic Relief Allowance to P4,000/month	HB 5782	Philippine-American War Memorial Day
HB 5809	Amending the Foreign Currency Deposit Act of the Philippines	HB 6006	Prohibiting Hiring of Teachers on Contracts of Service & Job Orders
HB 6062	Withholding the operational funds of units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines implicated in gross human rights violation	HB 6079	Declaring Filipino Sign Language (FSL) as the National Sign Language of the Filipino Deaf

Reaping Victories ...

5 as National Teachers' Day, has been approved on third and final reading by the House. A counterpart bill is now pending on second reading in the Senate.

HB 4096, which makes election service voluntary and no longer mandatory for public school teachers, has been recommended for approval on second reading by the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms. A counterpart bill has been filed by Senator Villar.

Other significant bills recently filed by the ACT Teachers Representative include HB 5661, which seeks to reduce the tax burden on teachers and other fixed-income earners; HB 5662, mandating the increase of PERA to P4,000/month; HB 5782, declaring February 4 as Philippine-American War Memorial Day; HB 6006, prohibiting the hiring of public school teachers through contracts of service or job orders; and HB 6079, declaring Filipino Sign Language (FSL) as the national sign language of the Filipino Deaf.

Rep. Tinio has also been active in the advocacy for women's rights. He is a vocal proponent of the Reproductive Health Bill as well as HB 1800, increasing maternity leave from 60 days to 120 days.

He has also filed 22 House Resolutions calling for inquiries into numerous people's issues, including the continuing impunity for human rights violations allegedly perpetrated by the military and police, the violent demolition of urban poor communities, militarization of schools, the impact of foreign and large-scale mining on indigenous communities, and graft and corruption in the military.

ON THE 2012 NATIONAL BUDGET

During the deliberations on the 2012 National Budget, Rep. Tinio actively exposed the woeful state of nearly 20,000 volunteer kindergarten teachers who are currently employed under the DepEd's Universal Kindergarten program. He also remained a staunch critic of the ballooning fund of Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program, and was one of few lawmakers who urged the Aquino administration to re-channel CCT funds to basic social services such as education and health. Rep. Tinio also voiced out his opposition to the Aquino administration's moves to privatize social services, by means of schemes like the so-called Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), particularly for school buildings, health and housing. He pointed out that experiences of other countries showed that PPPs will be much costlier for the Filipino people in the long run.

HIGHER CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

Rep. Tinio actively supported the "10-Point Demand for Greater Budget for Education" put forward by the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) in 2011. One of the demands was for the increase of the yearly Clothing Allowance of all government employees to P6,000 from the current P4,000.

ACT led numerous mass actions, culminating in a nationally-coordinated day of action on World Teachers' Day, October 5, 2011. Thousands of teachers in the National Capital Region, Davao City, Masbate City, Bacolod, Baguio City, Iloilo City, Butuan, Angeles, Tagbilaran and Cagayan de Oro participated. Rep. Tinio joined Cebu City teachers in the "Grand World Teachers' Day Parade" which commenced from Cebu Normal University to Fuente Osmeña Circle.

ACT also led a series of mass dialogues and delegations with concerned agencies, including the DepEd and the Department of Budget and Management.

The campaign bore fruit. From P4,000, the Clothing Allowance allotted per teacher has been raised to P5,000 as provided in the 2012 National Budget.

GSIS UPDATES

ACT Teachers Party-List's unwavering call for the scrapping of unjust policies of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has yielded positive results. Last June, the new GSIS board modified its notorious Claims and Loans Interdependency Policy (CLIP), which has victimized thousands of members through unjust deductions. GSIS now applies the Choice of Loan Amortization Settlement Program (CLASP). Among other things, this modified policy means that outstanding arrears, including housing loans, will no longer be automatically deducted from the benefits of retirees, but will be settled separately. However, CLIP will continue to be applied to active, non-retiree members. As such, ACT Teachers considers this as merely a partial victory and continues to advocate for the total scrapping of CLIP.

Furthermore, ACT Teachers remained firm in its call for the scrapping of the Premium-Based Policy of GSIS.

Rep. Tinio currently chairs a Technical Working Group of the House Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization which is preparing amendments to R.A. 8291, the GSIS Law. These amendments will respond to the numerous concerns raised by teachers and other GSIS members.

CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLIES

To maintain strong ties with its constituents, ACT Teachers continued to conduct consultative assemblies throughout the country. In the past year, Rep. Tinio has engaged thousands of teachers in dialogues in the divisions of Caloocan, Manila, Mandaluyong, Navotas, Malabon, Parañaque, Muntinlupa, Pasay, Pasig, Taguig, Marikina, Las Piñas, Makati, Valenzuela, Lingayen, Tarlac City, Malolos, San Jose del Monte City, Antipolo City, Cavite City, Dasmariñas, Calamba, San Pablo City, Sta. Cruz, Lucena, Cebu City, Toledo, Talisay City, Mandaue, Bacolod, Iloilo City, Tacloban, Davao City, General Santos City, Ozamis, Dapitan, and Zamboanga City.#

CONCERNS? QUERIES? UPDATES?

Text your ACT Teachers Representative
Cong. Antonio L. Tinio
0920-922-0817

Please give your name, school, and city or municipality.

Visit us at Room 511 South Wing, House of Representatives, Batasan Hills, Quezon City

BECOME A MEMBER OF ACT TEACHERS!

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION: THERE ARE TWO OTHER TEACHERS' PARTY-LISTS IN THE 15TH CONGRESS.

A TEACHER entered Congress in 2007. They currently have two Representatives. Cong. Mariano Piamonte was former Executive Director of the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA) while Rep. Julieta Cortuna was a successful businesswoman before serving in the Lower House.

AVE began its stint in Congress in 2004. It is currently represented by Cong. Eulogio "Amang" Magsaysay, a banker and an educator. He comes from the well-known Magsaysay and Rodriguez political families.

ACT TEACHERS PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS, FY 2011

Classrooms: Apolinario Mabini Elementary School, Baguio City • Quinavite Public School, Bauang, La Union • Ilocos Sur Polytechnic College-Tagudin Campus • San Agustin Elementary School, Bacarra, Ilocos Norte • San Isidro High School, San Nicholas, Pangasinan • Gaudencio B. Lontok Memorial School, Lipa, Batangas • Labac Elementary School, Lipa, Batangas • Dasmariñas Central Elementary School, Dasmariñas Cavite • Godofredo M. Tan Memorial School of Arts and Trades, San Narcisco, Quezon • Virac Pilot Elementary School, Virac, Catanduanes • Estrella Elementary School, Brgy. Estrella, Jovellar, Albay • Buayo Elementary School, Brgy. Buayo, Pioduran, Albay • Dimalinao Elementary School, Tambulig, Zamboanga del Sur • Surigao West Central Elementary School, San Juan, Surigao City

Multi-Purpose Building/ Teachers' Center: Ramon Avancena National High School, Iloilo City • University of the Philippines- Visayas, Iloilo City • UP Cebu • City Hall Compound, Kanhuraw Hills, Tacloban City • East City Central School, Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro • Talacogon Central Elementary School, Agusan del Sur • Cotabato City National High School, Cotabato City • Alviola Village, Bgy. Baan 3, Butuan City

Renovation of Multi-Purpose Building: RELC, Department of Education, Regional Office VI • **Repair/ rehabilitation of School building:** Benigno Aquino Jr. High School, Caloocan City • **Completion of Monkayo National High School Mini-Gymnasium:** Monkayo National High School, Compostela Valley • **Improvement of Faculty Room:** Rizal High School, Pasig • **Construction of concrete water system:** A. Montes Elementary School, Iloilo City • **Construction of Library Extension:** University of Caloocan, Camarin, Caloocan City

Scholarships: Benguet State University • PNU Isabela Campus • Isabela State University, Echague, Isabela • Cagayan State University, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan • Nueva Vizcaya State University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya • Quirino State University, Diffun, Quirino • Pangasinan State University • Bulacan State University-Malolos • Ramon Magsaysay Technological University • University of Rizal System • Mariner Polytechnic Colleges Foundation, Canaman, Camarines Sur • University of North Eastern Philippines, Iriga City, Camarines Sur • Divine Word College, Legaspi City • Polytechnic University of the Philippines-Ragay Campus • Dr. Emilio B. Espinosa Sr. Memorial State College of Agriculture and Technology • Bicol University • Cebu Normal University • Bohol Island State University • Cebu Technological University • Negros Oriental State University • Northwest Samar State University • Samar State University • CHED • University of the Eastern Philippines • College of Maasin • Eastern Visayas State University • Eastern Samar State University • Leyte Normal University • Naval State University • Southern Leyte State University • University of Southeastern Philippines • University of the Philippines, Davao and Diliman Campus • Philippine Normal University

Medical Assistance: Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center • Benguet General Hospital • Gabriela Silang Hospital, Vigan, Ilocos Sur • Candon City Hospital, Candon City, Ilocos Sur • Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center • Laoag City General Hospital • Emilio Aguinaldo Hospital • Quezon Medical Center • Oriental Mindoro Provincial Hospital • Rizal Provincial Hospital • Laguna Provincial Hospital • Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital • Bicol Medical Center • Masbate Provincial Hospital • Camarines Norte Provincial Hospital • Eastern Bicol Medical Center • Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center • Gov. Celestino Gallares Medical Hospital • Gov. William "Billy" Villegas Memorial Hospital • Siquijor Provincial Hospital • Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center • Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital • Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center • LGU, Tacloban Leyte • UP-Philippine General Hospital • National Kidney & Transplant Institute (NKTi) • Philippine Heart Center (PHC) • Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC)

Health Assistance: LGU Digos City • LGU Koronadal City • LGU Polomolok • LGU Tacurong City • LGU Zamboanga del Sur Province

DSWD Assistance: LGU Butuan City • DSWD Region VI • DSWD Region X • DSWD Region XI • DSWD NCR

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