

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8505, February 13, 1998]

AN ACT PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION FOR RAPE VICTIMS, ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE A RAPE CRISIS CENTER IN EVERY PROVINCE AND CITY, AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act of 1998."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide necessary assistance and protection for rape victims. Towards this end, the government shall coordinate its various agencies and nongovernment organizations to work hand in hand for the establishment and operation of a rape crisis center in every province and city that shall assist and protect rape victims in the litigation of their cases and their recovery.

SEC. 3. *Rape Crisis Center.* - The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and a lead nongovernment organization (NGO) with proven track record or experience in handling sexual abuse cases, shall establish in every province and city a rape crisis center located in a government hospital or health clinic or in any other suitable place for the purpose of:

- (a) Providing rape victims with psychological counselling, medical and health services, including their medico-legal examination;
- (b) Securing free legal assistance or service, when necessary, for rape victims;
- (c) Assisting rape victims in the investigation to hasten the arrest of offenders and the filing of cases in court;
- (d) Ensuring the privacy and safety of rape victims;
- (e) Providing psychological counselling and medical services whenever necessary for the family of rape victims;
- (f) Developing and undertaking a training program for law enforcement officers, public prosecutors, lawyers, medico-legal officers, social workers, and barangay officials on human rights and responsibilities; gender sensitivity and legal management of rape cases; and