

by Jubels Santos

The House of Representatives approved on Third Reading on October 9, 2015 the San Roque National High School bill (House Bill 6155), sponsored by Zamboanga City District 1 Representative Celso L. Lobregat.

House Bill 6155, "An Act Establishing a National High School in Barangay San Roque, Zamboanga City, to be known as San Roque National High School and Appropriating Funds Therefor" is in substitution of House Bill 5744 as filed by Representative Lobregat.

The said bill was submitted by the Committee on Basic Education and Culture and the Committee on Appropriations as per Committee Report No. 891 on September 17, 2015. The measure was approved by the Basic Education Committee on August 4, 2015 and by the Appropriations Committee on August 11, 2015. HB 6155 was approved on Second Reading on September 21, 2015, and on Third Reading on October 9, 2015 by the House of Representatives. It was transmitted to the Senate on October 15, 2015.

As stated by Lobregat in the bill's explanatory note, "The creation of the San Roque National High School shall be a concrete act for the realization of this Constitutional guarantee, making education more accessible to the youth of Barangay San Roque and the surrounding barangays."

Presently, there are two (2) elementary schools in Barangay San Roque, namely San Roque Elementary School and Salum Elementary School. These two (2) elementary schools are clamoring for the opening of a secondary school in Barangay San Roque. There is no National High School within the two (2) kilometer radius that will cater the Grade VII to 4th Year secondary students of said barangay. Though there is a Regional Science High School, a special secondary school located at Talungon, Barangay San Roque, this only caters to students who belong to the top ten of the class with 85% general average. Thus, it cannot accept all the graduates of San Roque and Salum Elementary Schools. In this light, approval of the said measure is earnestly requested.

There are also two (2) National High School Bills – HB 5364, Tulungatung National High School, and HB 5365, Pasonanca National High School, authored by Representative Lobregat. Both were already approved by the House of Representatives on 23 February 2015 and transmitted to the Senate for concurrence. The Department of Education (DepEd) on its letter dated September 14, 2015 to Senator Pia Cayetano, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture, interposes no objection to the passage into law of said bills. Said letter was signed by DepEd Assistant Secretary Tonisito Umali. Both bills were considered by the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture, chaired by Senator Pia Cayetano, on September 24, 2015 and will await Second and Third Reading in the Senate. — Jubels Santos