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A BILL FOR AN ACT TO INTRODUCE PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND TEACHINGS OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE INTO THE CURRICULUM AS A MANDATORY SUBJECT (CIVIC EDUCATION) FOR ALL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA (HB. 502)Sponsor: **Hon. Julius Ihonvbere****1. Objectives of the Bill**

The primary objective of the Bill is to mandatorily include preventive measures and teachings on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) into the civic education curriculum of all secondary school in Nigeria. This initiative aims to create awareness, educate students on their rights, and provide knowledge on prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. The Bill also seeks to train teachers in the effective delivery of the curriculum.

2. Introduction

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a pervasive issue in Nigeria, encompassing a range of harmful actions such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and human trafficking. It significantly affects the lives of individuals across various demographic and social strata and adversely impacts the lives of survivors.

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Sexual and gender-based violence is also seen as a significant public health problem not just a crime or societal ill. Children and young people are some of the most vulnerable populations affected by such violence. Experts find that their exposure to sexual and gender-based violence is associated with negative outcomes in their development and can have devastating effects on their physical and mental health. Therefore, schools are ideal settings for promoting sexual and gender-based violence and abuse prevention and providing knowledge for children to recognize what constitutes violence and abuse, learn how to protect themselves from harm, and how to take action to avoid harm to others.

Educating students about SGBV is pivotal in making them become adept at recognizing and resisting and preventing harmful behaviors. Additionally, it allows educators identify signs of violence early and provide swift support and resources to affected students.

Currently, Civic Education is a compulsory subject in Nigerian secondary schools and provides an ideal platform for integrating teachings on SGBV. The Bill aims to educate young people about their rights and empower them to stand up against violence and seek help if they or someone they know is a victim.

3. Key Provisions of the Bill

- **Mandatory Inclusion of SGBV Teachings:** The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) is tasked with the responsibility of incorporating teachings on the

prevention and management of SGBV into the Civic Education curriculum at all secondary school levels.

- **Regulation and Implementation:** The NERDC, in collaboration with the National Senior Secondary School Commission (NSSEC), States' Ministry of Education, and the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), is responsible for ensuring the integration of SGBV teachings into the curriculum. The National Orientation Agency and UBEC will be required to oversee the proper implementation and monitoring of these teachings. The NERDC in collaboration with the National Teachers Institute, will ensure adequate training for Civic Education teachers to effectively deliver the content of the curriculum.
- **Compliance and Penalties:** The Ministry of Education in the various States will be required to ensure the compliance of secondary schools with the program. Schools that fail to comply will face penalties similar to those for non-compliance with other mandatory curriculum inclusions.

4. Observations and Recommendations

- a. Collaboration with various governmental and non-governmental organizations actively working to combat SGBV in Nigeria is essential for addressing sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, partnership with international bodies to provide training for law enforcement, healthcare workers, and community leaders will aid in developing a comprehensive curriculum, amplifying impact and enhancing management of

SGBV cases. Also, the provision of joint initiatives, such as awareness campaigns, legal aid services available to victims, and support centers for victims and survivors alike, will further strengthen efforts to combat SGBV and support those affected.

- b. While the effort to educate students on sexual and gender-based violence is commendable, there is a need to double efforts on the legal and institutional side. Research has shown that many cases of SGBV go unreported due to stigma and lack of trust in the justice system, as the judicial process is often slow and inadequate in providing timely justice and support to victims. The enforcement of legislations such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) of 2015 and Fundamental Rights Enforcement (Procedure Rules) 2009 must be prioritized for a successful fight against sexual and gender-based violence in Nigeria.

Reference:

1. UNESCO. Curriculum approaches to preventing violence and promoting gender equality. Available at: <https://endvawnow.org/en/articles/1760-curriculum-approaches-to-preventing-violence-and-promoting-gender-equality.html>

NB: This bill was passed by the House of Representatives on Wednesday, 6th March, 2024. See: <https://goo.by/UhwUzN>

3. Conclusion

The integration of SGBV teachings into the Civic Education curriculum represents a strategic move towards addressing the pervasive issue of sexual and gender-based violence in Nigeria. By educating secondary school students, the Bill aims to foster a more informed and proactive generation capable of recognizing, preventing, and responding to instances of SGBV. This legislative measure has the potential to make a significant positive impact in preventing sexual and gender based violence in Nigeria, foster a culture of respect and equality and ultimately create a safer society.



About PLAC

Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) is a non-governmental organization committed to strengthening democratic governance and citizens' participation in Nigeria. PLAC works to enhance citizens' engagement with state institutions, and to promote transparency and accountability in policy and decision-making process.

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