

Republic of the Philippines  
Province of Leyte  
Sangguniang Panlalawigan

**PROPOSED PROVINCIAL ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE MANDATING THE INCLUSION OF LAWS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN (VAWC), TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, AND OTHER RELATED PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION IN PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING SESSION ACROSS THE PROVINCE OF LEYTE.**

**Authored by:** Hon. Raissa J. Villasin  
Atty. Ronnan Christian "Bolingling" M. Reposar

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Marriage is a foundational institution that shapes family dynamics, community values, and the well-being of future generations. In recognition of the increasing need to protect women and children from violence, exploitation, and abuse, this Ordinance seeks to institutionalize the integration of relevant laws into pre-marriage counseling sessions conducted by local government units (LGUs) across the Province of Leyte.

By educating couples on their legal rights and responsibilities before entering marriage, the province aims to foster respectful, informed, and rights-based relationships. This measure supports national mandates under the Anti-VAWC Act (RA 9262), Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (RA 9208 as amended), the Mental Health Act (RA 11036), Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), and other protective legislation, while reinforcing the role of LGUs in preventive education and community empowerment.

Recognizing the growing social, health, and psychological challenges faced by couples and families, there is a need to strengthen the Pre-Marriage Orientation and Counseling (PMOC) Program by institutionalizing its implementation at the provincial and local government levels and by expanding its coverage to include essential life topics such as mental health, nutrition, gender sensitivity, anti-violence against women and their children (VAWC), and safe spaces.

This Ordinance seeks to institutionalize the PMOC as a mandatory and standardized program across Leyte Province, anchored on the aforementioned relevant national laws. It ensures that every couple entering into marriage is equipped to foster healthy relationships, responsible parenthood, and resilient families as cornerstones of a progressive and peaceful society.

**WHEREAS**, Article XV, Section 2 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes the family as the foundation of the nation and mandates the State to strengthen its solidarity and actively promote its total development;

**WHEREAS**, Section 3, Article XV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution declares that the State shall defend the right of spouses to found a family in accordance with their religious convictions and the demands of responsible parenthood;

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004), Republic Act No. 9208 as amended by RA 10364 (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act), and other related laws affirm the State's commitment to protect women and children from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and discrimination;

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 11036, or the "Mental Health Act," emphasizes the importance of promoting mental health awareness and integrating it into basic health services;

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 11148, or the "Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act," highlights the importance of nutrition, especially during preconception, pregnancy, and early childhood, as a determinant of overall family health;

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 11313, or the "Safe Spaces Act," seeks to address gender-based sexual harassment in streets, public spaces, online, workplaces, and educational institutions;

**WHEREAS**, Section 16 of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, empowers LGUs to exercise powers necessary for the promotion of the general welfare, including the protection of vulnerable sectors;

**WHEREAS**, pre-marriage counseling is a mandatory requirement for the issuance of a marriage license under Article 16 of the Family Code of the Philippines, and serves as a strategic platform for preventive education and values formation;

**WHEREAS**, the Province of Leyte recognizes the importance of integrating legal awareness into pre-marriage counseling to promote safe, equitable, and informed marital relationships;

**NOW THEREFORE**, on motion of \_\_\_\_\_, duly seconded by \_\_\_\_\_, be it ordained by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Leyte in session assembled:

**SECTION 1. TITLE** - This Ordinance shall be known as the "Pre-Marriage Legal Awareness Ordinance for the Protection of Women and Children."

**SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY** - It is the policy of the Province of Leyte to:

- a. promote informed, respectful, and rights-based marital relationships by ensuring that couples are educated on laws protecting women and children prior to marriage.
- b. Strengthen the institution of marriage and family by preparing couples for responsible and harmonious family life;
- c. Institutionalize the conduct of Pre-marriage Orientation Course as a standardized, accessible, and comprehensive program across all LGUs;
- d. Ensure inclusion of mental health, nutrition, gender sensitivity, reproductive health, anti-VAWC, safe spaces and other related protective legislations.
- e. Promote inter-agency collaboration for effective Pre-marriage Orientation Course implementation.

**SECTION 3. COVERAGE** - This Ordinance shall apply to all cities and municipalities within the Province of Leyte conducting pre-marriage counseling as part of the marriage license application process. It shall apply to all individuals applying for a marriage license in the Province of Leyte, whether residents or non-residents, and shall be implemented in coordination with the City/Municipal Local Government Units (C/MLGUs) through their respective Local Civil Registry Offices and Municipal/City Health Offices.

**SECTION 4. MANDATORY INCLUSION IN PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING** - All LGUs shall integrate the salient features of the following laws and frameworks into their pre-marriage counseling:

- RA 9262 or Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004
- RA 9208, as amended by RA 10364 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act
- RA 7610 or the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act
- RA 11036 or the Mental Health Act, which emphasizes the importance of promoting mental health awareness and integrating it into basic health services;
- RA 11313 or the Safe Spaces Act on awareness of gender-based sexual harassment under RA 11313, how to prevent it, and reporting mechanisms.
- RA 11148, or the Kalusugan at Nutrisyon ng Mag-Nanay Act, highlights the importance of nutrition, especially during preconception, pregnancy, and early childhood, as a determinant of overall family health;
- RA 9710 – Magna Carta of Women
- RA 9344 – Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act
- Other relevant national and local issuances promoting gender equality and child protection, responsible parenthood and family planning, financial literacy and household management, conflict resolution and communication Skills

**SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS.**

- The Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO), in coordination with the Provincial Gender and Development (GAD) Office and Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC), shall develop standardized modules and materials.
- Municipal and City Civil Registrars shall ensure that only applicants who have completed the enhanced counseling are issued marriage licenses.
- LGUs may partner with accredited CSOs, faith-based organizations, and national agencies for delivery of sessions.

**SECTION 6. TRAINING OF COUNSELORS** - All LGU-designated marriage counselors shall undergo capacity-building on the above laws, facilitated by the PSWDO and GAD Office, at least once every two years.

**SECTION 7. FUNDING** - Funds for implementation shall be sourced from the Provincial GAD Budget, PCPC Fund, and other available appropriations, subject to budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules.

**SECTION 8. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE** - The PSWDO shall submit an annual report to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan on compliance, challenges, and recommendations. Non-compliant LGUs may be subject to administrative review.

**SECTION 9. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE** - If any provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 10. EFFECTIVITY** - This Ordinance shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication and posting in at least three (3) conspicuous places in the Province of Leyte.