

## Outline

1. The Philippines is a country where approximately 87% of the population are Roman Catholics. There are many Catholic schools found in all the cities and most towns in the country.
2. The Catholic Church teaches that sex should only be enjoyed between a man and a woman who are married. The Catholic Church is against artificial contraception and procedures.
3. For more that a decade, there were efforts to introduce a Reproductive Health (RH) bill in the Philippines promoting artificial contraception and procedures without much success. Presently, with the active support of the President and his political allies who control Congress, it is expected that the RH Bill could soon be passed.
4. The Catholic Church has taken an active public stand opposing the RH Bill. Many Catholics have also expressed their strong opposition to the bill. There is much public debate and argumentation about the bill in the country.
5. There are many provisions of the RH Bill that are being objected on the ground that it infringes on religious freedom. Among them are:
  - (a). Mandatory reproductive health and sex education with common curriculum for all public and private schools;
  - (b). Employers are mandated to provide reproductive health services to its employees;
  - (c). Penalizing a person who maliciously engages in disinformation about the intent and provisions of the Rh Bill.
6. Objections to mandatory reproductive health and sex education which mandates the teaching of values and reproductive health procedures contrary to Catholic beliefs.
  - (a) Balancing the legitimate interests of the state in educating the young and the equally legitimate interests of parents in the religious upbringing of their children.
  - (b) Also, the Philippine Constitution provides that it is the natural and primary right of parents in the rearing of the youth and the development of their moral character.
  - (c) The issue of institutional religious freedom of schools.
7. Objections to requiring all employers to provide reproductive health services to employees.
  - (a) Balancing the exercise of the police power of the state when it conflicts with the religious beliefs of the employer.
8. Objections to penalizing a person for alleged disinformation on the RH Bill.
  - (a) Free exercise of religion includes free expression.