

**PSAMS SUPPORTS PPS POSITION ON HOUSE BILL 002 OR
“THE MINIMUM AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT”**

The Philippine Society of Adolescent Medicine Specialists, Inc. (PSAMS) is a subspecialty society of specialists in adolescent health care.

House Bill No. 002 seeks to amend *Republic Act No. 9344 or The Juvenile Justice Welfare Act, as amended by Republic Act no. 10630*, by lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 15 years to 9 years.

PSAMS believes that the proposed amendment is a step in the wrong direction. It is a step backward in the sense that the government focuses more on punishment rather than on value and character formation of our youth.

As pointed out by the Philippine Pediatric Society, Inc. (PPS) in its position paper on HB #002, scientific studies clearly demonstrate that generally children aged 15 years and below lack discernment in distinguishing right from wrong due to the immaturity of the developing brain. In this regard, PSAMS fully supports PPS in its opposition to House Bill No. 002.

PSAMS is in solidarity with all groups and persons opposing the lowering of the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 9 years.

PSAMS recognizes the value and worth of children as precious resources of the nation. As such, their development should be fully safeguarded, protected, and promoted by all. If we are to ensure a bright future for our youth, we have to harness their inner strengths, not to give up on them. Our children need love and understanding not punishment, reformation not retribution.

To curb the prevalence of violence among our youth, our government and society should provide the means to capacitate our children to develop themselves to become responsible, productive, and morally upright members of society.