

# Solons back mandatory drug test in QC schools

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At least two senators are backing Quezon City's plan to conduct mandatory drug tests in public high school and colleges, although reminding that the protection of children should be ensured.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III, a former vice mayor of the Quezon City, expressed support for Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte in her plan to enforce mandatory drug tests of all public high school and college students in the city, with or without their parents' consent.

Belmonte made the announcement after the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) reported that the city has a "100 percent drug affectation" in all school levels, including elementary school-children.

Sotto said the move is stated in the Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, of which he is principal author.

He explained that it is part of the "preventive education campaign" mandated by RA 9165.

Under Article 3 of the law, "students of secondary and tertiary schools pursuant to the related rules and regulations as contained in the school's student handbook and with notice to the parents, undergo a random drug testing."

Aside from the inclusion of drug abuse prevention in school curriculums, it also mandated local government units in Section 51 to allot "a substantial portion of their respective annual budgets to assist in or enhance the enforcement of this Act giving priority to preventive or educational programs and the rehabilitation or treatment of drug dependents."