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SENATE

RECEIVED BY: Ordo

S. No. 531

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As a consequence of poverty, malnutrition among Filipino school children has worsened. Reports show that out of the 3.4 million pupils enrolled in elementary, 515,000 are afflicted with poverty-related health problems and suffer from varying levels of malnutrition.

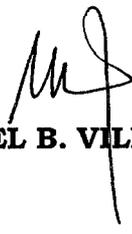
Some of the considerable effects of malnutrition among school children are impaired cognitive development, underachievement and the eventual dropping out from school.

To address the nutritional needs of schoolchildren, this bill seeks to establish a national school feeding program initially for elementary pupils. The program, which shall be called *Hot Meals for Hungry Learners* shall integrate a health and nutrition program in the school.

All public elementary schools shall be provided with seed capital to develop school gardens that shall grow vegetables and fruits and raise poultry and other animals for the feeding program.

It is hoped that with the passage of this bill, millions of hungry, elementary schoolchildren who are often forced to learn on empty stomach will have their hunger satisfied, will be attracted to go and stay in school and will have increased literacy rates and better academic performance.

In view of the foregoing, immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

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SENATE

S. No. 531

RECEIVED BY: Quila

INTRODUCED BY HON. MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
A NATIONAL SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY GRADE
PUPILS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the "Hot Meals for Hungry Learners Act of 2004."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to implement a national plan of action that will save millions of elementary school children from malnutrition and illiteracy by establishing in the Department of Education a national school feeding program that could significantly reduce the prevalence of malnutrition and swiftly resolve related school and pupil-learning problems.

SECTION 3. *National School Feeding Program.* The "Hot Meals for Hungry Learners Act" establishes in the Department of Education a National School Feeding Program that will address the nutritional needs of schoolchildren. As a priority target, the program shall be based in all public elementary schools nationwide.

Schools shall be tasked to develop school gardens for growing vegetables and raising poultry and other animals. The garden produce and/or earnings from the sale thereof shall be used exclusively for the school feeding program.

All public elementary schools shall offer food supplementation as a form of school nutrition service in order to reduce the prevalence of malnutrition which persists as a health problem due to inadequate intake of food nutrients in the pupils' homes and poor nutrition practices.

SECTION 4. *Integrated School Health and Nutrition Program.* The "Hot Meals for Hungry Learners" program shall form part of the Integrated School Health and Nutrition Program managed by the Department of Education Health and Nutrition Center.

The school health and nutrition program is a comprehensive education and service package delivered initially to the schools, and eventually to the homes and communities, in order to improve the health and nutritional status of the total school population.

Overall school health strategies and interventions to promote health, nutrition and to combat diseases common among schoolchildren such as Vitamin A deficiency, iodine/iron deficiency, anemia, roundworm and other intestinal parasitic infections shall be developed.

SECTION 5. *School Health and Nutrition Center.* The Department of Education Health and Nutrition Center created by Executive Order No. 117 shall manage the school health program to provide all public elementary schoolchildren basic health services such as medical service, dental service and nursing services. Likewise, the Center shall manage the "Hot Meals for Hungry Learners" program which shall form part of the school nutrition program.

SECTION 6. *Applied Nutrition Projects.* The Applied Nutrition Center located in Banilad, Cebu City shall serve as a laboratory for introducing applied nutrition projects which are self-sustaining. Technical assistance and training shall be provided to school heads and schoolteachers so that commodity-assisted nutrition service such as breakfast feeding program and school milk projects may be sustained with the use of locally produced primary food commodities grown in school gardens.

SECTION 7. *Responsibility of School Heads.* The "Hot Meals for Hungry Learners" program shall be initially established in all public elementary schools nationwide. Pursuant to the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001 (R.A. 9155), the school head, together with the schoolteachers, shall have full authority, responsibility and accountability for the successful implementation of the program.

For this purpose all public elementary schools shall receive a grant to be used as seed capital for the "Hot Meals for Hungry Learners" program. The school head shall be directly accountable for the prudent and judicious use of the seed capital provided herein and any earnings derived therefrom. He/she shall guarantee that the seed capital and any earnings thereof shall be exclusively used to maintain and sustain the school feeding program.

The seed capital and any earnings thereof shall be utilized to develop school gardens where vegetables and plants will be grown and poultry and other animals will be raised. To ensure sustainability the school head, in consultation with the parent-teachers-community associations, may solicit commodity assistance from local food product manufacturers such as noodles and milk products.

SECTION 8. *Initial Appropriation.* For the initial implementation of this Act, the amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (P500,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated

of which the amount of Four Hundred Fifty Million Pesos (P450,000,000.00) shall be a direct grant to every public elementary school in such an amount as may be determined by the Department of Education but in no case shall be less than Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) per school; and the amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) shall be utilized to provide technical assistance and training for the maintenance and sustainability of the program. Said amount of Five Hundred Million Pesos (P500,000,000.00) shall be funded from the net income of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

SECTION 9. *Continuing Appropriation*. For the succeeding years, the amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) for technical assistance and training in support of the program shall be included in the annual appropriation of the Department of Education.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause*. All laws, decrees, executive issuances, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause*. The provisions of this Act are hereby declared to be separable, and in the event one or more of such provisions are held unconstitutional, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity*. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,