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SENATE
S. B. — 2755

RECEIVED BY: *J*

Introduced by Senator Poe

AN ACT
TO PROTECT FILIPINO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FROM MALNUTRITION BY
ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CARE PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE

Explanatory Note

The first 1,000 days of a child's life is most critical for growth and development; consequently, hunger and poor nutrition during this period can have irreversible consequences.

The first 1,000 days refers to the period that begins with day one of a woman's pregnancy until her child's 2nd birthday. The brain and nervous system development begins early in pregnancy and is largely complete by the time the child reaches the age of 2. The damage to health, physical growth and brain development of infants affected by chronic under-nutrition can cause "stunting." Smaller than their non-stunted peers, stunted children are more susceptible to sickness and have lower chances of finishing school. They enter adulthood more prone to non-communicable disease and are less productive.

Malnutrition during this critical period of development for a child has not been adequately addressed in the Philippines. Although there are supplementary feeding programs which are undertaken by the DSWD and the DepED, these programs target children of two years and older, when children are already in either Day Care or Elementary school. It is obvious that poverty is one of the driving causes for this situation. Hence, what is needed is a program to combat malnutrition during the first 1,000 days, specifically targeting the vulnerable sectors. The World Health Organization of the United Nations strongly recommends proper health care on the first 1,000 days of a child. The right nutrition during this 1,000 days has a profound impact on the ability of the child to grow, learn and lead a long-term healthy and stable life.

Under-nutrition in the Philippines remains a serious problem. Available data show large numbers of Filipino children are undernourished: 3.6 million of children 0-59 months are underweight; and 4 million are stunted.¹ The 2012 report conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute-Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST) shows that 25% or one in every four pregnant women is undernourished. Babies who are malnourished in the womb have a higher risk of dying in infancy and are more likely to face lifelong cognitive and physical defects and chronic health problems.

This bill seeks to establish a mother and child health care program in every barangay, in order to protect mothers and children from malnutrition. Maternal nutrition is vital because the

¹Unicef http://www.unicef.org/philippines/health_nutrition.html#VUhem46gqko.

health to the mother while pregnant, affects the development of the fetus. There is an imperative need to provide prenatal and postnatal maternity care service to a pregnant woman in order to protect her health as well as ensure the nutritional diet of her newborn child to eradicate malnutrition. The program shall include early and exclusive breastfeeding; timely, safe, appropriate and high-quality complementary food; and appropriate micronutrient interventions.

This legislation will supplement my advocacy and one of the first policy measures that I filed in this Congress, “Sustansiya Sa Batang Pilipino Act of 2013” – a feeding program for school children. Significantly, the bill is also a counterpart to House Bill No. 5431 filed by Representative Rogelio J. Espina (Biliran, Lone District).

Though hunger and malnutrition in children of any age are alarming public health issues, intervention during the 1,000-day window is critical and deserves our urgent attention, thus approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.


GRACE POE

15 MAY -7 AM 1:13

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**AN ACT
TO PROTECT FILIPINO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FROM MALNUTRITION BY
ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CARE PROGRAM
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE**

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "First 1,000 Days Act."

2
3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* -It is hereby declared the policy of the State: (a) To
4 equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception. (b) To recognize
5 the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, and the duty of
6 the State to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services

7 For purposes of this Act, the "First 1,000 days" refers to the period starting from Day One
8 of a woman's pregnancy, until the child reaches the age of two years.

9 SECTION 3. *Establishing a First 1000 Days Program in every barangay.* - The
10 Department of Health (DOH) shall, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local
11 Government (DILG), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the National
12 Nutrition Council (NNC), and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute-Department of Science and
13 Technology (FNRI-DOST), develop a comprehensive health care program for pregnant and lactating
14 women as well as the health and nutrition of their newborn children from 1 to 1,000 days, in every
15 barangay.

16 SECTION 4. *Program Content.* - The maternal and child health care services which may
17 be provided to eligible individuals during the 1,000-day period shall include the following:

- 18 a) Instruction and counseling regarding future health care for the mother and child;
19 b) Nutrition counseling;
20 c) Milk-feeding program for pregnant and nursing mothers, including breastfeeding for
21 new-born children;
22 d) Treating malnourished children with special and therapeutic foods;
23 e) General family counseling, including child and family development; and
24 f) Timely intervention through safe, appropriate and high-quality complementary food.

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26 SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the
27 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the

1 Interior and Local Government, and Secretary of Social Welfare and Development and
2 representatives of recognized women's and children's organizations and academic communities,
3 promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the effectivity of this Act.

4 SECTION 6. Appropriation. – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as may
5 be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the
6 amount necessary for the continuous operation of the Bike Program shall be included in the annual
7 appropriation of the DOTC.

8
9 SECTION 7. Separability Clause. - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
10 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
11 valid and subsisting.

12
13 SECTION 8. Repealing Clause. - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,
14 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with any
15 provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

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17 SECTION 9. Effectivity Clause. -This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
18 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

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21 Approved,
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