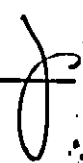




'16 JAN 25 P5:18

SENATE
S. No. 3125

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A PREGNANCY SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICE UNDER THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 12, provides:

The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It shall equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception...

The World Health Organization recently released a scientific-based evidenced report entitled "Meeting Women's Contraceptive Needs in the Philippines."¹ Among the key points stated by the report are as follows:

- Without contraceptive use in the Philippines, there would be 1.3 million more unplanned births, 0.9 million more induced abortions and 3,500 more maternal deaths each year.
- More than half of all pregnancies in the Philippines are unintended, with the highest proportions in the Cordillera Administrative Region, Central and Eastern Visayas, and Caraga.
- Three in 10 Filipino women at risk for unintended pregnancy do not practice contraception. These women account for nearly seven in 10 unintended pregnancies.

¹ https://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2009/04/15/IB_MWCNP.pdf

- Poor women are especially likely to need assistance in preventing unintended pregnancy. The 35% of women aged 15 to 49 who are poor account for 53% of unmet need for contraception.

In the Philippines, the alleged root cause of abortion is unintended pregnancy. Hence, expectant mothers should be aware of the services available, during and after pregnancy. This bill seeks to encourage and assist women to carry their children to live birth by providing services, during and after pregnancy, which will alleviate the financial, social, emotional, and other difficulties that may otherwise lead to abortion.²


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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² This bill was originally filed during the Fourteenth Congress, Second Regular Session.



'16 JAN 25 P5:18

SENATE
S. No. 3125

RECEIVED BY: *J*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A PREGNANCY SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICE UNDER THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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 “Care for Life Act.”

2 SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purposes of this Act, the term:

3 A. “Pregnancy support services” refers to services offered by the government,
4 faith-based, and other providers, during and after pregnancy, that will
5 encourage and assist women to carry their children to live birth by
6 alleviating financial, social, emotional, and other difficulties that may
7 otherwise lead to abortion, including the following:

8 1. Material assistance, including maternity and baby clothing, diapers,
9 baby food (including formula), and baby furniture.

10 2. Referrals for adoption, job training, housing, assistance with
11 domestic violence, and food stamps and other governmental
12 assistance.

13 3. Crisis hotlines, including for violence or suicide prevention.

14 4. Pro-bono obstetric and prenatal care services for women intending to
15 carry their children to live birth, including services during pregnancy

1 and following childbirth, and neonatal care services, including
2 referrals for such services.

3 5. Pro-bono legal services to assist women who wish to carry their
4 children to live birth and parents with newborn children.

5 6. Child care services.

6 7. Services to assist parents to care for, and prepare to care for, a child
7 with Down Syndrome or another prenatally diagnosed condition, and
8 to facilitate the adoption of such children as appropriate.

9 8. Life skills mentoring, including to enhance the following
10 competencies:

11 i. Strengthening marriage.

12 ii. Communication and conflict management for building
13 healthy marriages and families.

14 iii. Decision-making and relationship-building skills prior to
15 marriage.

16 iv. High-risk behavior awareness.

17 9. Life-skills counseling.

18 B. "Secretary" refers to the Department of Health Secretary.

19 SECTION 3. *Pregnancy Support Services Office.* – The Department of Health
20 shall establish an Office of Pregnancy Support Services which shall encourage and assist
21 pregnant women to carry their children to live birth by providing services, during and
22 after pregnancy, that will alleviate the financial, social, emotional and other difficulties
23 that may otherwise lead to an abortion.

24 SECTION 4. *Pregnancy Care Information Service.* – The Secretary shall develop
25 and maintain a comprehensive, publicly accessible, and user friendly database, to be

1 known as the Pregnancy Care Information Service, to serve as a consolidated source of
2 information on pregnancy support services. Further, it shall include pertinent information
3 on the providers of the pregnancy support services listed in the database.

4 SECTION 5. *Annual Conference.* – The Secretary shall conduct an annual
5 nationwide best practices conference, gathering experts from State and local
6 governments, prenatal and parenting care centers, and other relevant facilities to:

7 A. Share information on best practices in pregnancy support services; and

8 B. Identify and address key burdens or adverse circumstances facing pregnant
9 women.

10 SECTION 6. *Public Outreach.* – The Secretary shall develop and implement a
11 public outreach campaign to provide information on pregnancy support services to
12 vulnerable women, including those in low-income, urban and rural areas.

13 SECTION 7. *Parental Care Grants to Institution of Higher Education.* – The
14 Secretary may award competitive grants to institutions of higher education for the
15 exclusive purpose of providing pregnancy support services, which may include:

16 A. Employing a registered nurse, physician assistant or physician with
17 specialized training in prenatal care.

18 B. Establishing and maintaining student outreach programs to provide prenatal
19 care, parenting assistance, and student housing assistance to the
20 institution's pregnant and parenting students.

21 SECTION 8. *Annual Report.* – The Secretary shall submit an annual report to
22 Congress on the activities, the funds expended on such activities, and the results achieved
23 through such activities.

1 SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
3 provisions hereof.

4 SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or
5 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
6 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

7 SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
8 after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
9 circulation.

Approved,

/lml3Dec2015