


THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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SENATE
S. B. No. **1654**RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 13, Section 11 mandates the State to give priority to the needs of women. To carry out this mandate, the State should undertake appropriate research focusing on women's health which shall be responsive to their needs and responsibilities.

Women have peculiar needs and responsibilities. Women are more exposed to diseases and danger as they get pregnant and give birth. Studies show that women who give birth are more susceptible to pregnancy-related and childbirth-related complications, especially if the women are either too young or too old, or if the pregnancies and child bearing have been too many or closely spaced.

Because of the responsibilities of women in this society, they have heavier and more tiring workloads. Women, aside from doing income-generating work also have to perform such other responsibilities as child rearing, community work and housework, which often fall solely on them. Hence, there is a probability that they get tired more and so may have lower resistance to infections.

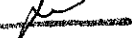
Taking into account the needs of women arising from the role that they play in this society, this bill seeks to establish the Office of Research on Women's Health which shall conduct research on women's health and shall provide the appropriate and quality care to women.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Research on Women’s Health Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to give priority to the needs of women. Taking into account the inherent disparity between men and women, the State shall undertake a research focusing on women’s health which shall be responsive to the needs of every woman.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

- (1) “Secretary” shall refer to the Secretary to the Department of Health;
- (2) “Women’s health conditions” shall refer to all diseases, disorders, and conditions —
 - (i) unique to, more serious, or more prevalent in women;
 - (ii) for which the factors of medical risk or types of medical intervention are different for women, or for which it is unknown whether such factors or types are different for women; or
 - (iii) with respect to which there has been insufficient clinical research involving women as subjects or insufficient clinical data on women.
- (3) “Research on women’s health” shall mean research on women’s health conditions, including research on preventing such conditions; and
- (4) “Committee” shall refer to the Advisory Committee on Women’s Health.

SECTION 4. *Establishment of the Office of Research on Women's Health.* - There shall be established an office to be known as the Office of Research on Women's Health which shall be headed by the Secretary. The Secretary shall have the following functions:

- (1) to identify projects of research on women's health that should be conducted or supported by both the government and non-government agencies;
- (2) to promote coordination and collaboration among entities conducting research identified under paragraph 1;
- (3) to recommend an agenda for conducting and supporting such research; and
- (4) To encourage the conduct of such research.

SECTION 5. *Advisory Committee on Women's Health.* - In carrying out the provisions of Section 4, the Secretary shall establish a Committee to be known as the Advisory Committee on Women's Health.

SECTION 6. *Composition.* - The Committee shall be composed of nine (9) members which shall include the following:

- (1) Two (2) representatives from the Department;
- (2) Four (4) physicians, practitioners and other health personnel;
- (3) Two (2) representatives from a non-governmental organization which conducts research on women;
- (4) One (1) representative from the general public.

A majority of the members of the Committee shall be women.

SECTION 7. *Meetings.* - The Advisory Committee shall determine the number, time, place and conduct of meetings, except that it shall hold at least one (1) public meeting each year at which the general public is given an opportunity to express views concerning the conduct of research on women's health by the Office.

SECTION 8. *Term.* – Members shall be appointed by the Secretary for a term of three (3) years. Of those first appointed, three (3) members shall serve for three (3) years, three (3) members for two (2) years, and the last three (3) members for one (1) year.

Any vacancy in the membership of the Committee shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

Any member of the Committee may be removed for cause in accordance with procedures established by the Committee.

SECTION 9. *Functions.* – The Committee shall have the following functions:

(1) Advise the Secretary on appropriate research activities to be undertaken by the Office with respect to —

- (a) research on women's health;
- (b) research on gender differences in clinical drug trials, including responses to pharmacological drugs;
- (c) research on gender differences in disease etiology, course and treatment;
- (d) research on obstetrical and gynecological health conditions, diseases and treatment; and
- (e) research on women's health conditions which require a multidisciplinary approach.

(2) Report to the Secretary on such research;

(3) Provide recommendations to such Secretary regarding activities of the Office.

(4) Prepare a report regarding the activities of the Committee.

SECTION 10. *Appropriation.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of the Office of Research on Women's Health shall be included in the annual appropriation of the Department of Health.

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

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.

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