

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

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SENATE
S. B. No. 1688 RECEIVED BY: pu

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 4 mandates the State to recognize the role of women in nation-building. This mandate requires the State to give women opportunities that will enhance their welfare and realize their full potential in the service of the nation.

In order to help our economy recover, the full potential of every Filipino must be realized. Every Filipino must be given chance to be productive and play his or her part in building a nation we can all be proud of. Every one must be given a chance notwithstanding the person's gender, age, or creed.

This bill seeks to empower women in business enterprise by giving them the necessary assistance to attain their fullest potential in the field of trade and business.

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO *df*

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SENATE **1688**
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AN ACT
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING THEM WITH FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL,
AND INFORMATION ASISTANCE IN ORDER FOR THEM TO EXCEL IN COMMERCE
AND TRADE

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 “Women Empowerment in Enterprise Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – In accordance with the mandate of the Constitution, it is declared a State policy to grant women assistance and opportunities in enterprise that will enhance their welfare their full potential in order for them to play their role in nation-building and serve the nation.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act, the terms:

- (1) “Secretary” refers to the Secretary of Labor and Employment,
- (2) “Department” refers to the Department of Labor and Employment; and
- (3) “Committee” refers to the Women in Enterprise Assistance and Advisory Committee.

SECTION 4. *Development Program.* – The Secretary shall adopt and implement a Women in Enterprise Development Program which provides women with financial, educational and information assistance, as provided for in the subsequent Sections of this Act.

SECTION 5. *Financial Assistance.* – The Secretary shall provide financial assistance to women:

(1) to support the creation of small to medium-size businesses in which women can readily participate;

(2) to foster investment in business substantially owned or managed by women; and

(3) to enable such women to further their education.

SECTION 6. *Educational Assistance.* – The Secretary shall, with the aid and cooperation of the Secretary of Education, provide scholarship and educational assistance:

(1) to encourage women to participate in the processes of local and national government and to stimulate the interest of women in business;

(2) to prepare women for involvement in government and business;

(3) to provide opportunities for women to gain practical experience in government and business through internship or on-the-job apprenticeships while in school; and

(4) to identify women with leadership potential to serve as role models, and to assist such women in furthering their education and obtaining suitable positions in the public or private sector.

The Secretary of Education shall take the interest of women in consideration, specially their development in enterprise, in adopting curricula, policies and guideline for secondary and post-secondary education.

SECTION 7. *Information Assistance.* – The Department shall create and establish a local resource centers in its provincial which offer to women interested in careers in business, government, or related fields:

(1) basic course in accounting, bookkeeping, and marketing practices, and other courses;
and

(2) workshop, informational materials, career counseling, and assistance in the local community.

SECTION 8. *Establishment of Committee.* – The Secretary shall establish a Women in Enterprise Assistance and Advisory Committee.

SECTION 9. *Composition.* – The Committee shall be composed of Secretary as the Chairman and eight (8) members appointed by the said Secretary, including:

- (1) One (1) representative of a labor organization;
- (2) Two (2) representatives of the Department of Labor and Employment;
- (3) Two (2) representatives of the Department of Education; and
- (4) Three (3) members of the general public, of whom at least (2) shall be women engaged in an enterprise as an owner or part owner.

SECTION 10. *Functions of the Committee.* – The Women in Enterprise Assistance and Advisory Committee shall have the following functions:

- (1) make recommendations regarding prevention of gender discrimination in the province of business and trade;
- (2) study and recommend ways to empower women in the field of business and trade;
- (3) identify areas around the country where women may excel not only in the field of business and trade but also in career service in the government;
- (4) approve and disapprove application of women candidates applying for any assistance under this Act; and
- (5) formulate the necessary rules and regulations;

SECTION 11. *Term of Office.* – Members of the Committee shall be appointed for a term of office of three (3) years, except that of the members first appointed, three (3) shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year, two (2) shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years, and two (2) shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years, as determined by the Secretary.

SECTION 12. *Meetings.* – The Committee shall meet not less than four (4) times a year or at the call of the Secretary.

SECTION 13. *Compensation.* - Members of the Committee shall be compensated at a rate equivalent to an employee of the National Government occupying a salary grade 25 position, except those already employed by the Philippine Government.

SECTION 14. *Appropriations.* - To carry out the provisions of this Act, such sum as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the sums necessary for the continuous operation of the centers shall be included in the annual appropriations of the Department of Labor and Employment.

SECTION 15. *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 16. *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 17. *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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