



SENATE

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P.S.R. No. 370

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

**RESOLUTION
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT TO
INCLUDE ALL FAMILIES WITH SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE SOCIAL
AMELIORATION PROGRAM**

WHEREAS, on 12 March 2020 the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) raised the COVID-19 threat to the highest alert level after evidence revealed a sustained community transmission of the disease¹;

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization and various studies have shown that older persons are at a significantly increased risk of getting infected by COVID-19 given their diminished physiological wellbeing characterized by decreased immune function associated with ageing, as well as the presence of underlying conditions such as hypertension and diabetes common to the elderly²;

WHEREAS, the latest data from the Department of Health shows that of the 6,981 confirmed COVID-19 cases 28.55% are senior citizens, and a huge 68.61% of deaths come from the elderly³;

WHEREAS, older persons are disproportionately affected by the ongoing health crisis and the consequent Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) not only for their health vulnerabilities but also because most of them are impoverished, as well;

WHEREAS, Republic Act 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act provides for an emergency subsidy from P5,000.00 to P8,000.00 a month for two months to low-income families to provide for their basic sustenance;

WHEREAS, the Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 series of 2020 signed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Budget and Management, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Interior and Local

¹ GMA News Online, 12 March 2020, *Code Red Sub-Level 2: Duterte announces 'community quarantine' vs. COVID-19*. Retrieved from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/729459/code-red-sub-level-2-duterte-announces-tougher-measures-vs-covid-19-threat/story/>.

² Kluge, Hans Henri, 2 April 2020, Statement – Older people are at highest risk from COVID-19, but all must act to prevent community spread. Retrieved from <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/statements/statement-older-people-are-at-highest-risk-from-covid-19,-but-all-must-act-to-prevent-community-spread>.

³ Department of Health COVID-19 Case Tracker, 23 April 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.doh.gov.ph/2019-nCoV>.

Government identified senior citizens as beneficiaries for the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) that targets the most affected residents of areas under the enhanced Community Quarantine;

WHEREAS, while the DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 04 series of 2020 identifies senior citizens among the target beneficiaries of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), the criteria it sets excludes a wide range of senior citizens;

WHEREAS, among those excluded are senior citizens receiving pension, and whose exclusion does not take into consideration the 2018 SSS and GSIS Administrative data disclosing that 75% of SSS pensioners and 24.1 GSIS pensioners receive a meager P5,000 and less a month⁴;

WHEREAS, excluding social pension beneficiaries under Republic Act 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 misses the point that this social pension was designed to supplement the needs of indigent senior citizens, and it ignores the fact that amid this crisis many of our elderly who still work as part of the informal economy are summarily deprived of their livelihood;

WHEREAS, according to the 2018 Longitudinal Study of Ageing and Health in the Philippines, while a significant number of senior citizens are dependent on financial support coming from their children a "vast majority of older persons, 43% (women) and 13% (men)" experienced considerable difficulty in making ends meet, thus excluding the elderly who receive support from their children who, in most likelihood have also been adversely affected by the ECQ is counter-productive⁵, and

WHEREAS, an overwhelming majority of our senior citizens are poor, and the COVID-19 crisis managed to magnify their physical and financial vulnerabilities, and as an institution of power, the Senate is called upon to respond to their urgent need.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED TO URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE ALL FAMILILES WITH SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM, AND TO PRIORITIZE OLDER PERSONS LIVING ALONE WITH THEIR SPOUSES, THOSE LIVING UNACCOMPANIED, AND THE HOMELESS.

Adopted.


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator

⁴ Joint Statement of the Coalition of Services of the Elderly, Inc. and other senior citizens' organizations nationwide on the Inclusion of Senior Citizens in the Social Amelioration Program and the Immediate Distribution of Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens, 8 April 2020.

⁵ Ibid.