

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

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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. **213**

INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE MAR ROXAS

A RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE INDISCRIMINATE AND WIDESPREAD USE OF INFANT MILK FORMULA IN THE COUNTRY AND ITS ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FILIPINO INFANTS AND CHILDREN;

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 12 provides that "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;"

WHEREAS, on 21 May 1981, the Thirty-Fourth World Health Assembly issued Resolution WHA34.22, also known as the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, which states that "The encouragement and protection of breastfeeding is an important part of the health, nutrition and other social measures required to promote healthy growth and development of infants and young children; and that breastfeeding is an important aspect of primary health care;"

WHEREAS, on 10 October 1986, Resolution WHA34.22 was adopted by the Philippines by virtue of E.O. No. 51, also known as the "National Code of Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes, Breastmilk Supplements and Other Related Products;"

WHEREAS, consistent with Article 1 of Resolution WHA34.22, E.O. No. 51 seeks "to contribute to the provision of safe and adequate nutrition for infants by the protection and promotion of breastfeeding and by ensuring the proper use of breastmilk substitutes and breastmilk supplements when these are necessary, on the basis of adequate information and through appropriate marketing and distribution;"

WHEREAS, the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have recommended exclusive breastfeeding of infants up to six months of age and continued breastfeeding with complementary feeding up to two years to promote infant and child development;

WHEREAS, a recent study by the National Demographic Health Survey showed that only 16% of Filipino mothers breastfeed their babies in the first six months from birth. It was also reported earlier this year that the top consumer commodity in the Philippines is infant milk formula;

WHEREAS, the UNICEF has expressed alarm over the widespread use of infant milk formula in the Philippines. UNICEF's country representative to the Philippines, Nicholas Alipui, said in a press statement released in the Washington Times last 21 January 2005 that "In a country where access to safe water is limited, and where 26.5 million persons live in poverty, the high consumption of infant formula is a death sentence to thousands of infants;"

WHEREAS, the WHO expressed similar alarm this month after receiving reports that the Philippines was one of 42 countries accounting for 90 percent of child deaths worldwide since 2000. In an article published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer last 7 March 2005, the WHO's country representative to the Philippines, Dr. Jean-Marc Olive, said that as many as 16,000 Filipino infants below five months of age would contract fewer infections if exclusively breastfed from birth. He also cited studies by Geneva-based experts showing that breastfeeding alone can prevent 75% of child deaths;

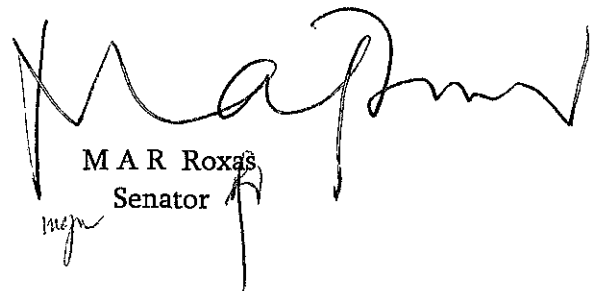
WHEREAS, only a mother's breastmilk provides ideal nutrition and health protection for infants in the first six months of life, possessing anti-infective properties that help to protect infants against diarrhea, infection and disease. Breastfeeding also forms a unique biological and emotional basis for the health of both mother and child;

WHEREAS, poor feeding practices in infancy stall the child's physical growth and intellectual and social development and increase the risk of obesity, heart disease and gastrointestinal problems in the child's later years;

WHEREAS, there is a need to regulate the promotion of infant milk formula use in the country by enacting measures to strengthen the implementation of E.O. No. 51 and to better educate Filipino health workers and parents on the health benefits of breastfeeding;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Senate direct the Committee on Health and Demography to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the widespread and indiscriminate use of infant milk formula in the country and its adverse impact on the development of Filipino infants and children.

Adopted,


M A R Roxas
Senator