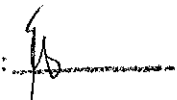


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

7 JUL -4 11:27

SENATE  
S.B. No. 921

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill provides for the creation of programs and opportunities that will improve the welfare and encourage the empowerment of *Filipino women* all over the country.

The 2000 Census reported that there are 37.9 million women in the Philippines. 51 percent or 19 million of these women belong to the reproductive age group (15 to 49 years old). *Filipino women* head 5.4 percent of the households in the country and have a higher literacy rate than their male counterparts with 94.7 percent. Less than half of the 19 million women are engaged in gainful activities. From this group, 26 percent are laborers and unskilled workers.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) assists provincial governments and congressional offices in the funding of women livelihood program, like the "Self-Employment Assistance sa Kaunlaran or SEA-K program. In South Cotabato, the program has 4,128 members. The town of President Roxas, Capiz adopted the scheme and has extended assistance to 1,000 women. Clearly, these efforts are inadequate because these programs are unavailable to other *Filipino women* in other parts of the country.

This bills seeks to grant assistance to women through development programs and financial, educational and information assistance which will aid in empowering and enhancing their welfare. A "Women in Enterprise Assistance and Advisory Committee" shall be established by the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment to manage and supervise the programs of the Act.

Furthermore, the measure authorizes the necessary appropriations be made by the National Treasury in order to fund the operations of the Act's programs.

In order to help our economy recover, the full potential of every *Filipino* must be realized. Every *Filipino* must be given a 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, especially women.

For these reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**LOREN LEGARDA**  
Senator

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

7 JUL -4 11:27

SENATE  
S.B. No. 921

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

---

**AN ACT**  
**EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING THEM FINANCIAL, EDUCATIONAL**  
**AND INFORMATION ASSISTANCE 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 and realize 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:

- (a) *Secretary* refers to the Secretary of Labor and Employment
- (b) *Department* refers to the Department of Labor and Employment
- (c) *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 will provide 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:

- (a) to support the creation of small to medium-size business in which women can readily participate;
- (b) to foster investment in business substantially owned or managed by women; and
- (c) to enable such women to further their education.

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

- (a) to encourage women to participate in the process of local and national government, and to stimulate the interest of women in business;
- (b) to prepare women for involvement in government and business;
- (c) to provide opportunities for women to gain practical experience in government and business through internship or on-the-job apprenticeship while in school; and
- (d) to identify women with leadership potential to serve as role models, and to assist such women in furthering their educational and obtaining suitable positions in the public or private sector.

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

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

- (a) basic courses in accounting, bookkeeping and marketing practices, and other courses; and
- (b) workshops, information materials, career counseling and assistance in the local community.

**SECTION 8. Establishment of a Committee.** The Secretary shall establish an 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:

- (a) one (1) representative of a labor organization;
- (b) two (2) representatives of the Department of Labor and Employment;
- (c) two (2) representatives of the Department of Education, and
- (d) three (3) members of the general public, of whom at least two (2) shall be 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:

- (a) make recommendations regarding prevention of gender discrimination in the province of business and trade;

- (b) study and recommend ways to empower women in the field of business and trade;
- (c) identify areas around the country where women may excel not only in the field of business and trade but also in career service in government;
- (d) approve and disapprove application of women candidates applying for any assistance under this Act;
- (e) develop a criteria for identifying the women who are eligible to avail of the assistance given under this Act; and
- (f) 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 or 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 of regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provision 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 newspaper of general publication.

Approved,