

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



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SENATE

S.B. No. 1266

RECEIVED BY: *ji*

INTRODUCED BY SEN. CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2001, the Philippine economy experienced a surge in growth due to the increased demand for Filipino professionals abroad, foremost of which is the demand for registered nurses. Since the demand for Filipino services was high and the OFWs were earning in foreign currency, our country benefited as their remittances of foreign funds soon became a major contributor to our economic development. However, during the past years, there has been a reduction of foreign demand for the Filipino worker. Regarding nurses, developed nations, such as the United States, are adopting policies that resulted to reducing the opportunities of our nurses to work abroad. As of today, there are around one hundred thousand unemployed nurses (including those not employed or working as nurses) in the Philippines.

While nurses may have found employment in unrelated industries, such as call centers, or perhaps found other means of livelihood, In order to deal with the growing unemployment rate among nurses, our country now finds itself unable to utilize the potential benefits that may be provided by properly employed nurses considering that the health service sector remains wanting. The entire education and training process in order to produce nurses is being wasted by reason of the unemployment of the nurses.

The aim of this bill is to urgently address the problem of the unemployment and underutilization of our thousands of nurses. This bill proposes that government mobilize and utilize these unemployed nurses by dispatching at least one registered nurse to every barangay in the Philippines. The duties of each dispatched nurse include educating their respective barangays on the importance of health, hygiene, sanitation, and wellness. Their goal is not only to address the immediate medical needs of the community, but also, through education, to prevent illnesses and ailments because, to quote Benjamin Franklin, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

I recommend the immediate passage of this bill.


CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

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Office of the Secretary

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF NURSES, ASSIGNING ONE REGISTERED NURSE FOR EVERY BARANGAY IN THE PHILIPPINES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “A Nurse in Every Barangay Act”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policies. – The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare. Towards this end, it is further declared to be the policy of the State to promote a sustained and cultivated reservoir of national talents, preserving the skills and aptitude of our trained professionals, particularly our nurses, through utilization and maximization of their medical knowledge in programs that will likewise help promote the right of the people to health and health consciousness, thereby achieving the realization of a healthy and productive citizenry.

SECTION 3. Program of the Employment of Nurses in Every Barangay – There is hereby established a Program for the Employment of Nurses in every barangay, for the purpose of improving the delivery of public health care services, and to provide relevant and timely education on wellness, hygiene, sanitation and other health safety measures to the poorest communities in rural areas as well as underprivileged communities in the urban areas, while providing gainful employment to registered nurses and utilizing their professional competencies.

SECTION 4. Role of Local Government Units. – Each local government unit is mandated to employ one (1) registered nurse in every barangay within their jurisdiction.

SECTION 5. Recruitment, Selection, and Training. – The local government units shall secure the assistance of the Department of Health in recruiting, selecting, and in training the registered nurses employed by Local government units to ensure their capability in addressing public health and wellness concerns of the barangays.

For this purpose, the Department of Health is hereby mandated to issue guidelines setting the qualifications of nurses to be deployed to the barangays as well as come up with a module for the relevant training of these nurses. The guidelines to be set shall in no case discriminate against the hiring of fresh graduates or newly passed registered nurses.

SECTION 6. *Minimum Qualification of Nurses* – Nurses engaged under the program shall have the following minimum qualifications: must have a valid RN license issued by the Professional Regulatory Commission; must be willing to relocate to its assigned area, even temporarily; and must have passion for public health concerns.

SECTION 7. *Stipend* – Nurses employed under the program shall be entitled to a monthly stipend equal to salary grade 15, consistent with the mandatory minimum entry-level pay for government nurses under the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, or Republic Act no. 9173.

SECTION 8. *Certification* – Nurses under this program are required to provide an annual health status report regarding the average health and wellness of the barangay and must provide suggestions to the local government units to improve the health and wellness of all citizens of the barangay.

SECTION 9. *Appropriation*. - The amount necessary to implement the program under this Act shall be initially appropriated out of the funds of the respective local government units. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the full implementation of this program shall be included in the respective budget of the local government units in the General Appropriation Act.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulation* – Within sixty days (60) from the effectivity of this Act, the DILG and DOH shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations, as may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause* – Should any section or provision of this Act be held unconstitutional or invalid, such a declaration shall not invalidate other provision hereof.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed and/or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) following its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines

Approved,