

SENATE  
S. B. 161

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Introduced by Senator Poe

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**AN ACT  
TO PROTECT FILIPINO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN FROM MALNUTRITION BY  
ESTABLISHING A MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH CARE PROGRAM AND  
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE PURPOSE**

**Explanatory Note**

The first 1,000 days of a child's life is most critical for growth and development; consequently, hunger and poor nutrition during this period can have irreversible consequences.

The first 1,000 days refers to the period that begins with day one of a woman's pregnancy until her child's 2nd birthday. The brain and nervous system development begins early in pregnancy and is largely complete by the time the child reaches the age of 2. The damage to health, physical growth and brain development of infants affected by chronic under-nutrition can cause "stunting." Smaller than their non-stunted peers, stunted children are more susceptible to sickness and have lower chances of finishing school. They enter adulthood more prone to non-communicable disease and are less productive.

Malnutrition is responsible for almost half of all deaths of children under age 5; virtually all of these deaths are preventable. Nearly 170 million children have had the growth of their young bodies and brains stunted by chronic malnutrition. Women who are poorly nourished throughout their lives are at greater risk of complications during pregnancy and death during childbirth. The damage caused by poor nutrition early in life can be irreversible<sup>1</sup>.

Malnutrition during this critical period of development for a child has not been adequately addressed in the Philippines. Although there are supplementary feeding programs which are undertaken by the DSWD and the DepED, these programs target children of two years and older, when children are already in either Day Care or Elementary school. It is obvious that poverty is one of the driving causes for this situation. Hence, what is needed is a program to combat malnutrition during the first 1,000 days, specifically targeting the vulnerable sectors. The World Health Organization of the United Nations strongly recommends proper health care on the first 1,000 days of a child. The right nutrition during this 1,000 days has a profound impact on the ability of the child to grow, learn and lead a long-term healthy and stable life.

Under-nutrition in the Philippines remains a serious problem. Available data show large numbers of Filipino children are undernourished: 3.6 million of children 0-59 months are underweight; and 4 million are stunted.<sup>2</sup> The latest National Nutrition Survey showed that overall malnutrition or stunting rate for Filipino children aged 0 to 2 was at its worst in the last 10 years

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hmhb.org/2014/03/1000-days-matter/>

<sup>2</sup> Unicef [http://www.unicef.org/philippines/health\\_nutrition.html#.VUhem46qqko](http://www.unicef.org/philippines/health_nutrition.html#.VUhem46qqko).

at 26.2 percent in 2015—an indication that growth was not inclusive and that inequality between the rich and the poor continued to widen. The 2015 data from the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) also revealed that one in every two children in the poorest quintiles was stunted or whose height was below the World Health Organization (WHO) reference for his age. The rate also jumped by almost three percentage points from 30.5 percent in 2013 among those under 5 years old.<sup>3</sup>

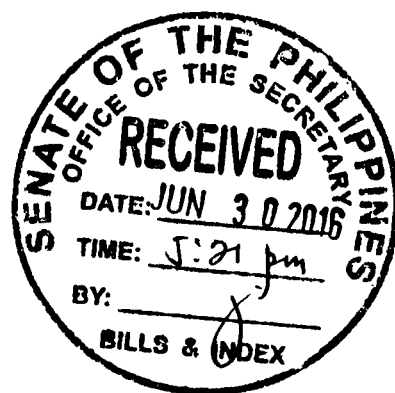
This bill seeks to establish a mother and child health care program in every barangay, in order to protect mothers and children from malnutrition. Maternal nutrition is vital because the health to the mother while pregnant, affects the development of the fetus. There is an imperative need to provide prenatal and postnatal maternity care service to a pregnant woman in order to protect her health as well as ensure the nutritional diet of her newborn child to eradicate malnutrition. The program shall include early and exclusive breastfeeding; timely, safe, appropriate and high-quality complementary food; and appropriate micronutrient interventions.

Though hunger and malnutrition in children of any age are alarming public health issues, intervention during the 1,000-day window is critical and deserves our urgent attention, thus approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.

  
GRACE POE

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<sup>3</sup> <http://opinion.inquirer.net/95066/stunting-worsens-despite-gdp-growth#ixzz4AILTXkt>



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

1           **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "*First 1,000 Days Act of 2016.*"  
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3           **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** -It is hereby declared the policy of the State:  
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- 5           a) To equally protect the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception.  
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7           b) To recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard  
8           of health, and the duty of the State to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right  
9           of access to such health care services.  
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11           For purposes of this Act, the "First 1,000 days" refers to the period starting from Day One  
12           of a woman's pregnancy, until the child reaches the age of two years.  
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14           **SECTION 3. *Establishing a First 1000 Days Program in every barangay.*** - The  
15           Department of Health (DOH) shall, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local  
16           Government (DILG), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the National  
17           Nutrition Council (NNC), and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute-Department of Science  
18           and Technology (FNRI-DOST), develop a comprehensive health care program for pregnant and  
19           lactating women as well as the health and nutrition of their newborn children from 1 to 1,000 days,  
20           in every barangay.  
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22           **SECTION 4. *Program Content.*** - The maternal and child health care services which may  
23           be provided to eligible individuals during the 1,000-day period shall include the following:  
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- 25           a) Instruction and counseling regarding future health care for the mother and child;  
26           b) Nutrition counseling;  
27           c) Milk-feeding program for pregnant and nursing mothers, including breastfeeding for  
28           new-born children;  
29           d) Treating malnourished children with special and therapeutic foods;  
30           e) General family counseling, including child and family development; and  
31           f) Timely intervention through safe, appropriate and high-quality complementary food.  
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1           **SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within ninety (90) days from the  
2 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the  
3 Interior and Local Government, and Secretary of Social Welfare and Development and representatives  
4 of recognized women's and children's organizations and academic communities, promulgate rules and  
5 regulations necessary for the effectivity of this Act.

6           **SECTION 6. *Appropriation.*** - To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as may be  
7 necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount  
8 necessary for the continuous operation of the Program shall be included in the annual appropriation of the  
9 DOH.

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11           **SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or  
12 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain  
13 valid and subsisting.

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15           **SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.*** - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,  
16 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with any provision  
17 of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

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19           **SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.*** -This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication  
20 in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

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23           Approved,