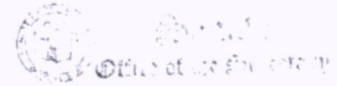


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



SENATE

S.B. No. 884

'19 AUG 13 A8:48

Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

RECEIVED

**AN ACT LAUNCHING THE "YOUNG FARMERS CHALLENGE PROGRAM,"
PLANNING AND EVALUATING EXISTING RELATED PROGRAMS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY,
NATIONAL YOUTH COMMISSION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, AS WELL
AS OTHER GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS,
ALLOCATING BUDGETS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to Article II, Section 21 of the 1987 Constitution, "*The State shall promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform.*" Further, the Constitution provides that the State shall promote industrialization and full employment based on agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets.

However, laggardly poverty reduction numbers in the Philippines are even weaker in the rural sector, where as many as 60% of the population are impoverished. Most families in the countryside depend on agriculture as their primary, and often sole, source of income. Worse, the youth cohort, comprising a huge 40% portion of the Philippine population, more and more often choose to leave their parents' farms, rejecting agriculture-related activities for the more profitable professions available in the cities. Today the average age of Filipino farmers, is fifty-seven (57) years, posing a serious threat to national food security by 2030.

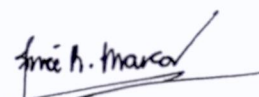
As of January 2019, the Philippine youth sector numbers 44 million individuals, and from fifteen (15) to forty (40) years. According to the Labor Force Survey, the

overall youth unemployment rate is 7.2%, significantly higher than national unemployment at 5.2%. Upon further examination, it will be noted that the "graduate" or 15-24 year old unemployment rate is a staggering 14.1%, or almost thrice the national unemployment rate! The failure to generate jobs and opportunities for the youth is not merely a development obstacle, it also impedes social justice and threatens national security.

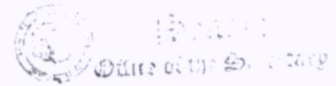
By challenging the youth sector to participate in agriculture, this bill seeks to address poverty, inequality, and the lack of social mobility. Until today, young farmers are burdened by their lack of access to knowledge, information and education; the lack of available land to till or affordable credit; a lack of "green jobs"; and hardly any consultation or participation venues for the youth in agricultural policy debate and formulation.

This bill seeks to address the myriad problems of the youth in the countryside by decreeing a new "Young Farmers Challenge Program" which, through a whole-of-government approach, undertakes the renewed participation of young farmers in the development of rural areas.

Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


IMEE R. MARCOS

SENATE
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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 "Young Farmers
2 *Challenge Program of 2019."*

3 *Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
4 recognize and engage the role of the youth in nation building and rural development,
5 providing for this purpose access to knowledge, information and education, access to
6 land, new sources of financial services and capital, green jobs, access to new and
7 niche markets, and participation in policy dialogue.

8 *Sec. 3. Young Farmers Challenge Council.* – There is hereby created the Young
9 Farmers Challenge Council.

10 The Young Farmers' Council shall have the following members:

11 (a) One (1) representative from the National Youth Council (NYC) or the
12 Sangguniang Kabataan (SK);

13 (b) One (1) representative from the Department of Agriculture (DA);

14 (c) One (1) representative from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);

15 (d) One (1) representative from the Department of Science and Technology
16 (DOST);

- 1 (e) One (1) representative from the Department of Information and
2 Communications Technology (DICT);
- 3 (f) One (1) representative from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- 4 (g) One (1) representative from the Department of Education (DepEd);
- 5 (h) One (1) representative from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR);
- 6 (i) One (1) representative from the Department of Environment and Natural
7 Resources (DENR);
- 8 (j) One (1) representative from the governing body of the State Universities
9 and Colleges (SUC) and Private Education Institutions (PEI);
- 10 (k) One (1) representative from the League of Provinces of the Philippines
11 (LPP);
- 12 (l) One (1) representative from the Technical Education and Skills
13 Development Authority (TESDA); and
- 14 (m) One (1) representative from the private sector, through the Philippine
15 Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce;

16 *Provided that*, the majority of the members shall be fifteen to forty (15-40)
17 years of age from the rural farmer's sector. *Provided further that*, the DA shall convene
18 and chair the "*Young Farmers Challenge Council*," and the Agricultural Training
19 Institute (ATI) shall act as its Secretariat.

20 *Sec. 4. Powers and Functions of the Council.* – The Council shall have the
21 following powers and functions:

- 22 (a) Formulate the "*Young Farmers Challenge Program*", hereinafter referred to
23 as the "Program," in consultation with research institutions such as the
24 Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in
25 Agriculture (SEARCA), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural
26 Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), University of the
27 Philippines – Los Banos (UPLB) and other relevant State Universities and
28 Colleges;
- 29 (b) Develop, in coordination with various departments and agencies, specific
30 action plans for unambiguous tasking and quick implementation;

- 1 (c) Create special programs for marginalized sectors such as women,
2 indigenous people, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim
3 Mindanao (BARMM);
- 4 (d) Develop initiatives in new farm sectors such as "*smart farming*," farm
5 tourism, agro-, aqua-, and hydro-ponics, organic and boutique vegetables;
- 6 (e) Identify relevant training and livelihood budgets in the different
7 departments and agencies, including start-up capital;
- 8 (f) Implement the departments' and agencies' action plans, engaging the
9 assistance of the Local Government Units (LGUs) and Sangguniang
10 Kabataan (SK);
- 11 (g) Identify the best practices in the implementation of the program;
- 12 (h) Initiate new packaging, promo, and marketing events;
- 13 (i) Participate in agri and food tourism marketing events, nationally and
14 internationally;
- 15 (j) Establish linkages with agricultural representatives of the Association of
16 South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other international farming youth
17 associations; and
- 18 (k) Engage national and international leaders in formulating policies directly
19 addressing young farmers concerns.

20 *Sec. 5. Access to Knowledge, Information, and Education.* – A whole
21 government approach shall be utilized to inform and enlist young farmers in
22 agriculture:

- 23 (a) *Role of the DepEd* – The DepEd shall include at all levels, but particularly in
24 its K-12 program, subjects focused on agriculture, such as garden farming,
25 urban greening, reforestation and coastal management;
- 26 (b) *Role of the TESDA* – The TESDA, in coordination with the DICT and the
27 DOST, shall add subjects in their training centers for agricultural
28 entrepreneurship, "*smart farming*", and other advanced farming
29 technologies, prioritizing programs focused on agriculture. The TESDA shall
30 also provide scholarships and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers;

1 (c) *Role of the DOLE* – The DOLE shall provide on-the-job training programs
2 for young farmers, including the Special Program for Employment of
3 Students (SPES);

4 (d) *Role of the CHED, SUCs, and Agricultural Schools* – The CHED, SUCs, and
5 agricultural schools shall provide scholarship grants, stipends, and subsidies
6 to qualified young farmers. Likewise, the CHED, SUCs, and agricultural
7 schools shall provide schemes for distance, remote, and digital learning. The
8 CHED shall include agriculture in its National Service Training Program
9 (NSTP) curriculum, such as garden farming, urban greening, and coastal
10 management. Scholarships for post-graduate and doctoral degrees shall be
11 provided by both the CHED and the private colleges;

12 (e) *Role of the DA and the ATI* – The DA, in particular the 4-H Club of the ATI,
13 shall provide for scholarship grants and stipends to qualified young farmers,
14 targeting specific marginalized sectors such as women, indigenous people,
15 and persons with disabilities (PWDs);

16 (f) *Role of the DOST and DICT* – The DOST and DICT shall develop portals,
17 utilize social media, and exploit other electronic technologies, to publicize
18 the Program; and

19 (g) *Role of the LGU and the SK* – The LGU shall inform and enlist the SK who
20 shall act as trainer-leaders to qualified and interested young farmers.

21 *Sec. 6. Access to Land.* – Short-leases, free land and agrarian reform schemes
22 shall be developed to provide access to land for young farmers:

23 (a) *Role of the DENR* – The DENR shall explore the possibilities of extending
24 short-term leases of public land to young farmers, provide free or subsidized
25 land for cultivation, and develop such other packages as would allow young
26 farmers to use available or unutilized agricultural land. In coordination with
27 the LGUs and SK, the Department may also create lease-to-buy programs;

28 (b) *Role of the DAR* – The DAR shall facilitate and expedite the lease,
29 distribution, and award of agrarian reform land to young beneficiaries;

30 (c) *Role of the LGU and the SK* – The LGU shall prioritize the lease and
31 acquisition of land for cultivation by young farmers. Further, the LGU and

1 SK shall distribute hillside or other undercultivated lands to young farmers,
2 for farming and other agricultural purposes;

3 (d) *Role of the SUCs and PEIs* – Whenever SUCs and PEIs own or occupy excess
4 landholdings, young farmers shall be given first option to use and cultivate
5 such landholdings for agricultural purposes.

6 *Sec. 7. Access to Financial Services.* – Young farmers shall be provided financial
7 assistance and given access to financial services:

8 (a) *Role of the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP)* – The LBP shall develop
9 favorable financial packages for young farmers, waiving collateral, salary
10 and other typical bank requisites;

11 (b) *Role of the DA* – The DA shall develop financial packages specifically
12 targeting young farmers;

13 (c) *Role of the DTI* – The DTI shall extend loans to the young farmers for the
14 trade and marketing of their agricultural products;

15 (d) *Role of the DOST, DICT, and DTI* – The DOST, DICT and the DTI, pursuant
16 to Republic Act No. 11337, otherwise known as the “Innovative Start-up Act
17 of 2018,” and other programs shall include agricultural enterprises for
18 qualified young farmer-entrepreneurs in their incubation efforts;

19 (e) *Role of the Private Sector* – The Private Sector shall subcontract, partner,
20 and extend financial grants, initiate social partnerships and rural
21 development initiatives, as well as mentor young farmers on livelihood
22 strategies, as part of their corporate social responsibility and other
23 community participation;

24 (f) *Role of the LGU* – The LGU, in coordination with the SK, shall provide
25 funding and livelihood opportunities to young farmers;

26 (g) *Role of the SK* – The SK, using its ten percent (10%) Development Fund,
27 and other funds, shall provide entrepreneurial and finance packages for
28 young farmers;

29 (h) *Role of the NYC* – The NYC, in tandem with potential youth agri-
30 entrepreneurs, shall initiate donation and fundraising drives for the
31 Program, exploiting for this purpose online advertising, “crowd-sourcing”,
32 and other digital means to generate funds for the Program.

1 *Sec. 8. Access to "Green Jobs."* – Young farmers shall be given priority in access
2 to green jobs, as follows;

- 3 (a) *Role of the DOLE* – The DOLE, through the SPES, shall include "green jobs",
4 reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other rural-based jobs, in
5 cooperation with LGUs. The DOLE shall prioritize young farmers for
6 employment in public projects or private agro-industries and corporations;
- 7 (b) *Role of the TESDA* – The TESDA shall develop on-the-job trainings, job fairs,
8 employment bridging initiatives, and private partnerships in producing,
9 processing, packaging, and marketing youth products;
- 10 (c) *Role of the DOT* – The DOT shall prioritize the employment of young farmers
11 in eco- and agro-tours, and encourage youth entrepreneurship in farm
12 tourism;
- 13 (d) *Role of the PEZA* – The PEZA shall prioritize young farmers for jobs in agro-
14 industrial ecozones, provide access to modern farm technology, promote
15 linkages in agriculture-related enterprise, and accelerate the creation of
16 "green jobs" for young farmers;
- 17 (e) *The DA and the ATI* – The DA, particularly the 4-H Club of the ATI, shall
18 provide jobs and embark upon farming start-ups in new and niche
19 agricultural sectors such as organic farming, agroponics, aquaponics,
20 hydroponics, dairy, livestock, coffee, cacao, and other areas of farming;

21 *Sec. 9. Access to Markets.* - Young farmers shall have access to markets
22 through the following:

- 23 (a) *Role of the DTI* – The DTI shall assist young farmers in the packaging,
24 marketing and promotion of their products, including branding, advertising,
25 and subsidizing their participation in trade fairs and exhibits;
- 26 (b) *Role of the LGU* – The LGU shall provide subsidized rental rates for public
27 retail areas and public markets, encourage agricultural tourism, and develop
28 other opportunities for young farmers;
- 29 (c) *Role of the Department of Tourism (DOT)* – The DOT shall promote the
30 products of young farmers through tourism conventions, events, and other
31 tourist souvenir sales opportunities;

1 (d) *Role of the Private Sector* – The private sector shall market and promote
2 the products of young farmers, as part of their Corporate Social
3 Responsibility (CSR) and other development efforts;

4 (e) *Role of the Media* – The media shall promote and advertise the products of
5 the young farmers and the Program.

6 *Sec. 10. Engagement in Policy Dialogue.* – The young farmers are encouraged
7 to participate in policy dialogues, as follows:

8 (a) *Role of the NYC* – The NYC shall ensure that young farmers are represented
9 in all decision-making bodies relating to the establishment of mechanisms
10 for the promotion and protection of the rights of young farmers;

11 (b) *Role of the SK* – The SK, through local and Congressional youth
12 representatives, shall liaise with the Local Government Leagues and the
13 Congress of the Philippines to consult and engage young farmers in policy-
14 making;

15 (c) *Role of the DA* – The DA shall ensure that young farmers are equitably
16 represented and consulted in its decision-making process to fully realize the
17 young farmers role as agents and partners for national development.

18 *Sec. 11. Waiver of Government Fees and Charges.* – Subject to the exceptions
19 provided in Sec. 8 of Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the "*First-Time*
20 *Jobseekers Assistance Act*," all government agencies and instrumentalities, including
21 government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), LGUs, and government
22 hospitals shall not collect fees or charges from any young farmer. *Provided that*, such
23 fee or charge is paid in connection with the application for and the granting of licenses,
24 proofs of identification, clearances, certificates or other documents usually required in
25 the course of employment locally or abroad. *Provided further that*, the benefit provided
26 shall only be availed of once.

27 *Sec. 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from
28 the effectivity of this Act, the DA and DAR, in coordination with the DOST, DICT, DOLE,
29 DENR, DepEd, CHED, LBP, and NYC shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for
30 the implementation of this Act.

1 *Sec. 13. Appropriation.* – The amount needed to initially implement the
2 provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the current year
3 of the concerned departments and agencies. Thereafter, such sums, as may be
4 necessary, for its continued implementation shall be included in the appropriation of
5 the concerned departments and agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act.

6 *Sec. 14. Repealing Clause.* – All laws or parts thereof, decrees, orders, rules
7 and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
8 modified accordingly.

9 *Sec. 15. Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
10 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall
11 remain in full force and effect.

12 *Sec. 16. Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following
13 its publication in a newspaper of general circulation or in the Official Gazette,
14 whichever comes first.

15
16 *Approved,*