



SENATE
S. No. 1508

20 MAY 14 P5:20

RECORDED

[Signature]

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE VISION CARE TO
CHILDREN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the 2018 Philippine National Blindness Survey and Eye Disease Study conducted by the Philippine Eye Research Institute (PERI) of the National Institutes of Health at the University of the Philippines – Manila, four (4) pupils in every class of forty (4) have vision problems. Three (3) of them are caused by error of refraction or myopia (nearsightedness) while one (1) may have amblyopia or lazy eye. Amblyopia has a prevalence rate of two to five percent among children, making it one of the causes of visual impairment and preventable blindness.

Visual impairment is one of the ten (10) most common causes of disability in the country. This is attributable to the fact that eighty percent (80%) of what children learn is acquired through the visual processing of information.

In children, visual impairment is associated with developmental delays and the need for special education, vocational, and social services. At least twenty percent (20%) of children with learning disabilities have been found to have prominent visual information processing problems.

This bill aims to provide comprehensive eye examinations for children identified or considered at high risk of vision impairment.

This measure was filed by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago in the 16th Congress but remained pending in the Committee on Health and Demography.

In this light, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

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AN ACT
TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE VISION CARE TO CHILDREN

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Vision Care for Kids*
2 *Act of 2020*".

3 Sec. 2. *Definition of Terms.* - The following terms as used in this Act shall be
4 defined as follows:

5 (1) "*Comprehensive Eye Examination*" includes an assessment of a patient's
6 history, general medical observation, external and ophthalmoscopic
7 examination, visual acuity, ocular alignment and motility, refraction, and
8 as appropriate, binocular vision or gross visual fields, performed by an
9 optometrist or an ophthalmologist;

10 (2) "*Secretary*" refers to the Secretary of Health.

11 Sec. 3. *Grant regarding vision care for children.* -

12 (a) In general - The Secretary, may award grants to local government units
13 (LGUs) on the basis of an established review process for the purpose of
14 complementing existing government efforts for:

15 (1) providing comprehensive eye examinations by a licensed
16 optometrist or ophthalmologist for children who have been
17 previously identified through a vision screening or eye

1 examination by a licensed health care provider or vision screener
2 as needing such services, with priority given to children who are
3 under nine (9) years old;

4 (2) providing treatment or services, subsequent to the examinations
5 described in paragraph (1), necessary to correct vision problems;
6 and,

7 (3) developing and disseminating, to parents, teachers, and health
8 care practitioners, educational materials on recognizing signs of
9 visual impairment in children.

10 (b) Criteria and coordination – The Secretary, in consultation with
11 appropriate professional and consumer organizations including
12 individuals with knowledge of age appropriate vision services, shall
13 develop criteria governing the operation of the grant program under
14 subsection (a), and for the collection of data related to vision assessment
15 and the utilization of follow up services

16 (c) Application – to be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), an
17 LGU shall submit to the Secretary an application in such form, made in
18 such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may
19 require, including the following:

20 (1) information on existing government-funded children vision
21 programs;

22 (2) a plan for the use of grant funds, including how funds will be used
23 to complement existing State efforts (including possible
24 partnerships with non-profit entities);

25 (3) a plan to determine if a grant eligible child has been identified as
26 provided for in Section 3(a); and,

27 (4) a description of how funds will be used to provide items or
28 services only as a secondary payer to any local government
29 compensation program, under an insurance policy, or under any
30 government health benefits program, or by any entity that
31 provides health services on a prepaid basis.

(d) Evaluations – To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), an LGU shall agree that, no later than one (1) year after the date on which amounts under the grant are first received by it, and annually thereafter while receiving amounts under the grant, the LGU will submit to the Secretary an evaluation of the operations and activities carried out under the grant, including –

(1) an assessment of the utilization of vision services and the status of children receiving these services as a result of the activities carried out under the grant;

(2) the collection, analysis, and reporting of children’s vision data according to guidelines prescribed by the Secretary; and,

(3) such other information as the Secretary may require.

(e) Limitations in Expenditure of Grant – A grant may be made under subsection (a) only if the LGU involved agrees that it will not expend more than twenty percent (20%) of the amount received under the grant to carry out the purpose described in paragraph (3) of such subsection.

Sec. 4. *Appropriations.* – Such sums as may be necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the current appropriations of the Department of Health (DOH). Thereafter, the fund necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Sec. 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec. 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,