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SENATE
S. B. No. 2668

RECEIVED BY: JAY

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Good nutrition and a balanced diet are important to help children grow up healthy. Nutrition plays a major role in children's health and also affects their performance in school. Children's peak performance at school can be attributed much to good nutrition and eating habits. Eating a nutritious meal has an effect on cognition, strength, attitudes and endurance at school. Hungry, weak children are not alert and are less active in class.

It is important to improve the standard of health of children through proper nutrition education and good health practices, particularly a good diet. This Act aims to provide supplementary food to public elementary school students to improve their general health and help them reach better scholastic achievements.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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[Signature]

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE MEALS FOR STUDENTS OF
PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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 "Healthy Students Act of 2007."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote good health among the youth. The State shall promote programs that will improve the nutrition value of meals given to children by providing free meals for students of public elementary schools.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* -

1. School meal program - shall refer to the free meal (breakfast or lunch) to be served by the public elementary schools to their students at least once every school day;
2. Commission - commission to be constituted by the DepEd for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

3. Public elementary schools - shall refer to all public elementary schools accredited with the DepEd.

SECTION 4. *School meals program.* - Every public elementary school throughout the country shall be entitled to apply for funds to be used for school meals program as provided for under this Act.

SECTION 5. *Guidelines.*—

A. Commission

1. In General - The Department of Education (DepEd) shall constitute a “Commission to Formulate and Improve School Meals for Students of Public Elementary Schools”, hereinafter referred to as the “Commission”;

2. Membership - The DepEd shall appoint members of the Commission from among individuals who are nutritionists, pediatricians, or experts in nutrition and children's health.

3. Duties - The Commission shall--

- a. review available dietary guidelines that are relevant for children;
- b. evaluate the nutritional and dietary needs of school-age children and recommend nutritional standards for establishing a healthy school nutrition program;
- c. not later than 90 days after the date of enactment this Act, develop new nutritional standards for the school meal programs under this Act;

d. evaluate compliance with and enforcement of the minimum nutritional requirements established under subparagraph (c);

e. not later than 90 days after nutritional standards are developed under subparagraph (c), the Commission shall promulgate and implement rules, based on the standards, that establish minimum nutritional requirements for food served under the meals programs for students of public elementary schools as provided for under this Act

B. School Nutrition Programs

1. In General - The Commission shall carry out a program under which the Commission shall provide funds to public elementary schools for school meal programs under this Act ;

2. Uses - Funds provided under this subsection may be used

- a. to provide an healthy foods in the meals served under programs;
- b. to promote healthy food education in the school curriculum;
- c. to carry out garden to kitchen or seed to table programs; or
- d. to provide professional development for teachers to carry out programs that promote healthy alternatives for students.

C. Study Report

1. Study - During the first year of the implementation of this Act, in which funds are used by schools, the Commission shall conduct a study of the results of the school meals program;

2. Report - Not later than 90 days after the date on which the study is completed under subparagraph (1) above, the Commission shall submit to the DepEd a report that describes the results of the study.

SECTION 6. *Eligibility of Schools.* - Only public elementary schools shall be entitled to the school meals program as provided for under this Act.

SECTION 7. *Application-* An eligible school desiring the grant of funds for the implementation of the school meals program under this Act shall submit the application for the same at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Commission may require.

SECTION 8. *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 9. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.

Rcc/06-05-07