

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

13th Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2797



Introduced by Honorable Uliran T. Joaquin

EXPLANATORY NOTE

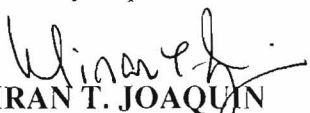
The proposed measure seeks to empower women in entrepreneurship by giving them the necessary assistance in order to attain their full potential in the service of the nation, in consonance with Section 14, Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution, which provides that "The State shall protect working women by providing safe and healthful working conditions, taking into account their maternal functions, and such facilities and opportunities that will enhance their welfare and enable them to realize their full potential in the service of the nation."

Women in the Philippines are perceived to be more empowered than most of their counterparts in other societies and cultures. However, the empowered image of the Filipino women is flawed when one studies their position in economic and public life. They continue to account for a higher number of unemployed, work under inhospitable conditions, receive lower pay, and are the last to be trained and the first to be laid off. They also have limited opportunities for growth in corporations, factories and other work places.

For instance, in the government, they are grossly under-represented in the legislature, executive branch and other decision-making bodies. In the bureaucracy, as in the corporate world, women executives tend to be stuck in lower management positions. In the academe, on the other hand, although women ironically dominate the teaching staffs, having women university presidents and college deans, however, are an exception, rather than the norm.

In such discriminatory situations, women have to look, therefore, for other fields of endeavors where they can excel, like in entrepreneurship, which now emerges as an attractive option for women who want to reap the full harvest of their efforts. As observed, the most empowered and successful women in the Philippines nowadays are in business. Nevertheless, only a few of them know that entrepreneurship is a fertile field for the blossoming of their capabilities. Majority of them still lacks the necessary education and trainings in this field, owing to financial incapacity, among other factors.

This proposed measure is, therefore, a very timely step to empower our women in commerce and trade. The early approval of this bill is hereby earnestly requested.


ULIRAN T. JOAQUIN
Representative, 1st District, Laguna

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AN ACT
EMPOWERING WOMEN BY PROVIDING THEM WITH FINANCIAL
EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATION ASSISTANCE IN ORDER FOR THEM TO
EXCEL IN COMMERCE AND TRADE.

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 “Women Empowerment in Enterprise Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - In accordance with the mandate of the Constitution, it is hereby declared a State policy to grant women assistance and opportunities in enterprise that will enhance their welfare and realize their full potential in order for them to play their role in nation-building and serve the nation.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For purposes of this Act, the terms:

- (a) “Secretary” refers to the Secretary of Labor and Employment
- (b) “Department” refers to the Department of Labor and Employment; and
- (c) “Committee” refers to the Women in Enterprise Assistance and Advisory Committee

SECTION 4. *Development Programs.* - The Secretary shall adopt and implement a Women in Enterprise Development Program which provides women with financial educational and information assistance, as provided for in the subsequent sections of this Act.

SECTION 5. *Financial Assistance.* - The Secretary shall provide financial assistance to women.

- (a) To support the creation of small to medium-size business in which women can readily participate.
- (b) To foster investment in businesses substantially owned or managed by women; and
- (c) To enable such women to further their education.

SECTION 6. ***Educational Assistance.*** - The Secretary shall, with the aid and cooperation of the Secretary of Education, provide scholarship and educational assistance:

- (a) To encourage women to participate in the process of local and national government, and to stimulate the interest of women in business;
- (b) To prepare women for involvement in government and business;
- (c) To provide opportunities for women to gain practical experience in government and business through internship or on-the-job apprenticeships while in school; and
- (d) To identify women with leadership potential to serve as role models, and to assist such women in furthering their education and obtaining suitable positions in the public and private sector;

The Secretary of Education shall take the interest of women in consideration, especially their development in enterprise, in adopting curricula, policies and guidelines for secondary and post-secondary education.

SECTION 7. ***Establishment of a Committee.*** - The Secretary shall establish a Women in Enterprise Assistance and Advisory Committee.

SECTION 8. ***Composition.*** - The Committee shall be composed of Secretary as the Chairman and eight (8) members appointed by the said Secretary, including:

- (a) One (1) representative of labor organization;
- (b) Two (2) representatives of the Department of Labor and Employment;
- (c) Two (2) representatives of the Department of Education; and
- (d) Three (3) members of the general public, of whom at least two (2) shall be engaged in an enterprise as an owner or art owner.

SECTION 9. ***Functions of the Committee.*** - The Women in Enterprise Assistance and Advisory Committee shall have the following functions:

- (a) Make recommendations regarding prevention of gender discrimination in the province of business and trade;

- (b) Study and recommend ways to empower women in the field of business and trade;
- (c) Identify areas around the country where women may excel not only in the field of business and trade but also in career service in government;
- (d) Approve and disapprove application of women candidates applying for any assistance under this Act;
- (e) Develop a criteria for identifying the women who are eligible to avail of the assistance given under this Act; and
- (f) Formulate the necessary rules and regulations.

SECTION 10. ***Term of Office.*** - Members of the Committee shall be appointed for a term of office of three (3) years, except that of the members first appointed, three (3) shall be appointed for a term of one (1) year, two (2) shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years, and two (2) shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years, as determined by the Secretary.

SECTION 11. ***Meetings.*** - The Committee shall meet not less than four (4) times a year or at the call of the Secretary.

SECTION 12. ***Compensation.*** - Members of the Committee shall be compensated at a rate equivalent to an employee of the National Government occupying a salary grade 25 positions, except those already employed by the Philippine government.

SECTION 13. ***Appropriations.*** - To carry out the provisions of this Act, such sum as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the sums necessary for the continuous operations of the centers shall be included in the annual appropriations of the Department of Labor and Employment.

SECTION 14. ***Separability Clause.*** - If any provisions 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 15. ***Repealing Clause.*** - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instructions, administrative order, rules or regulations, contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 16. ***Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,