



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Thirteenth Congress
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 4752

Introduced by Honorable Anna York P. Bondoc, M.D.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill designates the month of August of every year as "National Breastfeeding Awareness Month." Its aim is to promote and support breastfeeding in the Philippines as the most natural and safest and thus the preferred method of feeding infants and young children.

The government has long recognized the importance of breastfeeding. In 1986, Executive Order No. 51 otherwise known as the National Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, Breastmilk Supplements and Other Related Products was issued. This seeks to promote a national policy on breastfeeding and control the unethical marketing practices of milk companies.

Breastmilk is the only natural food in the world, the best start a baby can have in life. Hence breastfeeding is the best and natural choice in feeding infants and young children.

Various medical studies have revealed the vast array of benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers such as the following:

- Provides the perfect food which composition cannot be duplicated to meet the changing nutritional needs of the growing infant.

- Provides initial immunization against illness and infection and reduces the likelihood of allergy.
- Prevents acute diarrhea, the leading cause of infant death in developing countries.
- Aids in the development of a baby's eyesight, speech and intelligence.
- Saves money, given the fact that breastmilk is practically free, thus there is no need for mothers to spend money to buy expensive infant formulas and feeding equipment. WHO estimates that Filipinos spend P43 billion a year to formula-feed their babies.
- Environmentally friendly, breastmilk is a naturally-renewable resource that saves fuel, energy and resources.
- Provides long-term health benefits for both mother and child
- Promotes a special loving bond between mother and baby.

Yet in the Philippines today, there is an alarming drop in the number of mothers who breastfeed. This may be attributed to several factors such as the lack of education of some mothers on the advantages of breastfeeding, the insufficient information and dissemination campaign of the agencies concerned to decisively promote breastfeeding as the safest and the most natural choice, and the lack of support for programs and projects promoting and encouraging breastfeeding.

This bill seeks to reestablish the culture of breastfeeding and instill public awareness about the superiority and benefits vis-à-vis bottle-feeding. Choosing to return to this time-honored tradition and nurturing value will save lives and strengthen not only the health of our children, but also our community and our future. We believe that one of the main benefits of breastfeeding is watching a happy, healthy child grow up, knowing that, as mothers, we have given our child the very best we can give.

In this light, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly and urgently sought.


ANNA YORK P. BONDOC, M.D.



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AN ACT
DECLARING THE MONTH OF AUGUST OF EVERY YEAR AS
"NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH."

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

SECTION 1. **Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as "The National Breastfeeding Awareness Month Act."

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development and shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition and declare the month of August of every year as "National Breastfeeding Awareness Month."

SEC. 3. Public Education and Awareness Program. – To ensure the meaningful observance of the month as herein declared, a comprehensive public education and awareness program shall be undertaken by the Department of Health as follows:

1. To protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the Philippines as the normal, natural and preferred method of feeding infants and young children;

2. To guarantee the rightful place of breastfeeding in society as a time-honored tradition and nurturing value as well as a national health policy that must be enforced;

3. To provide information about the benefits and superiority of breastfeeding and the high risks and costs of bottle-feeding;

4. To generate awareness on, and full enforcement of, national and international laws, codes, policies and programs on the promotion and protection of safe and adequate nutrition for infants and young children by promoting and protecting breastfeeding and by regulating the marketing of certain foods and feeding bottles, teats and pacifiers; and

5. To instill recognition and support and ensure access to comprehensive, current and culturally appropriate lactation care and services for all women, children and families, including support for breastfeeding mothers in the work force.

SEC. 4. **Inter-Agency and Multi-Sectoral Effort.** – The Department of Health shall lead in the implementation of the comprehensive national public education and awareness program on breastfeeding through a collaborative inter-agency and multi-sectoral effort at all levels. It shall particularly ensure widespread and expeditious public information about the benefits and superiority of breastfeeding against the high risks and costs of bottle-feeding.

SEC. 5. **Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,