

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4955



INTRODUCED BY **REP. FERJENEL G. BIRON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

We are facing a very serious social problem: the health system in our country is on the brink of collapse. This is the kind of brinkmanship which we cannot risk without courting catastrophic consequences for the country.

Doctors in private practice or in the government service are leaving the country in droves in search for greener pastures in the United States, Canada, Europe and in the middle East. Many of them will be employed in these foreign countries – not as doctors but as nurses. They completed abbreviated courses in Nursing to prepare them for the lucrative exodus to these foreign lands because it is difficult for them to immigrate to these countries as doctors.

While it does not look like a dignified thing to do, it makes economic sense. Consider the following: Doctors in the government service receive an average salary of P 15,000.00 a month. Doctors in private practice on the average earn from P 60,000 to P 100,000 a month, while a nurse in the United States earns on the average excluding overtime pay \$4,000.00 a month or roughly P 216,000.00. In other countries, the pay may be less but it is still at least four times bigger than the average income a government-employed doctor earns at P 15,000 a month.

Since 1994, more than 100,000 nurses left the country to work abroad. While Filipino doctors migrating to the United States since 1960 were not in large number, today they are because they are migrating – not as doctors but as nurses.

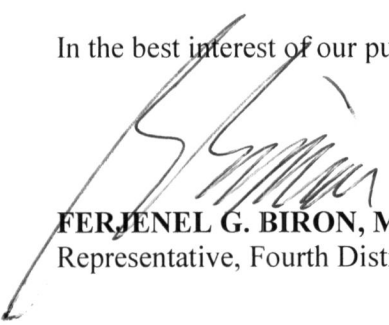
Something must be done to stop this precarious outflow of Filipino doctors to foreign countries – otherwise the delivery of our health system will be compromised – especially the public health services which cater to the needs of the marginalized sectors of our society.

The following statistics are scary: as of 2003, there is only one government doctor for every 28, 493 Filipinos and one government nurse for every 16, 986. The acceptable doctor-to-patient ratio according to the World Health Organization is one doctor for 10,000 people.

Since these government-employed doctors are driven to leave the country by economic imperative, their mass exodus can be minimized if their income will be raised.

This bill proposes to standardize the basic pay of government doctors to at least Grade 23- thus giving a 30% increase in their present salary. Additionally, the bill offers incentive for government doctors to stay in the country because of the educational benefits provided for their children.

In the best interest of our public health system, passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



FERJENEL G. BIRON, M.D.

Representative, Fourth District of Iloilo

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR AN INCREASE IN THE SALARY OF GOVERNMENT
DOCTORS AND FOR EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF THEIR CHILDREN
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Statement of Policy – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to insure adequate delivery of public health services and in pursuance thereto to provide economic incentives to government-employed doctors so that they will be encouraged to stay in the country.

SECTION 2. Coverage – The provisions of this Act embrace all physicians employed in the government which includes both the national and local governments. As used in this Act, a government physician is a Doctor of Medicine duly licensed by the Professional Regulatory Commission employed in government hospitals, public health institutions or government agency.

SECTION 3. Raising Salary Grade To Provide Increase - In order to bolster the moral of government-employed physicians, strengthen their commitment to serve; and enhance their professionalism, their minimum base pay is hereby adjusted to salary grade 28 prescribed under Republic Act No. 6578, otherwise known as the “Compensation and Classification Act of 1989”; Provided, That for physicians employed in Local Government units, adjustments to their salaries shall be according to Section 10 of said Act.

SECTION 4. Educational Benefits for Children – Children of doctors employed in government hospitals, health institution or agencies for at least five (5) years are hereby provided full scholarship in state or government supported universities or colleges for degrees leading to the College of Medicine and for the degree in Doctor of Medicine, provided, further that upon being licensed to practice their profession by the Professional Regulatory Commission they shall serve as doctors in government hospitals, health institutions and agencies for at least five (5) years. Failure of the

beneficiaries to comply with this provision will require them to reimburse the total costs of their scholarship to the state or government-supported universities or colleges where they completed their pre-medical and medical studies.

SECTION 5. Repealing Clause – All laws, rules and regulations, orders circulars and issuances inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause – Should any provision of this Act be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall not be affected hereby.

SECTION 7. Appropriation – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. Effectivity- This Act shall take effect fifteen days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

The DBM shall, within sixty (60) days after its approval, allocate all positions in their appropriate position titles and salary grades and prepare and prepare and issue the necessary guidelines for their implementation.

Approved,