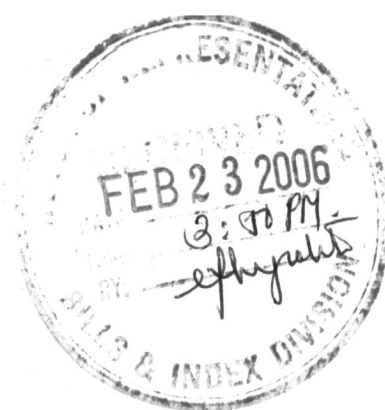


REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 5301



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE ALAN PETER S. CAYETANO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill designates the month of August of every year as “**National Breastfeeding Awareness Month**” in order to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the Philippines as the normal, natural and preferred method of feeding infants and young children. The core message of the bill is specially urgent today considering that, as reported, 16,000 Filipino babies die every year – more than all those who died from insurgency and terrorism combined – directly due to the harmful effects of bottle-feeding.

There is no natural baby food available in the world other than breastmilk. Thus there is no other natural choice than breastfeeding. Breastmilk is the most ideal gift a mother can give to her baby. It is the best start a baby can have in life. Decades of research have shed light on the vast array of benefits of breastfeeding:

- a. Provides the perfect food that cannot be duplicated, actually altering in composition to meet the changing nutritional needs of the growing infant.
- b. Provides initial immunization against illness and infection and reduces the likelihood of allergy.
- c. Prevents diarrhea, the leading cause of infant death in developing countries.
- d. Aids the development of a baby's eyesight, speech and intelligence.
- e. Saves money, given the fact that breastmilk is practically free, there will be 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.
- f. Environmentally friendly, breastmilk is a naturally-renewable resource that saves fuel, energy and resources.
- g. Provides long-term health benefits for both mother and child.
- h. Promotes a special loving bond between mother and baby.

Despite undeniable advantages of breastmilk in the Philippines today, there is an alarming drop in the number of mothers who breastfeed. This inspite of the enactment in 1986 of Executive Order 51, otherwise known as the “National Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, Breastmilk Supplements and Other Related Products” that seeks to promote a national policy on breastfeeding and control the unethical marketing practices of milk companies.

This bill seeks to reestablish the culture of breastfeeding and instill public awareness about its superiority and benefits vis-a-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.

Immediate approval of this bill is thus most earnestly and urgently sought.

ATTY. ALAN PETER S. CAYETANO
Congressman, LD Taguig-Pateros

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Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE ALAN PETER S. CAYETANO**

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."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – In line with the principles and mandates set by the Philippine Constitution that "the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them" (Article 2, Section 15), that "the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development" (Article 13, Section 11), and that "the State shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition" (Article 15, Section 3.2), the month of August in each and every year throughout the Philippines shall be known under the name of "National Breastfeeding Awareness Month."

SECTION 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:

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.

SECTION 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 and the high risks and costs entailed in bottle-feeding.

SECTION 5. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect twenty (20) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,