

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

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 834

Introduced by **HONORABLE EDCEL C. LAGMAN**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A major indicator of the level of a nation's human development is life expectancy at birth. Human development is attainable when the human population lives healthy, and consequently, long and productive lives. Today, given the level of the country's development, the average Filipino can expect to live to only 71 years. Living to be a centenarian, or three decades past the life expectancy, is therefore an achievement and a distinction worthy of emulation and public recognition.

The pursuit of living to be 100 demands immense self-discipline. Studies show that while genetics plays a role in longevity, the dominant factor in living long is lifestyle. According to Dr. Thomas Perls, head of the New England Centenarian Study, "...with some changes in health-related behavior, each of us can earn the right to have at least 25 years beyond the age of 60--years of healthy life at good function. The disappointing news is that it requires work and willpower." Indeed, Centenarian Expert Lynn Peters Adler, J.D. was correct when she said that "centenarians are not quitters". They must also be some of those who have worked the hardest – definitely the longest – and contributed much to society.

In the TIME magazine cover story "How To Live To Be 100" published in August 2004 (Corliss, Richard; Lemonick, Michael D.), the writers cited the importance of a "sense of belonging and purpose that provides a strong foundation for staying mentally alert well into old age." In the same article, it was mentioned that the people of the Japanese prefecture of Okinawa, known for their exceptional longevity, "maintain a sense of community, ensuring that **every member, from youngest to oldest, is paid proper respect and feels equally valued.** (emphasis supplied)

This bill seeks to honor and provide incentives to all Filipino centenarians. As an incentive, every Filipino residing in the Philippines or abroad shall receive on his or her 100th birthday a letter of felicitation from the President of the Philippines for his or her longevity as well as a plaque of recognition from his or her city or municipal government. As a modest pecuniary incentive, he or she will also receive a Centenarian's gift of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00) from the national government and a cash incentive from the local government, the latter to be presented in a ceremony during National Respect for Centenarians Day.

Verily, our centenarians deserve to be honored and respected. As Adler said, "...centenarians are our role models for living long and aging well. They are the role models for the future of aging."

The government can and should provide psychological and pecuniary incentives to its centenarians, sterling citizens who have led exemplary long lives which every Filipino must be inspired by and aspire for.

Accordingly, approval of this measure is urgently and earnestly sought.


EDCEL C. LAGMAN

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AN ACT
HONORING AND GRANTING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES TO
FILIPINO CENTENARIANS, DECLARING THE 25TH OF SEPTEMBER AS NATIONAL
RESPECT FOR CENTENARIANS DAY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "**Centenarians Act of 2010**".

SEC. 2. **Letter of Felicitation and Cash Gift.** - On his or her one hundredth (100th) birthday, every Filipino residing in the Philippines or abroad shall be honored with 1) a letter of felicitation from the President of the Philippines congratulating the celebrant for his or her longevity, and 2) a Centenarian's Gift in the amount of One hundred thousand pesos (PhP 100,000.00) chargeable against the Contingent Fund.

SEC. 3. **National Respect for Centenarians Day.** - As part of the annual Family Week celebration from September 19 to 28, the 25th of September is hereby declared as National Respect for Centenarians Day during which all Filipinos who have turned centenarian in the current fiscal year shall be awarded a plaque of recognition and a cash incentive by their respective city or municipal governments in appropriate ceremonies in addition to the recognition and cash gift provided in the preceding paragraph. The amount of the cash incentive shall be determined by the concerned local government unit.

SEC. 4. **Older Surviving and Deceased Centenarians.** - All living centenarians who reached their 100th birthday prior to the effectivity of this Act shall be honored on the celebration of the first National Respect for Centenarians Day or one hundred twenty (120) days after the effectivity of this Act, whichever comes earlier, in appropriate ceremonies which shall be observed as a national event. They shall each be awarded a plaque of recognition and the Centenarian's Gift referred to in Section 2 hereof. In the same event, posthumous plaques of recognition in honor of deceased centenarians shall be presented to the nearest surviving relative of each centenarian or his/her representative.

SEC. 5. **Additional Benefits.** - All centenarians shall be entitled to the grant of fifty percent (50%) discount and exemption from the value-added tax (VAT), if applicable, on the sale of the goods and services from all establishments, for the exclusive use and enjoyment or availment of senior citizens, amending for the purpose Section 4 of Republic Act No. 7432, as amended by Republic Act No. 9257 and further amended by Republic Act No. 9994, the "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010".

SEC. 6. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within thirty days from its organization, a National Committee composed of the Executive Secretary as Chairperson and the respective Secretaries of the Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Department of Health, and the Executive Director of the Commission of Filipinos Overseas as members shall promulgate the necessary guidelines for and shall take the lead in the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. ***Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation which shall not be later than seven (7) days after the approval thereof.

Approved,