

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**FIFTEENTH CONGRESS**

First Regular Session

House Bill No. ~~1023~~

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Introduced by **REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them, adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, establish and maintain an effective food and drug regulatory system, and undertake appropriate health manpower development and research responsive to the country's health needs and problems.

The bill seeks to provide for a National Folic Acid Education Program to be administered by the Department of Health (DOH) for prevention of birth defects, cleft lip and palate, and heart defects. The bill promotes the public education on the effects of folic acid in preventing birth defects and encourages women even before and during pregnancy to consume the appropriate amount of folic acid as a dietary supplement on a daily basis. Through this bill, due protection will be given to unborn babies from acquiring birth defects caused by insufficiency of necessary nutrients and vitamins such as the folic acid.

In consideration of the foregoing, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO**  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Province of Iloilo

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
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**FIFTEENTH CONGRESS**

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House Bill No. 1028

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Introduced by REP. AUGUSTO BOBOY SYJUCO

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**AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A NATIONAL FOLIC ACID EDUCATION  
PROGRAM TO PREVENT BIRTH DEFECTS"**

*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 "Folic Acid  
Promotion and Birth Defects Prevention Act".

**SEC. 2.** *Promotion of the Beneficial Effects of Folic Acid in the Prevention  
of Birth Defects.* – The Department of Health shall carry out a program, directly or  
through special arrangements with other government agencies and other  
promotional entities engaged in public information activities, to provide education  
and training for health professionals and the general public for purposes of  
explaining the effects of folic acid in preventing birth defects and to encourage  
women of reproductive capacity to consume the appropriate amount of folic acid  
as a dietary supplement on a daily basis.

Pursuant thereto, the Secretary of Health may consult with the appropriate  
public or private entities, including national nonprofit and nongovernment  
organizations, health professionals and health insurance and health plan  
providers, to ensure the success of such education and training program. In  
addition, the Secretary shall, directly or through partnership with other sectors,  
provide technical assistance to public and nonprofit private organizations to fulfill  
the mandate provided for in Sections 2 and 3 hereof.

**SEC. 3.** *Continuing Research and Study of the Effects of Folic Acid.* – The  
Department of Health shall conduct continuing studies on the effects of folic acid to  
increase the understanding of the same on the health of the citizenry, especially its  
contribution to the prevention of birth defects, cleft lip and palate, and heart  
defects. It shall likewise conduct research with respect to such education and  
training, including identifying effective strategies for increasing the rate of  
consumption of folic acid by women of reproductive capacity. In addition, it shall  
provide for appropriate epidemiological activities regarding folic acid, birth defects  
and neural tube defects.

**SEC. 4.** *Evaluation of Program Implementation.* – The Secretary of Health  
shall cause the review of the program to evaluate the extent to which the activities  
carried out, pursuant to Sections 2 and 3 hereof, have been effective in fulfilling  
the goals of the program, including their effect on different sectors of the  
population. Methods of evaluation to be undertaken pursuant thereto may include

surveys of knowledge and attitudes on the consumption of folic acid and on blood folate levels, and the complete and timely monitoring of infants who are born with neural tube defects.

**SEC. 5. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be taken from the funds of the Department of Health of the current year and every year thereafter.

**SEC. 6. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

**SEC. 7. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

**SEC. 8. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette*.

Approved,