

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 2308

Introduced by Reps. TEDDY A. CASIÑO and NERI JAVIER COLMENARES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The future lies in the hands of today's children. To prepare them for their role as our future leaders, they must be afforded quality nutrition to give them a good start in developing their skills and potentials during their tender years. Adequate and quality nutrition is integral to a child's total development.

The Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), by virtue of Executive Order No. 128, is mandated to conduct research every five years on the nutritional status of the population particularly malnutrition. Its latest 2008 survey results include the following:

1. The number of Filipino children who were underweight and underheight or stunted increased from 2005 to 2008;
2. The prevalence of underweight children aged 0-5 years increased from 24.6 percent to 26.2 percent, about 3.35 million children;
3. The underheight rate increased from 26.3 percent to 27.9 percent, representing 3.57 million children; and
4. There was also a significant increase in the prevalence of underweight children aged 6-10 years from 22.8 percent in 2005 to 25.6 percent in 2008, equivalent to 2.6 million. The number of underheight children in this age group likewise increased from 32 percent to 33.1 percent.

The research also showed that a very high level of acute malnutrition among preschoolers (aged 0-5) was noted in six regions, namely Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula and Soccsksargen where the underweight-for-age prevalence was at least 30 percent.

A high prevalence of underheight-for-age or stunted preschoolers was mostly observed in Mimaropa, Bicol, and all the regions in the Visayas and Mindanao.

Chronic malnutrition affected a very high percentage of preschoolers in the provinces of Masbate, Biliran, Northern Samar, Western Samar, Zamboanga Sibugay, Sarangani, Abra and Mountain Province.

Meanwhile, the regions with very high prevalence of stunted schoolchildren were Mimaropa, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao and Soccsksargen.

According to FNRI, long standing or chronic malnutrition affected a very high percentage of schoolchildren in 25 provinces, including Abra, Aurora, Mindoro Occidental, Mindoro Oriental, Marinduque, Catanduanes, Masbate, Negros Occidental, Northern Samar, Western Samar, Leyte, Bukidnon, Agusan del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Misamis Occidental, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur and Basilan.

Food is the most basic of all necessities that, unfortunately, cannot be adequately provided by all parents to their children all the time. Regular meals have become a privilege to most. Children going to school on an empty stomach is a crude testament of the grinding poverty besetting most Filipinos.

This bill legislates a Nationwide Child Nutrition Program in all public elementary schools and barangay day care centers throughout the country. This Nutrition Program which makes feeding for schoolchildren mandatory is in keeping with the State's declared policy of promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of children.

Immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,


TEDDY A. CASINO
Bayan Muna Party-list


NERI JAVIER COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party-list

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A MANDATORY NATIONWIDE CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM
IN ALL PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND BARANGAY DAY CARE CENTERS

SECTION 1. *Title.* This Act shall be known as the “Child Nutrition Law of 2010.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the declared policy of the State to promote the rights of children to survival, development and special protection with full recognition of the nature of childhood and its special needs, and to support the nutritional needs of children to enhance their learning capacities in compulsory basic education. To this end, the State shall institutionalize a mandatory child nutrition program in all and public elementary schools and barangay day care centers that is comprehensive, integrative and sustainable on a national basis.

SECTION 3. *Objectives.* The objectives of the mandatory child nutrition program are:

1. To achieve improved child attendance and survival rates in day care centers and schools by ensuring that adequate health and nutrition programs are accessible to young children throughout the early childhood years;
2. To enhance the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, psychological, spiritual and language development of young children;
3. To enhance the role of public elementary schools and barangay day care centers as surrogate caregivers of children;
4. To facilitate the learning process through healthy body and physical environment;
5. To ensure that young children are adequately prepared for the formal learning system and that both public elementary schools and barangay day care centers are responsive to the developmental needs of these children; and
6. To establish an efficient system for early identification, prevention, referral and intervention for developmental disorders and disabilities in early childhood.

SECTION 4. *Program Framework.* The mandatory child nutrition program shall be provided for children enrolled or studying in public elementary schools and barangay day care centers regardless of age with the consent of parents. The program shall include:

1. Complementary feeding to ensure access to food supplements which will improve nutritional status. This activity may also be used as a venue for other nutrition-related activities such as micronutrient supplementation, weighing and growth monitoring, deworming of children, and emergency feeding during and after disasters. Health and nutrition counseling and education may also form an integral part of this activity and health personnel may be tapped as resource persons.
2. Dietary diversification/backyard gardening to assure availability of nutritious food in the local areas. Enhancing community resources accessible to local households and managed by the community will be an effective strategy to address lack of nutritious food therein.

The accompanying benchmarks under the mandatory child nutrition program shall be determined by the Department of Health in consultation with the Department of Education and the barangay having jurisdiction over the barangay day care center or the public elementary school.

SECTION 5. *Wholistic Approach.* Every agency of the national and local governments shall cooperate and extend full support and cooperation and make available such materials, data and other resources as may be necessary to ensure the successful implementation of this Act. In particular:

The Department of Health in consultation with the Department of Education and the appropriate barangay shall review the plans, programs and implementation of the school or day care supplementary feeding program, with the purpose of identifying: 1) ways and means of increasing the volume of supplementary feeding with particular attention to local food components, 2) priority areas of the country where greater attention is needed, and 3) the groups of school children most likely to benefit from supplementary feeding.

The Department Social Welfare and Development shall assist in monitoring the weight and health of children participating in the supplementary schoolfeeding program.

The Department of Agriculture and the National Food Authority shall make available warehouse, trucking and facilities.

The Department of Interior and Local Government shall help enlist the support of local government units in the accomplishment of program objectives.

The National Economic and Development Authority shall assist in the determination of official development assistance sources to expand the inputs into the school supplementary feeding program.

The Department of Budget and Management shall help prepare work and financial plans covering the food assistance program, particularly the peso counterpart requirement involved in the freight, insurance, storage and other requirements for effective food handling and distribution.

The Department of Trade and Industry shall look for cost-effective sources for components of the mandatory child nutrition program, including but not limited to foodstuffs, vaccines and dietary supplements.

SECTION 6. *Selection of Priority Areas.* The Department of Health in consultation with the Department of Education and the Department of Social Welfare and Development shall select at least five (5) regions for each year based on the criteria provided herein in order to achieve a national coverage for a period of three (3) years. All barangays within the selected region shall establish their respective mandatory child nutrition program within a period of six (6) months.

The following criteria shall be considered in the selection of priority regions:

1. Low level of participation of 3-5 year old population in existing day care and pre-school services; and
2. Number of provinces and cities with high incidence of poverty, low birth weight, infant and under-five (5) mortality, malnutrition, maternal mortality, low participation rate in Grade I, and high drop-out rate among Grade I pupils.

SECTION 7. *Self-Starting Barangays.* A self-selection alternative is available for barangays not selected as priority site for a given year but which can afford to institutionalize a mandatory child nutrition program in its locality.

SECTION 8. *Funds for the Mandatory Child Nutrition Program.* The funds for the establishment, maintenance and operation of the mandatory child nutrition program shall be appropriated from the following sources:

1. Ten percent (10%) of the recorded income of the general fund accruing from interest on deposit accounts and performance bonds and any forfeited amounts therefrom. Performance bonds and deposits filed or posted by private persons or entities with agencies of the government shall be deposited with an authorized government depository bank as trust liabilities and under the name of the agency concerned.
2. Ten percent (10%) of the total amount specifically identified and authorized intelligence and confidential funds as provided for in the budgets of departments, bureaus, offices or agencies of the national government, which shall be prorated among them.
3. Fifteen percent (15%) of the total amount automatically appropriated for debt service compounding both interest payment and principal amortization thereon.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, rules and regulations, and executive orders contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,