

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **4301**

Introduced by GABRIELA Women's Party Representatives
EMERENCIANA "EMMI" A. DE JESUS and LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN
Bayan Muna Representatives TEODORO CASINO and NERI COLMENARES
Anakpawis Representative RAFAEL MARIANO,
Kabataan Representative RAYMOND PALATINO and
ACT Teachers Representative ANTONIO TINIO

Explanatory Note

The Philippine Constitution affirms the responsibility of Congress to "give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good" (Section 1, Article XIII).

This duty is especially inviolable during periods when prices of basic commodities rise beyond the economic reach of a large percentage of our marginalized population. The 2009 Family Income and Expenditure Survey of the NSO showed that 40% of the Filipino population belonging to the lowest income groups barely have enough resources, whether through income or savings, to fund their various expenditures as a family.

In another 2009 survey¹, 48.73% of mothers come from families without any form of income, while 15.23% come from families who earn only a maximum of PhP100.00 a day. Under these circumstances, 36% of the mothers surveyed cope by reducing their food budget, while 21.72% of mothers and their family cope by having only one or two meals a day, and another 19.19% survive on noodles and dried fish, the prices of which have also skyrocketed.

Meanwhile, wages continue to be depressed for workers earning minimum wage income at P404.00, in the face of increasing prices of basic commodities as well as the actual cost of living. IBON, an independent economic think tank, estimates a cost of living of PhP 983.00 for a family of six living in the National Capital Region.

¹ Survey on the Economic and Living Conditions of Urban and Rural Poor Women, CWR, January – June 2009

Over the years, consumer groups and a growing percentage of the population have repeatedly sounded out the clamor to freeze price increases on basic commodities.

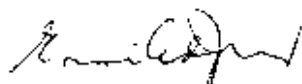
Historically, price control or price stabilization was first enacted in 1980, under Presidential Decree (PD) 1674, which provided a mechanism for price regulation, created a price stabilization council, and prescribed the powers and responsibilities of the said council. This was subsequently repealed by R.A. 7581, or An Act Providing Protection to Consumers by Stabilizing the Prices of Basic Necessities and Prime Commodities and by Prescribing Measures Against Undue Price Increases.

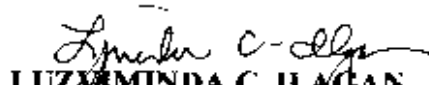
Under RA 7581, the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) was created to stabilize the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities by advising the President and other concerned agencies on general policy matters for promotion and improvement in productivity, distribution and stabilization of the said products. The NPCC assumed the function of the Price Stabilization Council which was created under PD 1674. In the process, the following important functions of the Price Stabilization Council were no longer assumed by the NPCC:

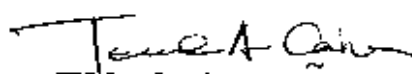
- The setting of price ceiling on key and essential commodities, particularly those purchased by low income groups after verification through surveys, studies and various other means, and
- Recommending to the President the grant of subsidies to certain sectors in order to hasten production of certain items.

The NPCC's present mandate apparently falls short of what it is expected to do. It is in this light and amidst clamor and protests of various women and consumer's groups that this bill is being proposed. This bill seeks to enforce and strengthen the functions of the National Price Coordinating Council, in giving relief and dependable safety net measures to the consumers amidst increases in the prices of basic necessities and prime commodities.

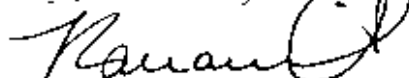
In view of the above, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


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Gabriela Women's Party


LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN
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Bayan Muna Party


NERI COLMENARES
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**AN ACT AMENDING SECTION TWELVE, FUNCTIONS OF THE PRICE
COORDINATING COUNCIL, OF REPUBLIC ACT 7581 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
AN ACT PROVIDING PROTECTION TO CONSUMERS BY STABILIZING THE
PRICES OF BASIC NECESSITIES AND PRIME COMMODITIES AND BY
PRESCRIBING MEASURES AGAINST UNDUE PRICE INCREASES DURING
EMERGENCY SITUATIONS AND LIKE OCCASIONS.**

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

1. Section 12 of RA 7581 otherwise known as "The Price Act" is hereby amended as follows.

Sec. 12 Functions of the Price Coordinating Council -The Price Coordinating Council shall have the following functions:

(1) It shall coordinate the productivity, distribution and price stabilization programs, projects and measures of the government and develop comprehensive strategies to effect a general stabilization of prices of basic necessities and prime commodities at affordable levels;

(2) It shall report to the President and to the Congress of the Philippines the status and progress of the programs, projects, and measures undertaken by each implementing department, agency or office as well as the comprehensive strategies developed by the Council to stabilize the price of basic necessities and prime commodities;

(3) It shall advise the President on general policy matters for promotion and improvement in productivity, distribution and stabilization of prices of basic necessities and prime commodities;

[4] **IT SHALL RECOMMEND TO THE PRESIDENT THE SETTING OF PRICE CEILINGS ON KEY AND ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE PURCHASED BY LOW INCOME GROUPS, AFTER VERIFYING THROUGH SURVEYS AND TECHNICAL STUDIES AND/ OR HEARINGS THAT THE PRICES OF THESE. ITEMS HAVE RISEN TO UNREASONABLE DEGREE;**

[5] **IT SHALL RECOMMEND TO THE PRESIDENT THE GRANT OF SUBSIDIES TO CERTAIN SECTORS IN ORDER TO HASTEN PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN ITEMS AND THEREBY ASSURE STABLE PRICES FOR CONSUMERS;**

(4) [6] It may require from its members or any other government agency such information as it may deem necessary, and conduct public hearings for purposes of assessing the supply, distribution, and price situation of any basic necessity or prime commodity:

(5) [8] ---xxxx---

Approved;