

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 1548

Introduced by HON. JULIETTE T. UY



EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our nation's children are definitely our country's future leaders. Thus, their quality nutrition needs to be ensured by the State to provide the best opportunities at developing the potentials of the present and future generations of children. The appropriate quality nutrition is integral to children's total development and the overall development of the nation.

Executive Order No. 128 mandated the Department of Science and Technology's Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) to conduct surveys every five years on the nutritional status of the population. The 2008 nutrition survey results include the following:

1. The number of Filipino children who were underweight and under-height 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 under-height rate increased from 26.3 percent to 27.9 percent (3.57 million children); and
4. The prevalence of underweight children aged 6-10 years increased from 22.8 percent in 2005 to 25.6 percent in 2008 (2.6 million children). The number of under-height children in this age group likewise increased from 32 percent to 33.1 percent.

The said survey revealed a high prevalence of under-height-for-age or stunted preschoolers in MIMAROPA, Bicol, and all the regions in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The survey 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 SOCSKSARGEN where the underweight-for-age prevalence was at least 30 percent.

Chronic malnutrition affects 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 SOCSKSARGEN.

Children going to school on an empty stomach is a sorry reality of the grinding poverty besetting most Filipinos, especially in the provinces.

This bill proposes a National Child Nutrition Program in all public elementary schools and barangay day care centers throughout the country. This program shall mandate feeding for schoolchildren in actualizing with the State's declared policy of promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of children.

The immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,



HON. JULIETTE T. UY
2nd District, Misamis Oriental

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HOUSE BILL No. 1548

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* This Act shall be known as the “National Child Nutrition Law of 2013.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is a declared State policy to promote the welfare of children, their development and special protection with full recognition of the nature of childhood and its special needs; to support the nutritional needs of children so as 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 integrative and sustainable on a national basis.

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

- 3.1. achieve improved child attendance and survival rates in day care centers and public elementary schools by ensuring that adequate health and nutrition programs are accessible to young children throughout the early childhood years;
- 3.2. enhance the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and language development of young children;
- 3.3. enhance the role of public elementary schools and barangay day care centers as surrogate caregivers of children;
- 3.4. ensure that young children are adequately prepared and nurtured in both public elementary schools and barangay day care centers; and
- 3.5. establish an efficient system for the early identification, prevention 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 and with the consent of parents. The program shall include but not limited to:

- 4.1. Complementary feeding to ensure access to food supplements which will improve nutritional status via micronutrient supplementation, weighing and growth monitoring, deworming, and emergency feeding during and after disasters.

4.2. 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.

4.3. The benchmarks under the mandatory child nutrition program shall be determined by the Department of Health (DOH) in consultation with the Department of Education (DepEd) and the respective barangay/s having jurisdiction over the barangay day care centers or the public elementary school.

SECTION 5. *Holistic 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 DOH, in consultation with the DepEd and the appropriate barangay/s 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 and sources of the same; 2) priority areas of the country where greater attention is needed; and 3) identify the groups of school children most likely to benefit from supplementary feeding.

The Department Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall assist in monitoring the weight and health of children participating in the supplementary school feeding program.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) and the National Food Authority (NFA) shall make available warehouses, trucking and facilities for the mandatory child nutrition program.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall help enlist the support of local government units in the accomplishment of mandatory child nutrition program objectives.

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

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) 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 (DTI) 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 DOH, in consultation with the DepEd and the DSWD 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:

6.1. Low level of participation of 3-5 year old population in existing day care and pre-school services; and

6.2. Number of provinces and cities with high incidences of poverty, low birth weight, infant mortality, malnutrition, maternal mortality, low participation rates in Grade I, and high drop-out rates 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 start and 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 sourced from 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.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'M' or 'J' with a large loop at the bottom.