

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **2613**



Introduced by BAYAN MUNA
Representatives NERI J. COLMENARES and CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE

AN ACT
GRANTING MANDATORY GOVERNMENT SUPPORT
FOR TRIPLETS, QUADRUPLTS AND OTHER HIGHER ORDER MULTIPLE
BIRTHS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Mothers after being informed that they have multiple pregnancies experience happiness mixed with trepidation and unsure of their capacity to sustain the family. Corollary to that are the high expenses with extended hospital confinement and frequent hospital visits during the prenatal, delivery and postnatal check-ups including hospital obstetrical care - ultrasound scan, hospital visits, in-patient stay, delivery and postnatal care including admittance of the multiple-birth babies to Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) after birth. Further, the more babies born in the set (i.e. triplets, etc.), the lower the birth weight of each child and the increase in admittance to NICUs. Statistics also show that almost half of all multiple births are premature.

More often than not, death becomes unavoidable for one or more of the babies and even of the mothers resulting from complications during pregnancy or at childbirth. This situation then becomes doubly devastating for the family, psychologically and financially.

After birth, extra care and attention is needed by these babies and even of their mothers, logically, more than single childbirths require. Thus, there is a need to extend not only maternity leave benefits, but also the paternity leave benefits, for both parents to help the children adjust in their predicament, and even the parents themselves as well.

Children of multiple births also mean additional financial burden to the parents, doubling or tripling the expenses for every child as they grow older, and more so if they have disabilities. As most of multiple birth incidents, the preparation of the parents having to raise more children than what was expected is an issue that calls upon the government to be concerned about, especially to

those from among poor to middle class families.

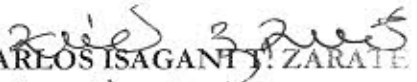
This bill therefore seeks to assist parents of triplets, quadruplets and higher order multiple births who are faced with the problem of raising several children all at the same time and are not economically prepared for such a situation. Specifically, mandatory support for these families is called for on:

1. All prenatal, delivery and postnatal care services
2. Funeral expenses in case of death of any one or more of the multiple births or their mothers;
3. Extended paternity and maternity leaves for parents;
4. Health and nutrition and educational support

Thus, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,


Rep. NERI J. COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party-List


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-List

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Section 1. *Short Title* – This Act shall be known as “Multiple Births Support Law of 2013”.

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy* – Section 11 of Art. XIII – Social Justice and Human Rights, of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides:

Section 11. The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms*. – For purposes of this Act:

- a. *Higher order multiples* - refer to triplets (3 babies), quadruplets (4 babies), quintuplets (5 babies) or even more babies. Higher order multiples can be any combination of the two basic twin types – 1 pair of identical twins plus 1 fraternal twin, 2 sets of fraternal twins, etc.
- b. *Childbirth* – includes both labor (the process of birth) and delivery (the birth itself); it refers to the entire process as an infant makes its way from the womb down the birth canal to the outside world.
- c. *Childbirth expenses* – refer to expenses incurred during pregnancy, at delivery and in the early post natal period, including hospital, medical and surgical expenses. This also includes professional fees of attending physician/s in all public and private hospitals, medical facilities, outpatient clinics and home health care services;
- d. *Child Benefit* - is a payment defined by Section 4.4 of this Act, made to all parents of

multiples provided that their joint annual incomes do not exceed P225,000 which is the 5th income decile under the Total Family Income and Expenditures and Savings at Current Prices for 2009. Said income shall adjust according to succeeding changes in the FIES values by the National Statistics Office (NSO). The monthly support shall continue until the child/children reach/es 18 unless he/she/they have physical or mental disability.

- e. *Extended Paternal and Maternal Leave Benefits* - refer to extra seven (7) days and thirty (30) days granted for the employed father and mother of the multiples, respectively, in the public and private sectors. These are additional days to what is mandated by Article 133 of the Labor Code and Section 14-A of "Social Security Act of 1997" (Republic Act No. 8282).
- f. *Maternal Death* – refers to death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management.
- g. *Medical Services* - refer to hospital services, professional services of physicians and other health care professionals and diagnostics and laboratory tests that are necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of an illness or injury;
- h. *Multiple Birth Loss/es* – refer to loss of life (or death) of any of the higher order multiples through miscarriage, stillbirth and early infant deaths.

Section 4. Coverage of Government Support for Families with Higher Multiple Births.

Parents of higher order multiples shall be entitled to the following assistance free of charge:

Section 4.1 Medical check-ups, surgery/ies, laboratory and other tests incidental to the prenatal, delivery and postnatal care of all mothers and multiples in all public hospitals and medical institutions.

Section 4.2 All funeral expenses in case of death or loss of any one of the higher order multiples or the mother shall be shouldered by the government.

Section 4.3. Paid paternity and maternity leave benefits as defined by Section 3e.

Section 4.4. The mandatory monthly support per child shall be:

1. Health and nutrition support per child shall be equivalent to the prevailing daily minimum wage.
2. Educational support per child shall be equivalent to one half of the prevailing daily minimum wage.

Support shall be availed of until legal age. There is also increased independence permitted by the parents or legal guardians.

In case the child has physical or mental disability, support may be lengthened

depending on the degree and type of disability.

Section 4.5. Exclusion from Coverage. Families of multiples earning an annual income exceeding that of the 5th income decile under the Total FIES at current prices shall be excluded from government support stated above.

Section 5. *Implementing Agencies.* The Department of Social Welfare (DSWD) with the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall jointly issue the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act.

Section 6. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law. An initial amount of Thirty Million Pesos (P30,000,000) shall be allocated for the first year of its implementation.

Section 7. *Separability Clause.* If any portion or provision of this Act is declared void or unconstitutional, the remaining portions or provisions hereof shall not be affected by such declaration.

Section 8. *Repealing Clause.* Any provision of law or regulations inconsistent herewith is hereby repealed, revoked or modified accordingly.

Section 9. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,