

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 3678

Introduced by
OFW Family Party-List Representative ROY V. SEÑERES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill is in furtherance of the mandate of Section 11, Article XIII, of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, which declares that 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 the people at affordable cost. For this reason, the State shall protect the interest, promote, and enhance the well-being of overseas Filipino workers, including their families and dependents through the provision of personal health care services in particular, and social welfare services in general.

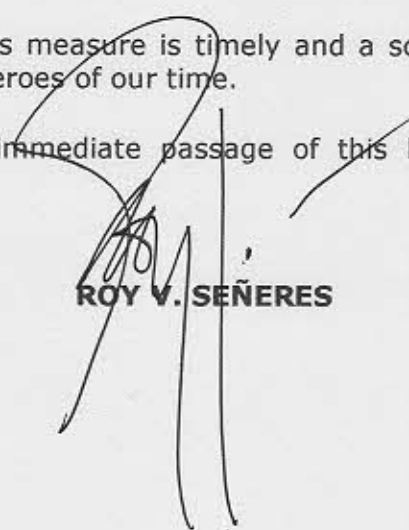
It is a known fact that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) daringly venture outside our shores to countries many of us do not have the courage to go into. They took great risks and hazards of exposing themselves to unfamiliar surroundings, different cultures, customs, traditions, and idiosyncracies of peoples of the host countries, simply because they wanted to provide their families, dependents and loved ones financial sustenance for their daily needs.

Every year, our OFWs are increasing in number as we do not have enough jobs available for them to stay with higher pay. In the process, the foreign exchange remittances of our OFWs to their families and dependents have increased tremendously. Thus, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) gave the following figures of cash remittances of foreign exchange by OFWs: US\$20.117 Billion in 2011; US\$21.391 Billion in 2012; and for 2013 with an estimated increase of 5%, it will be US\$22.460 Billion for this year. The continuous influx of foreign exchange remittances of our OFWs to their families and dependents have further strengthened the Philippine economy and sustained our economic growth and economic development. As such, it is expected that the projected economic growth rate of 6.5% to 7% for 2013 will be realized. Such growth rate will be the highest, if not one of the highest in South East Asia region.

Indeed, the Philippine economy withstand and overcame the worst financial crisis in the world of not long ago, and the endanger of encountering the same in the future, through the continuous and steady flow of foreign exchange remittances of our OFWs to their families and dependents in the country.

Clearly, then, the passage of this measure is timely and a solemn tribute to our OFWs, the modern-day heroes of our time.

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



ROY V. SEÑERES

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3678

Introduced by
OFW Family Party-List Representative ROY V. SEÑERES

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A HOSPITAL FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS
AND THEIR DEPENDENTS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. **Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) Hospital Act of 2013."

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – Section 11, Article XIII, of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, declares that 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 the people at affordable cost. For this Constitutional mandate, the State shall protect the interest, promote, and enhance the well-being of overseas Filipino workers, including their families and dependents through the provision of personal health care services in particular, and social welfare services in general.

SEC. 3. **Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined to mean as:

- (a) "Overseas Filipino Worker" shall refer to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a legal resident. A person "to be engaged in a remunerated activity" refers to an applicant worker who has been

promised or assured employment overseas and acting on such promise or assurance sustains damage and/or injury. The term "Overseas Filipino Worker" shall be used interchangeable with "Migrant worker".

- (b) "*Overseas Filipinos*" shall refer to migrant workers, other Filipino nationals and their dependents abroad.
- (c) "*Legal Resident*" shall refer to a person who has obtained permanent residency status in accordance with the law of the host country.
- (d) "*Host Country*" shall refer to a country or State where overseas Filipinos are located or found.
- (e) "*Dependents*" shall refer to the following: (1) the legal spouse entitled by law to receive support from the overseas Filipino worker; (2) the legitimate, legitimated, or legally adopted, and illegitimate child who is unmarried, not gainfully employed, and has not reached twenty-one (21) years of age, or if over twenty-one (21) years of age, he is congenitally incapacitated or while still a minor has been permanently incapacitated and incapable of self-support, physically or mentally; and (3) the parents who are receiving regular support from the overseas Filipino worker.

SEC. 4. *Overseas Filipino Workers' Hospital and Wards:*

Creation. – To implement the policy declared in this Act, there is hereby established an Overseas Filipino Workers' Hospital in the National Capital Region, which shall be the primary medical facility for the hospitalization, confinement, medical treatment and medical care of overseas Filipino workers, including their families and dependents. In addition, each regional hospital shall establish an Overseas Filipino Workers' Ward as the facility for the hospitalization and medical care of overseas Filipino workers, including their families and dependents residing outside the National Capital Region, with an initial capacity of at least fifty (50) beds.

The hospitalization, confinement, medical treatment and medical care of overseas Filipino workers, including their families and dependents at the Overseas Filipino Workers' Hospital shall be free of whatever charges.

SEC. 5. **Exemption from Taxes and Duties.** – The Overseas Filipino Workers' Hospital shall be granted the status of a tax-exempt government facility. The Hospital shall be exempt from the payment of taxes on all contributions thereto and all donations, bequest, subsidies or financial aids which may be made to it. Accordingly, any donation, contribution, bequest, subsidy or financial aid to the Hospital shall constitute as allowable deduction from the income of the donor for income tax purposes and shall be exempt from donor's tax, subject to such conditions as provided in the National Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

SEC. 6. **Objectives.** – To ensure the acceptability, availability, and accessibility of quality health care, the Overseas Filipino Workers' Hospital shall:

- (a) Provide for a comprehensive health care services and social welfare services to overseas Filipino workers, including their families and dependents;
- (b) Ensure the inclusion of the following services: preventive, promotive, diagnostic, curative and rehabilitative programs as complement to the existing package of services under the National Health Insurance Program;
- (c) Conduct medical examination and testing to determine the physical fitness and mental soundness of overseas Filipino workers; and
- (d) Set-up a system that will effectively monitor the condition of patients and to generate relevant information/data in aid of policy formulation.

SEC. 7. **The Board of Directors.** – (a) Composition – The Hospital shall be governed by a Board of Directors hereinafter referred to as the Board, composed of nine (9) members as follows:

- (i) The Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) as *ex-officio* Chairman.
- (ii) The Administrator of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) as *ex-officio* Vice-Chairman.

- (iii) The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth) as *ex-officio* Member.
- (iv) The Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) or his representative as *ex-officio* Member.
- (v) The Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or his representative as *ex-officio* Member.
- (vi) Four (4) Representatives from the overseas Filipino workers sector: one (1) from National Capital Region; one (1) from Luzon; one (1) from Visayas; and one (1) from Mindanao as Members.

(b) Appointment and Tenure – The President of the Republic of the Philippines shall appoint the members of the Board from a list of nominees prepared by the Ex Officio Chairman in consultation with the Party-List group representing the aforesaid sector where the four (4) representatives are former overseas Filipino workers for a term of three (3) years without reappointment. Except for members whose terms shall be co-terminus with their respective positions in government, any vacancy in the Board shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made and the appointee shall serve only the unexpired term of his predecessor.

(c) Meetings and Quorum – The Board shall hold regular meetings at least once a month. Special meetings may be convened at the call of the Chairman or by a majority of the members of the Board. The presence of five (5) voting members shall constitute a quorum. In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, a temporary presiding officer shall be designated by the majority of the quorum.

(d) Allowances and Per Diems – The members of the Board shall receive a *per diem* for every meeting actually attended subject to the pertinent budgetary laws, rules and regulations on compensation, honoraria and allowances.

SEC. 8. Responsibilities, Powers and Functions. – The Board of Directors of the Overseas Filipino Workers' Hospital shall have the following responsibilities, powers and functions:

- (a) To formulate and implement measures and programs to achieve the objectives of the Overseas Filipino Workers' Hospital as mentioned in Section 6 of this Act;
- (b) To issue rules and regulations to implement the declared policy of this Act;
- (c) To organize the structure of the Hospital in accordance with a staffing pattern prepared by it and approved by the Department of Budget and Management;
- (d) To appoint the officials, employees and other personnel of the Hospital, subject to civil service laws, rules and regulations, and to prescribe their duties and fix their compensation subject to the provisions of Republic Act No. 6758, otherwise known as the Salary Standardization Law;
- (e) To formulate and promulgate policies for the sound administration, maintenance, and operations of the Hospital;
- (f) To formulate and implement guidelines on the proper disposition of contributions, donations, bequests, subsidies or financial aids/assistance received by the Hospital;
- (g) To enter into agreements and contracts which may be necessary or expedient for the attainment of the objectives of this Act; and
- (h) To perform such other acts as it may deem appropriate for the attainment of the objectives of the Hospital and for the proper enforcement of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. Appropriations. – There is hereby appropriated the sum of Five Hundred Million Pesos (Php500,000,000.00) to fund the initial budgetary requirements of this Act. Thereafter, the amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. **Repealing Clause.** - All laws, decrees, ordinances, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. **Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

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



SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3679

Introduced by
OFW Family Party-List Representative ROY V. SEÑERES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill is in furtherance of relevant provisions of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, to wit:

1. Section 10, Article II, states: "The State shall promote social justice in all phases of national development."
2. Section 18, Article II, states: "The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare."
3. Section 3, (first paragraph), Article XIII, which states: "The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all."

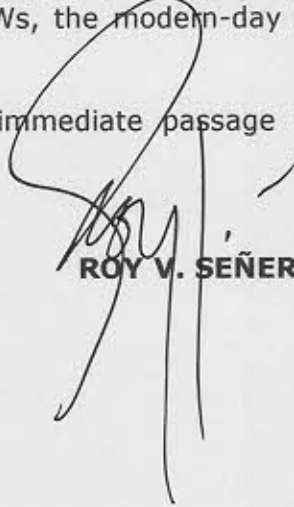
It is a known fact that overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) daringly venture outside our shores to countries many of us do not have the courage to go into. They took great risks and hazards of exposing themselves to unfamiliar surroundings, different cultures, customs, traditions, and idiosyncracies of peoples of the host countries, simply because they wanted to provide their families, dependents and loved ones financial sustenance for their daily needs.

Every year, our OFWs are increasing in number as we do not have enough jobs available for them to stay with higher pay. In the process, the foreign exchange remittances of our OFWs to their families and dependents have increased tremendously. The continuous influx of foreign exchange remittances of our OFWs to their families and dependents have further strengthened the Philippine economy and sustained our economic growth and economic development.

For this reason, it is only appropriate that the State should be considered as the surrogate employer of the more than ten (10) million OFWs who are considered to be the economic soldiers of the country. As surrogate employer, it shall be State's duty and obligation to contribute and share in the payment of SSS, Pag-ibig and Philhealth premium payments or contributions of OFWs.

The passage of this social legislation is a tribute and in recognition of the valuable contribution of the OFWs, the modern-day heroes of our time.

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



ROY V. SEÑERES

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3679

Introduced by
OFW Family Party-List Representative ROY V. SEÑERES

AN ACT
GRANTING SPECIAL PRIVILEGES TO OVERSEAS FILIPINO
WORKERS (OFWs) IN THE PAYMENT OF SSS, PAG-IBIG AND
PHILHEALTH PREMIUMS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. **Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) Premium Benefits Act of 2014.”

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to protect the interest, promote, and enhance the well-being of OFWs by granting them special privileges in the payment of SSS, Pag-Ibig and Philhealth premiums.

SEC. 3. **Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined to mean as:

- (a) “Overseas Filipino Worker” shall refer to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged, or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a

SEC. 4. **Special Privilege in the Payment of SSS, Pag-Ibig and Philhealth Premiums.** – As the surrogate employer of the more than ten (10) million OFWs, the government is obliged to contribute and pay Fifty percent (50%) of the SSS, Pag-Ibig and Philhealth premium payments or contributions of the covered OFW and the latter shall be entitled to all the benefits in accordance with the pertinent provisions provided under existing laws.

SEC. 5. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) is hereby tasked to implement this Act and shall, in coordination with the Social Security System (SSS), Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig), and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth), formulate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC.6. **Appropriations.** –The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. **Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. **Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, ordinances, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. **Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3680**

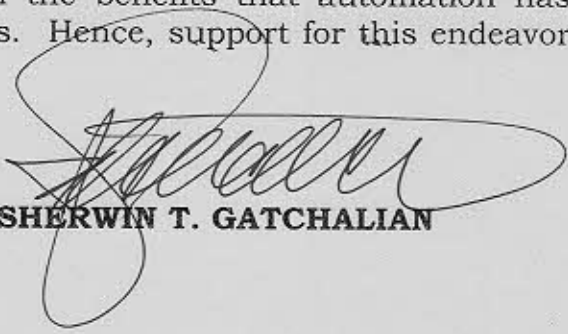


Introduced by Honorable Sherwin T. Gatchalian

Explanatory Note

Information Technology is commonly used as a synonym for computers and computer networks. Wikipedia defines it as the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data. Simultaneous access by many users has made business processes productive and has increased efficiency in most transactions. The speed by which these data are stored, retrieved and transmitted has revitalized efficiency and productivity to a whole different level.

The advantages of a fully automated public service transaction, we believe, shall save time and transportation cost, limit bureaucratic red tape and curb corruption, as well as allow for government transparency, and maximize efficiency and productivity of public functions. Some LGU's have already established far more advanced system of information technology in their locality and by this humble legislation, we wish that other LGU's shall likewise share in the benefits that automation has brought to the pioneering local units. Hence, support for this endeavor is earnestly sought.


SHERWIN T. GATCHALIAN

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3680**

Introduced by Honorable Sherwin T. Gatchalian

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICE
IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY, CITY AND PROVINCE
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to recognize the vital role of communication and information in nation-building. Towards this end, the automation of information and transactions in all municipality, city and province shall be organized and made accessible through a database management system to increase productivity and efficiency in public service.

Section 2. Information Technology Office - There shall be established an Information Technology Office in every municipality, city and province throughout the country which shall have the following objectives:

- a. To provide for the automation and system of electronic data storage for all information and transactions relating to local business processes and other matters of public concern;
- b. To provide on-time accomplishment reports of all departments, local advisories and participatory initiatives for local programs;
- c. To expedite the processing of all local transactions;
- d. To provide for a technology that will offer online payments for all local taxes, fees and other assessments;

- e. To be equipped with accurate computation of payments;
- f. To provide for transparency and the effective monitoring of all information and transactions within the locality concerned;
- g. To provide for consistent accessibility of organized informations to the general public as well as provide a venue for communication with constituents;
- h. To provide a productive tool to increase efficiency in local government service;
- i. To equip local government units with a constantly evolving technology that will be at par with global standards.

Section 3. *Budget and Implementation.* – The amount necessary for the operation and maintenance of the Information Technology Office in every municipality, city and province shall be charged to the local funds. The LGU concerned, shall, immediately include in its annual budget the amount to be defrayed, and, consistent with its allowable budgetary allocation may seek the technological support of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in the establishment of the IT Office.

Section 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

Section 5. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, rules and regulations, other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3681



Introduced by Honorable Sherwin T. Gatchalian

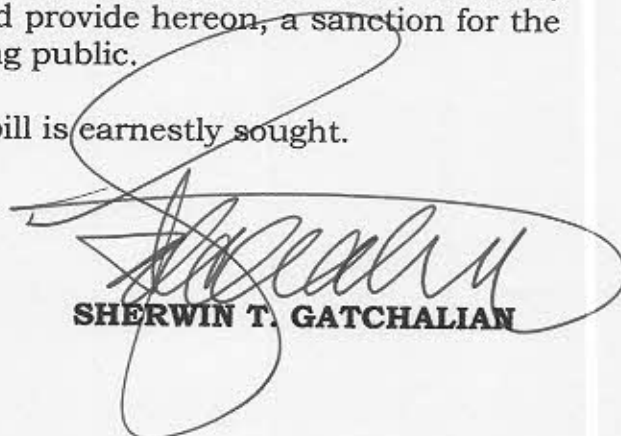
Explanatory Note

"A common carrier is bound to carry the passengers safely as far as human care and foresight can provide, using the utmost diligence of very cautious persons, with a due regard for all the circumstances." (Article 1755 of the Civil Code)

We have seen countless videos and heard sordid stories of cab drivers who are abusive, negligent and prey on unsuspecting passengers. They pick passengers on their terms, refuse carriage for some destinations, force you to pay an extra amount on top of the meter bill, are discourteous and tricks most passengers on circuitous routes to earn extra money. Most of the tourists who come to our country have fallen victims to these enterprising cab drivers. This sad state of our transportation system has been tolerated and ignored for lack of laws that singly protect our commuting public. Most people are likewise dismayed over the inadequacy of law enforcers who are responsive and sympathetic to concerns of this nature.

In order to address this problem and prevent any more untoward incidents of this nature to occur in the future, a passenger bill of rights is hereby proposed to protect the commuting public from abusive, itinerant and discourteous drivers and provide hereon, a sanction for the offenses they commit against the riding public.

The immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


SHERWIN T. GATCHALIAN

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3681

Introduced by Honorable Sherwin T. Gatchalian

An Act to Establish the Bill of Rights of Taxi Passengers

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the Bill of Rights of Taxi Passengers."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights. Towards this end, the State shall afford the public their established rights and the principles that will outline expectations on their commute to ensure their safety, and improve taxi service in the country.

SECTION 3. *Rights of Taxi Passengers.* - Every taxi passenger shall have the right to:

- A. A licensed driver;
- B. A properly dressed and courteous driver who will provide assistance, if requested, at no extra cost;
- C. A driver who is not under the influence of alcohol and/or dangerous drugs;
- D. Ride in a clean, safe and smoke-free taxi;
- E. Be transported to their stated destination, regardless of trip length;
- F. Direct the route, or expect the most economical route;
- G. A taxi meter calibrated and duly sealed by the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board;
- H. View the metered fare and request a receipt;
- I. Be given the exact amount of change;
- J. Travel with a service animal and/or portable mobility aid;
- K. Request for a quiet/silent trip (no radio or conversation);

- L. A substitute taxi, or be assisted to procure one, in case of mechanical/engine trouble or other similar instances that hinders the continuation of carriage, and by this reason, cause the waiver for payment of the flag-down taxi rate.

SECTION 4. *Responsibilities of Taxi Drivers and Operators.* – A taxi driver/operator shall:

- A. Display his/her Taxi Driver's License in a manner that is clearly visible to all passengers;
- B. Indicate on the inside doors of the taxi, the plate number of the taxi, the taxi operator's name, place of business and contact numbers;
- C. Display in a prominent/conspicuous place within the taxi, the rights of the taxi passengers, the procedure on filing of complaints for any of its violation, as well as the contact information to be provided by the LTFRB;
- D. Be courteous, and render assistance to the passenger, if requested;
- E. Accept all trips regardless of length;
- F. Avoid violating any law or traffic regulation;
- G. Refrain from using a cell phone while in transit and carrying passengers;
- H. Provide a clean, safe and smoke-free taxi;
- I. Protect the taxi passenger's health or safety;
- J. Refrain from soliciting or requiring passengers to pay more than the displayed meter fare;
- K. Know the major routes and destinations.

SECTION 5. *Filing of Complaints for Violation of Rights.* – A taxi passenger whose rights herein have been violated, shall file a personal complaint against the driver and operator of the taxi, with the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) which shall conduct the investigation and provide the necessary forum for adjudication of these complaints.

The complaint instituted under the provisions of this Act shall be without prejudice to the filing of a civil or criminal complaint for the violation of any law and/or other existing local ordinance, whenever applicable.

SECTION 6. *Fines and Penalties.* – Any taxi driver who willfully violates any of the provisions enumerated under Section 3 of this Act

shall be solidarily liable with their taxi operators and shall be meted a fine and/or a penalty, depending on the following:

- A. *First Offense.* – A minimum fine of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) but not to exceed Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00);
- B. *Second Offense.* – A minimum fine of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) but not to exceed Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00);
- C. *Third and Succeeding Offenses.* – A minimum of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) but not to exceed Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) and the suspension of the driver's license and/or the Certificate of Public Convenience for a period of one (1) week.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – In the enforcement of this Act, the LTFRB shall within sixty (60) days from its effectivity, promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the LTFRB under the current General Appropriations Act (GAA). Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its full implementation shall be included in the GAA as a distinct and separate item. The amount of fines collected in the enforcement of this Act shall be used exclusively in the furtherance of its effective implementation including information disseminations, education and awareness campaigns.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 10. *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.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3682**

Introduced by Honorable **MARIE ANNE S. PERNES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and to recognize the role of the youth in nation-building.

Soft drink consumption has become a highly visible and controversial public health and public policy issue. Several researches show that soft drinks contain sugar, artificial sweeteners, caffeine, phosphorus, and carbon acids which have harmful effects on the body.

Drinking too many beverages containing added sugar, such as soft drinks, fruit drinks, energy or sports beverages is associated with health problems such as:

- 1) Obesity – The World Health Organization recognized that consumption of soft drinks contributes to the growing incidence of obesity. According to *Dr. Tim Gill*, the Regional Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific International Obesity Taskforce of Australia revealed that in the Philippines, 1% of young children (0-10 years) and 3% of adolescents (11-17 years) were overweight. The national nutrition survey conducted by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) revealed a steady increase in obesity cases from 5.7 % in 1989 to 8 % in 1993.
- 2) Diabetes- Studies have found an association between a person's soda habit and the rising rate of type 2 diabetes. Experts generally agree that the consumption of these beverages, which has steadily increased, has contributed to the Filipinos' growing problem with the excess weight and weight-related health problems. Research has shown that adults and children who regularly drink beverages high in added sugars tend to have higher calorie intakes and experience greater weight gain. And, as weight gain increases, so does the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

- 3) Heart Disease- According to the journal *Circulation*, just one sugary drink a day increases risk of heart attack by 20%. Study author *Lawrence de Koning* says that the sugar-sweetened beverages and coronary heart disease is probably due to the large amount of easily digested sugar in these sugary drinks.
- 4) Dental Caries or Tooth Decay – Scientific studies conclude that soft drinks are responsible for doubling or tripling the incidence of tooth decay. A study involving children aged 6-12 years old in La Trinidad, Benguet shows the prevalence of dental caries and high consumption of sugar. Soft drinks are one of the most common sources of dietary sugar. The 2006 National Oral Health Survey (NOHS) revealed that 97.1% of six-year-old children suffer from tooth decay. More than four out of every five children of this sub-group manifested symptoms of dentinogenic infection. About 78.4% of twelve-year-old children suffer from dental caries and 49.7% of the same age group manifested symptoms of dentinogenic infections.

It is the responsibility of the State to protect our children from exposure to harmful substance. The sale of beverages that pose serious health risks can be curbed under the State's police power.

Dr. Ben: for

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3682**

Introduced by Honorable **MARIE ANNE S. PERNES**

AN ACT REGULATING THE AVAILABILITY OF BEVERAGES TO CHILDREN IN
SCHOOLS AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Title – This act shall be known as the “Healthy Beverage Options Act of 2013”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy- Article II, Section 15 of the 19887 Constitution provides that it tis the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them. Pursuant to said provision, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to actively promote the health of children and to take necessary steps to prevent serious health risks that can be brought on by the consumption of soft drinks. Towards this end, the State will ensure that children are provided with healthy choices when purchasing beverages in schools. Towards this end, the State shall regulate the sale of beverages in schools.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms – The following definitions will apply for purposes of this Act:

School – shall include preschools, grade schools, and high schools, whether public or private.

SECTION 4. Coverage – This Act shall apply to all schools in the Philippines as defined in this act.

SECTION 5. – Prohibitions

A) The following beverages shall not be provided or sold at schools:

- 1) Soft drinks, sports drinks, punches, and iced teas;
- 2) Fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50 percent real fruit juice or that contain additional sweeteners;
- 3) Drinks containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk.

B) The following beverages shall be sold at schools:

- 1) Fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50 percent of fruit juice and that do not contain additional sweeteners;
- 2) Water and seltzer;
- 3) Low-fat or fat-free milk, including , but not limited to , chocolate milk, soy milk, rice milk, and other similar dairy or non-dairy calcium-fortified milk.

SECTION 6. Implementation – The Department of Education shall implement this law and shall conduct periodic reviews of compliance by schools.

SECTION 7. Penalties – Schools and restaurants found violating this law shall be fined one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) for every violation.

SECTION 8. Repealing Clause - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause - If for any reason or reasons, any portion or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, all other parts or provisions not affected shall continue to remain in full force and effect.

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

Approved.

