

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

H. No. 3710



Introduced by Representative Estrellita "Ging" B. Suansing

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Global Age Watch Index revealed that the Philippines ranked 7th among 21 Asian countries as the best country for older people. The country also ranked 44th out of 91 countries worldwide. Sweden topped the list worldwide while Japan ranked first in Asia. (Source: <http://ph.news.yahoo.com>; viewed on December 16, 2013)

The index is said to be the first ever tool to measure the quality of life and well-being of older people around the world.

The **1987 Philippine Constitution**, as the highest law of the land also provides the following provisions for senior citizens, to wit;

"Article II - Declaration of Principles and State Policies

"Section 10. The State Shall Promote Social Justice in All Phases of National Development.

"Section 11. The State Values the Dignity of Every Human Person and Guarantees Full Respect for Human Rights.

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"Article XIII - Social Justice and Human Rights

"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 the 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.

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“Article XV - The Family

“Section 4. The family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security.”

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In view thereof, the State should engage in a more vigorous role in protecting, preserving and even improving the welfare of senior citizens in the country. Such is also in line with the Filipinos' age-old custom of revering our elderly relatives up to the end of their days. Be that as it may, improving the living conditions of the elderly will translate *ipso facto* in the improvement of the living conditions of the other classes in our country.

In the province of Nueva Ecija, a considerable number of senior citizens are hard-pressed already as they were due to the standard of living in the province. This was aggravated further by calamities such as typhoon Santi which hit Central Luzon in October, causing damage in the amount of more than P3 billion on two provinces alone, including Nueva Ecija; essentially obliterating a good part of the so-called 'rice granary' of the Philippines.

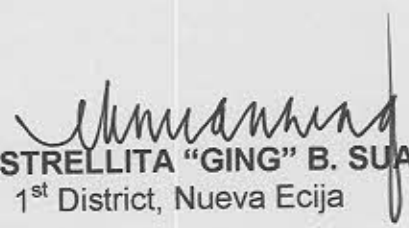
This bill seeks to provide adequate and effective social services to all members of society especially senior citizens so they may live prosperously and enjoy the fruits of their labor. For this purpose, the State undertakes to establish, initiate, and support programs, including endeavors, aimed at promoting and advancing the social and economic well-being of senior citizens.

Moreover, the bill aims to establish a national long-term care program for senior citizens that embodies programs and services relating to the following;

- 1) Social protection
- 2) Senior citizens and development
- 3) Advancing health and well-being
- 4) Enabling and supportive environment

If enacted into law, the bill will reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks of senior citizens, as well as enhance their social status and rights; promoting and protecting them also against hazards and sudden loss of income, thereby improving the capacity to manage risk.

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


Rep. ESTRELLITA "GING" B. SUANSING
1st District, Nueva Ecija

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SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
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H. Bill No. 3710

Introduced by Representative Estrellita "Ging" B. Suansing

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING LONG-TERM CARE FOR SENIOR
CITIZENS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR 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 Long-Term Care for Senior Citizens Act of 2013**".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policies. The State recognizes the invaluable contribution of senior citizens to the national development program. Accordingly, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide adequate and effective social services to all members of society especially senior citizens so they may live prosperously and enjoy the fruits of their labor. For this purpose, the State undertakes to establish, initiate, and support programs, including endeavors, aimed at promoting and advancing the social and economic well-being of senior citizens.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be construed to mean as follows:

a. Senior citizen refers to any person as defined in Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7876, otherwise known as the Senior Citizen Center Act.

b. Long-term care refers to a sustained provision of comprehensive programs and services to senior citizens with the view of enabling them to have dignified, healthy, and secured lives.

c. Dependent senior citizen refers to those persons who are frail, sickly, suffering from any disability, or have no other means to support their individual basic needs.

SEC. 4. National Long-term Care Program Framework. A national long-term care program for senior citizens is hereby established, which shall embody the following core programs and services, among others:

a. **Social Protection.** This shall cover programs that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of senior citizens by promoting and protecting them against hazards and sudden loss of income and improving senior citizens' capacity to manage risk.

a.1. Social Welfare. Curative and preventive interventions that seek to support the special needs of Senior Citizens and to reduce risks associated with old age shall be provided. These shall include activities aimed at protecting senior citizens from abuse, exploitation and discrimination. Moreover, prevention and provision of support services against physical, emotional and financial abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect and abandonment of senior citizens shall be established within the family and at the community level. Towards this end, trainings and awareness campaigns shall be initiated to raise the public's awareness of the problems confronting senior citizens and to equip the public with the necessary know-how to prevent and detection problem areas concerning senior citizens.

a.2. Livelihood Job Generation Program. Senior citizens shall be specifically targeted in livelihood programs and other poverty alleviation programs. Further, livelihood programs shall guarantee a minimum income and shall be designed in a manner that increases senior citizens' productivity.

a.3. Social Insurance. Existing social insurance programs shall be modified and expanded to guarantee that senior citizens shall be adequately protected from loss of income and unemployment as a result of old age. Economic and financial support through other innovative social insurance and pension schemes especially designed for families caring for dependents/disabled senior citizens shall likewise be endeavored.

a.4. Social Safety Nets. Stop-gap mechanisms or urgent and immediate responses shall be instituted to shield senior citizens from vulnerabilities arising from disasters, emergency and displacement due to development projects, natural and man-made calamities.

b. **Senior Citizens and Development.** This shall include mainstreaming activities such as lifelong, education programs for aging preparation and non-formal education at the local level for those sixty (60) years old and above and development of programs which will allow senior citizens to remain actively engaged in as many social, economic and community activities as possible.

c. **Advancing Health and Well-being.** An integrated and innovative elderly-focused health and social services shall be made available at the local level. Particular emphasis shall be made on disease prevention, health promotion and wellness of mind, body and spirit. Health services shall comprise preventive, curative and rehabilitative health care services in all government and private hospitals, local health facilities and other community-based facilities. The said program shall contemplate the following, among others:

c.1. Homecare and hospice for the frail and dependent elderly and medical and psychological support for patients requiring continued medical assistance after discharge.

c.2. Development and provision of geriatric training at the family and community level.

c.3. Mandatory PHILHEALTH coverage for non-contributory senior citizens especially the poor.

d. **Enabling and Supportive Environment.** Provision of home nursing for the elderly, facilities for respite care, programs on counseling, professional guidance and emotional support and low-cost, community-based activities integrated into existing community health programs as well as strengthening of inter-generational relationships.

Nothing above prevents the agencies tasked to implement the provisions of this Act from introducing other social services and programs designed to promote the National Long-Term Care Program for senior citizens.

SEC. 5. Implementing Agencies. The National Long-Term Care Program for Senior Citizens shall be implemented jointly by the Department of Finance, Department of Health, Department of Interior and Local Government, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the various local government units. The National Inter Agency Monitoring Board created under Republic Act No. 9257, otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act, shall take the lead in monitoring the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. Appropriation. The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter the local government units shall undertake the maintenance of the institutions established under this Act.

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, after due consultations with the other implementing agencies, shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the orderly implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,