

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH (16TH) CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3980**



Introduced by Hon. Lorna Q. Velasco

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include, among others: promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; and improving maternal health. The Philippines, together with the international community, made a commitment to achieve these goals by the year 2015.

Currently, female participation rate in the country's labor force stands at 49.7% and women in third-level government post stands at 46%. These figures reflect the leaps and bounds the Philippines has made in empowering women. Gone are the days when women are confined to handling domestic responsibilities, leaving behind the responsibility of providing food and livelihood to her male counterparts. In this rapidly changing environment, sometimes established laws and rules are slow to react in addressing new state of things - take for instance, our labor laws on pregnant women and child welfare.

Given that women compose almost half of the entire labor force, additional laws must be enacted to safeguard their safety and welfare in the workplace. While the Philippines is on track with the MDG of empowering women, there is much to be desired when it comes to the MDGs of improving maternal health and reducing child mortality.

This Act seeks to update our labor laws and to provide additional protection to pregnant women by obliging all employers to only require pregnant women to render six-hours of work a day while receiving the same salary earned from an eight-hour work day. This way, maternal health will not be compromised. Pregnant women need all the rest they can get not only for them but also for the unborn child.

Consequently, improved maternal health brought about by lesser hours of work for pregnant women shall logically lead to reduced child mortality.

The passage of this bill shall more importantly be consistent with the mandate of the Constitution that "recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall equally protect the life of the mother and of the unborn child" and which implicitly promotes proper health care of pregnant women. Subordinate, but no less important, the measure contained in the Act will enhance the country's thrust in achieving the UN's MDGs of reducing child mortality and improving maternal health.

Approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


LORNA Q. VELASCO

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AN
ACT PRESCRIBING A SIX-HOUR WORKING SCHEDULE FOR EMPLOYED
PREGNANT WOMEN AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. *Short Title* – This act shall be known as the “Pregnant Women Worker’s Act”.

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy* – The State hereby declares that proper health of pregnant women is important in maintaining a low maternal and infant mortality rate and the State shall strive to uphold the mandate of respecting the life of the mother and the unborn.

Section 3. *Six-Hour a Day Work Schedule* – All employers shall require pregnant women to render only six hours of work per working day during their pregnancy provided that the latter submit proof of such pregnancy from a government accredited physician.

Section 4. *Eight-Hour Pay* – All pregnant women required to work under the preceding section shall be entitled to be paid by their respective employers the regular pay covering an eight-hour work schedule.

Section 5. *Overtime Work and Pay* – All hours of work rendered by pregnant women in excess of six hours shall be considered as overtime work and shall be paid by the employer according to the computation of overtime pay established by applicable labor laws. Pregnant women may choose to render overtime work provided that the employer necessitates such overtime work. However, they may not be at any time or in any manner be compelled to render overtime work.

Section 6. *Application in Public and Private Employment* – Benefits granted to pregnant women under this Act shall be applicable to all those employed in both the public and private sector.

Section 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* – the Department of Labor and Employment and Civil Service Commission shall formulate and issue rules and regulations implementing this Act within thirty (30) days upon its effectivity.

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

Section 9. *Effectivity* – This act shall take effect fifteen days (15) after publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,