



Republic of the Philippines

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Sixteenth Congress
2nd Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5584**



Introduced by Hon. Sharon S. Garin,
Hon. Rogelio J. Espina, and Hon. Romero Federico S. Quimbo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Studies show that diet and nutrition play a crucial role in a child's overall development. (UNICEF) In a report by the United Nations (UN), it was estimated that there are 6 million Filipino children who suffer severe malnutrition. This is consistent with the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) study in 2011 which found out that 2 out of 10 of Filipino children aged 0-5 years old and 3 out of 10 aged 6-10 years old are underweight. Malnutrition alongside with the issue of poverty has been experienced more in conflicted and disaster-prone regions such as the Mindanao and the Visayas.

It is reported that there are many Filipino children who go to school with an empty stomach. This obviously compromises the learning of the children in the classroom. In 2012, the Department of Education (DepEd) had disclosed that there are more than 500,000 pupils enrolled in public kindergarten and elementary levels were considered "severely wasted."

It is the primary responsibility of the State to ensure proper education and health care among its citizens especially the children.

To address the issue of malnutrition among Filipino students and to further encourage them to go to school, the "Malusog na Estudyante Program" is hereby proposed. Through the implementation of the program, Filipino children in daycare centers and public schools from kindergarten to highschool nationwide are given free meals from Monday to Friday.

Why provide school meals?

programs can enhance enrollment and reduce absenteeism among Filipino students. Moreover, "school meals connect the community, as parents and teachers work hand in hand for the benefit of the children as well as strengthen their social ties amongst the children themselves." (UNICEF)

Aside from the free meals, the students are also given regular check -ups, vaccination, and vitamin supplements to ensure that they are physically fit.

As the aim of the program is to safeguard physical and intellectual development among Filipino students, the early enactment of this measure is earnestly sought.



Hon. Sharon S. Garin

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AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FREE MEAL AND A REGULAR CHECK UP PROGRAM TO STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS INCLUDING DAYCARE CENTERS, KINDERGARTEN, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY SCHOOL, PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. Title - This Act shall be known as the "Malusog na Estudyanteng Pilipino Act"

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. It is a declared policy of the State that it shall ensure the promotion of both health and education among its citizens. The Act aims to address the issue of malnutrition, poverty, and illiteracy among children.

Section 3. Malusog na Estudyanteng Pilipino Act. To improve the overall health, academic performance, and attendance of school children enrolled in daycare centers, public elementary and secondary schools, a Malusog na Estudyanteng Pilipino Act (Free Meals and regular checkups for Public School Students Program) is hereby institutionalized.

The **Malusog na Estudyanteng Pilipino Act** aims to provide free meals and check-ups among children in daycare centers and students in public schools.

The food which will be recommended by the National Nutrition Council (NNC) shall be served during meal time from Monday to Friday (except holidays and semestral breaks) which will start on the date of class opening in June and ends in the last day of class in March.

Checkups which shall include vaccinations and provision of supplements shall be done regularly during the school year to monitor if there is an improvement among students.

Public schools located in conflict- and typhoon-stricken areas and the provinces where extreme poverty is experienced worse shall be given priority in this act.

The Program shall follow a 5-year full implementation phase. In its first three years, the program shall be implemented in the public schools of the top 10 provinces where the poverty rates are the highest.

On the fourth year onwards after the enactment of this Act, the Program shall be implemented in all daycare centers and public schools nationwide.

Section 4. National Nutrition Council as the lead agency. The National Nutrition Council (NNC) shall lead the implementation of the program with the help of the following agencies: the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) and the Department of Health (DOH).

The council shall establish a framework to monitor the improvement of students upon its implementation. This framework will serve as a guide detailing the step-by-step implementation of the program which include the identification of food to be provided among students; accreditation of food providers (canteens or the likes) where the food will come from; the types of check-ups necessary to monitor and improve students' health; development of a database of information which shall be done by the respective schools where the program will be implemented; monitoring progress report on children; and the participation of communities and civil society and private-public sector partnership.

Section 5. Orientation and Training for the Parents, Teachers, and Regional Government Personnel.

The Program shall be complemented by public health and nutrition education campaign programs, which aims to promote a holistic and integrated approach to health and nutrition education of school pupils. For this purpose, relevant and user-friendly nutrition information and education materials shall be developed and distributed in the public school. Orientation-training shall be held among DepEd health and nutrition unit personnel at the regional and division levels, concerned local government representatives, and the parent-teacher associations (PTAs), in order to orient them on the Program's objectives and mechanics and generate support for the Program.

Section 6. Regular Check-ups. A concurrent health examination including necessary vaccination and deworming to all school pupils shall be undertaken before the start of the feeding program which shall be done by the respective local Health Officer or a volunteer doctor from an NGO or private organizations. Vitamin supplements shall also be provided among daycare and public school students. Children found with ailments shall be given proper treatment and referred to hospitals. Class Advisers shall note the progress of each pupil for the entire duration of the implementation of this program. The respective Principals shall submit a quarterly progress report to the Division Superintendent. The Division Superintendent shall submit the consolidated reports to the National Nutrition Council.

Section 7. Role of the Department of Education (DepEd). - The Department of Education shall be responsible in establishing the standard lunch program in the public education system, which will: a) provide free lunch meals to all public school children; b) ensure that the provided meals meet the standard nutrition content, c) establish a system of efficient sourcing, procurement, and delivery of the required raw materials and other necessary inputs.

Section 8. Role of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The DSWD together with the different local government units shall implement the feeding programs done in daycare centers among different barangays nationwide.

Section 9. Role of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG). The DILG shall implement an effective monitoring system that will be implemented through the Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS), and shall institutionalize a fair and progressive system of compensation and incentives for the BNS, which shall likewise be sourced from the funding of the national feeding program in the public education system. The DILG shall issue memorandum circulars which will institutionalize a subsidized funding scheme for the 5th and 6th class municipalities and a national-local counter-parting scheme for 3rd and 4th class municipalities. Moreover, the agency through the BNS shall help in the supervision of the feeding program in daycare centers.

Section 10. Role of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI). - The DOH and the FNRI shall identify the fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods which are appropriate for the feeding programs in the specified locality. The DOH shall also procure personnel or volunteers from the locality, preferably from the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and provide technical assistance in the training on the proper and healthy preparation, cooking, and other healthy practices in relation to the feeding programs.

Section 11. Role of the Department of Agriculture (DA). - The Department of Agriculture (DA) shall take over in encouraging school gardening in all public schools. It shall identify and accredit farmers' organizations or farmer's cooperatives, who can supply good quality seeds. Moreover, it shall provide technology and technical assistance alongside with provision of trainings and seminars to teach teachers and parents about school gardening.

Section 12. Private Sector and other Non-government Organization (NGO) Participation. The participation of private sectors is highly encouraged in this Act. The private entity through their Corporate Social Responsibility donate or adopt a school as a recipient of the "Malusog na Estudyanteng Pilipino" Program in partnership and guidance of the different agencies mentioned in this Act.

For purposes of this provision, the DepEd in coordination with the Department of Finance (DOF) and other relevant government agencies may provide a system of incentives which would exempt these private organizations from income tax, or discount in business permits registration or other assistance.

Section 13. Appropriation. - The amount of Fifty Billion pesos (Php 50,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the implementation of the Program and shall be taken from the proceeds of Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Philippine Gaming and Amusements Corporation. Initially, a substantial portion shall be sourced from the Social Fund of the Office or the President.

The funds shall be administered by the National Nutrition Council (NNC).

Thereafter, such sum necessary for its continuous implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

All expenditures and disbursement of funds made under the program shall be subject to existing government auditing and accounting rules and regulations.

Section. 14. Implementing Rule and Regulations. - The National Nutrition Council (NNC) shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act. Each of the member national government agencies and instrumentalities shall likewise promulgate the necessary internal memoranda, circulars, and other order to institutionalize the program within their respective offices, not later than the date to be determined by the NNC.

Section. 15 Repealing Clause. - All laws, decreed and orders or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly. Nothing in this Act shall affect the existing food programs being implemented by other government agencies.

Section. 16. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, or whichever comes earlier.

APPROVED,