

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

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4821**



Introduced by Honorable Michaelina M. Antonio

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XVI, Section 8 of the Constitution declares that the State shall, from time to time, review to upgrade the pensions and other benefits due to retirees of both the government and the private sectors.

Currently, the government provides pensions to indigent senior citizens, members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and employees of the government and private sectors through the GSIS and SSS, respectively.

As much as it is laudable that our government provides much-needed assistance to our citizens through social pensions, we must acknowledge the reality that there are sectors being neglected.

The agricultural sector, which accounts for 10.3% of the Filipino GDP¹ and employs a third of the Filipino workforce,² remains to be underprivileged when it comes to pensions and benefits. Farmers and fisherfolk who are responsible in producing food for the nation are the most disadvantaged workers. They toil and till the land under extreme weather conditions, yet earn very little to feed their families. And still, in their old age, after all their sacrifices, they have no assurance of a secured retirement.

In response to this sad plight of our agricultural workers, this bill aims to establish an "Agricultural Pension Fund," from which our farmers and fisher folk will receive their monthly pensions once they retire. With this proposed pension plan, the government will be able to recognize the plight of, and give due respect to our farmers and fisherfolk whose hard work and continuous efforts ensure that we have food on our plates on a daily basis.

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


MICHELLE M. ANTONIO

¹ "Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)." (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=PH>). Retrieved August 3, 2016

² "Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)". (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS>). Retrieved August 3, 2016

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**AN ACT CREATING AN AGRICULTURAL PENSION FUND TO PROVIDE
PENSION BENEFITS TO FARMERS AND FISHER FOLK**

*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 *Agricultural Pension Fund Act of 2016*.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy* - The Constitution provides that the State shall, from time to time, review to upgrade the pensions and other benefits due to retirees of both the government and private sectors. As far as may be possible, it should provide to those who have less in life the opportunity to earn for their living so that they may play a more active role in social life and especially in the economic and political spheres. It is the duty of the State to create conditions which are necessary to realize the right of all citizens particularly the underprivileged the equal opportunity.

SECTION 3. *Creation of the Agricultural Pension Fund* – The Agricultural Pension Fund is hereby established to provide pension benefits to agricultural workers, specifically farmers and fisherfolk.

SECTION 4. *Implementing Agency.* – The Philippine Crop Insurance Corporation (PCIC), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall be the main

implementing agency of the provisions of this Act. To fulfil the goals of this Act, it shall perform the following duties and functions:

- a. manage and invest the funds properly to ensure sustainability and increased capacity to provide benefits;
- b. create a pension plan that shall become the basis for the allocation of benefits to its pensioners;
- c. promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act;
- d. coordinate with other relevant agencies in the fulfilment of the goals of this Act; and
- e. perform other duties and functions towards and efficient and effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the PCIC Board of Directors shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture and representatives of recognized farmers and fisherfolk's groups, promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriations* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of the Program shall be included in the annual appropriation of the DA.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule and regulation contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,