

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H.B. No. 5865



Introduced by Representative H. Harry L. Roque Jr.

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A BREASTFEEDING CENTER IN EVERY BARANGAY
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 15, provides:

Section 15. The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.

Breastfeeding infants provides protection against major illnesses in children such as respiratory infections, diarrhea and malnutrition and reduces risk of degenerative diseases well into adulthood, and ensures material health by protecting against hemorrhage, anemia, certain cancers as well as facilitating the recovery of mothers from rigors of pregnancy and birth and helping prevent closely spaced pregnancies.

Breastfeeding is the most far-reaching and least costly Poverty Alleviation Strategy of developing countries, especially in the Philippines where breastfeeding culture is being diminished beyond all reason, even as it addresses the issues of not

only economy, but also national health, ecology, empowerment of women, bonding between mother and child, love and faith.

Breastfeeding also contributes to the country's economy. Ninety-nine percent of milk formula sold in the market is imported. If all lactating mothers at any given time exclusively breastfeed their infant up to six months, our country would save \$57 million worth of imported milk formula per week.¹



H. HARRY L. ROQUE JR.

¹ This bill was originally filed by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago in the Sixteenth Congress, Second Regular Session.

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Barangay
2 Breastfeeding Centers Act.”

3 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote
4 the general welfare of the people. Pursuant to this policy, it shall promote
5 breastfeeding as a means to provide protection against major illnesses in children such
6 as respiratory infections, diarrhea and malnutrition. The State shall likewise promote
7 breastfeeding as a means to ensure material health by protecting against hemorrhage,
8 anemia, certain cancers as well as facilitating the recovery of mothers from rigors of
9 pregnancy and birth and helping prevent closely spaced pregnancies.

10 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

1 (A) "Breastfeeding" mean feeding of the child directly from the breast or the
2 expression on milk from the breast of a lactating woman;

3 (B) "Barangay breastfeeding centers" means breastfeeding centers situated in
4 every barangay which provide breastfeeding services such as information on proper
5 breast feeding method and proper use of breast feeding materials;

6 (C) "Barangay breastfeeding personnel" authorized health workers assigned by
7 the municipal health office to supervise the healthcare facilities in each barangay; and

8 (D) "Breastfeeding materials" means materials used to aid lactating mothers in
9 breastfeeding which include medicines, vitamins, breast pumps and other useful
10 paraphernalia; materials shall also include breastfeeding milk supplements to be
11 supplied by the barangay breastfeeding centers.

12 SECTION 4. *Establishment of Barangay Breastfeeding Centers.* – If the
13 barangay health center in a particular barangay already has sufficient space and
14 equipment to facilitate the barangay breastfeeding program, the barangay
15 breastfeeding center shall be integrated within the barangay health center. If the
16 barangay health center is not sufficiently equipped to facilitate the breastfeeding
17 centers, a separate breastfeeding center shall be built.

18 SECTION 5. *Campaign for Breastfeeding and its Importance to the Health of*
19 *Infants and Mothers.* – The barangay breastfeeding personnel shall also conduct
20 periodical campaigns involving information dissemination on the importance of breast
21 feeding for the health of mothers and infants.

1 SECTION 6. *Breastfeeding Equipment and Supplements.* – Constituents of
2 every barangay shall avail of the services and facilities of barangay breastfeeding
3 centers for free. No payment in any form shall be accepted by the personnel of the
4 breastfeeding centers. They shall however, be allowed to receive donations in the form
5 of breastfeeding materials and supplements.

6 SECTION 7. *Beneficiaries of the Services and Facilities of Breastfeeding*
7 *Centers.* – All residents of the respective barangays shall be entitled to avail of the
8 services of the barangay breastfeeding centers.

9 SECTION 8. *Funding for Barangay Breastfeeding Centers.* – The funds to be
10 used for the barangay breastfeeding centers shall be allocated from the budget of the
11 respective local government units. The respective barangay councils shall also allocate
12 budget for the breastfeeding centers from the budget of their respective barangays.

13 SECTION 9. *Monitoring and Inspection of Barangay Breastfeeding Centers.* -
14 The municipal or city health office having jurisdiction over the respective barangay
15 shall monitor and inspect the services and facilities of every barangay breastfeeding
16 center at least once every two months. The municipal/city health office shall ensure
17 that every breastfeeding center has sufficient equipment and are able to efficiently
18 service the needs of constituents.

19 SECTION 10. *Trainings and Seminars.* - The barangay breastfeeding personnel
20 should undergo trainings and seminars to improve and update their skills in providing
21 breastfeeding services, The municipal or city health offices, in coordination with the

barangay officials of every barangay, shall schedule breastfeeding trainings and seminars at least once every six months.

SECTION 11. *Implementing Agencies.* - The Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the local government units shall be responsible for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - DOH and DSWD shall formulate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for this Act within sixty (60) days upon its effectivity.

SECTION 13. *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 this program shall be included in the annual appropriation for DOH and DSWD.

SECTION 14. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

SECTION 15. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

1 SECTION 16. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
2 after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
3 circulation.

Approved,