

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

Seventeenth Congress
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8865



Introduced by Hon. Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay

Explanatory Note

As the Commission on Population Development projected that by the years between 2030 and 2035, the Philippines is expected to have an aging population (when the proportion of the population age 65 and over exceeds 8 to 10 percent), certain challenges are expected to arise at an unprecedented rate, given the shift of an elderly demographic from a once young and dynamic populace.

Currently, the Philippines is home to some 9 million senior citizens, and despite monumental strides in measures protecting and empowering this population segment, the elderly are still considered as the most vulnerable sectors in the country. In its 2015 study, the Philippine Statistics Authority has projected that the sector has a poverty incidence of 13.1%, and with the current inflation, is expected to grow substantially.

In its 2005 study, the Philippine Statistics Authority also reported that, "more than half of the household population 60 years old and over (57.41 percent) were household heads. Of the total number of households in the Philippines (15.3 million), 17.13 percent (2.6 million households) were headed by senior citizens." Perhaps, these numbers are expected to have risen substantially, given the period the report was made and the rapid increase in the country's elderly population.

Despite what is prescribed in the 1987 Constitution, Article XV, Section 4, that "The family has the duty to care for its elderly members...", we are seeing quite the opposite, where much of the household is still greatly dependent on their elderly

members. So, to quote the succeeding provision of Article XV, Section 4, “although the State may also do so through just programs of social security.”

Social security in the age of retirement goes beyond both contributory and tax-based pension systems, more affordable and accessible healthcare and consumer goods. This representation deems it pressing and necessary to accord our elderly with more protection and leverage, particularly in their access of basic utilities.

In response to the increasing prices of public utilities such as electricity and water, Republic Act 9994 granted at least five percent (5%) discount on electric and water consumption provided that the same does not exceed 100kWh and 30 m³. In factoring the increasing costs of public utilities and the general increase in electric and water consumption requirements, senior citizens (and their family dependents) are not directly benefiting from this specific provision of law.

Therefore, this representation deems it a need to amend the law by removing the exemption and automatically applying the discount to the first 100 kWh and first 30m³ consumed by the household registered under the senior citizen. If we really want to see the existing law to benefit a greater number of our elderly, particularly those who, despite reaching retirement, still manages to head and manage their own respective households, we would need a version of the law that is more empowering, encompassing, and equalizing.

With this proposed amendment, the government is effectively and rightfully adhering to its sworn mandate in Article XV Section 4, by reducing the daily cost of living for senior citizens nationwide, and by ensuring that our elderly (and their dependent family members) would have a more secured and affordable access to basic utilities.

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


Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay

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SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8865

Introduced by Rep. Milagros Aquino-Magsaysay

AN ACT EXPANDING THE PRIVILEGES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE EXPANDED SENIOR CITIZEN ACT OF 2010

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

SECTION 1. Section 4 (c) of Republic Act No. 9994, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 4. *PRIVILEGES OF SENIOR CITIZENS.* –

“x x x

“x x x

(c) THE GRANT OF A MINIMUM MONTHLY FIVE PERCENT (5%) DISCOUNT TO THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED KILOWATT HOURS (100 kWh) OF ELECTRICITY AND THE FIRST THIRTY CUBIC METERS (3m³) OF WATER SUPPLIED BY PUBLIC UTILITIES PROVIDED THE SAID UTILITIES ARE REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF THE SENIOR CITIZEN RESIDING THEREIN; PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT THE PRIVILEGE GRANTED PER HOUSEHOLD REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER OF SENIOR CITIZENS RESIDING THEREIN.”

SECTION 2. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Energy, and the Department of Trade and Industry, along with the Local Water Utilities Administration, and other agencies concerned shall promulgate the necessary guidelines for and shall take the lead in the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 3. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other parts or provisions thereof shall remain valid and effective.

SECTION 5. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, which shall not be later than seven (7) days after the approval thereof.

Approved,