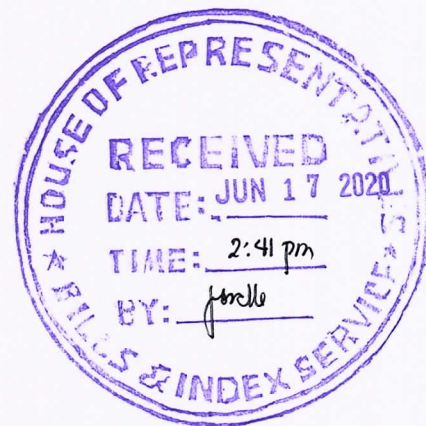




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7009



Introduced by Representative Sharon S. Garin

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In recent times, multiple statistics from studies conducted by multiple agencies reveal a problematic trend of hunger, wasting, and undernutrition in our young children, particularly our school children.

According to 2012-2013 figures of the Department of Education (DepEd), more than half a million or 534,054 Filipino schoolchildren are malnourished and severely wasted, meaning that they are too thin for their height. The most recent Global School-based Health Survey by the World Health Organization (WHO) from 2011 also reported that 11.8% of surveyed Filipino students aged 13-15 years old were underweight.

This is problematic as though a student's life can be exciting and exhilarating, it can also be grueling and exhausting. Undernutrition and hunger adversely affects a child's ability to learn and hinders them from achieving their full potential. It disrupts a child's mental and physical development, which may ultimately lead to poor productivity in adulthood. Furthermore, it makes them more vulnerable to diseases, disabilities, and even death.

This bill seeks to battle undernutrition, as well as promote health and nutrition in school children and the community in general. This is done by establishing a National Farm to School Program, which is a school-based strategy that focuses on creating a healthy school food environment. This program has already been implemented in various states and locales in the United States resulting in great outcomes. Farm to School implementation differs by location but almost always include the following: (a) Procurement, where local foods are purchased, promoted, and served to school children; (b) Education, where students participate in educational activities related to agriculture, food, health and nutrition; and (c) School Gardens, where students engage in hands-on learning through in-school farming and gardening.

Farm to School Programs provide a variety of benefits to students, parents, schools, communities and food producers. Key outcomes in student health and achievement have included improvement in early childhood eating behaviors, including choosing healthier options in school canteens, consuming more fruits and vegetables through supplementary feeding programs, and willingness to try new foods and healthier options. There is also anecdotal evidence that children are more inclined to eat healthier when they or their friends grew their own food or they know the garden where it was grown.

Farm to school programs also provide benefits to education by promoting food and agriculture-based learning activities to enhance the quality of the educational experience. This leads to an increase in knowledge and awareness about gardening, agriculture, and instill in children the values of good health, proper nutrition, hard work, and responsibility. All this, ultimately leads to enhanced overall academic achievement for our school children.

Farm to school likewise provide economic development opportunities to local economies by mandating the procurement of food from local farms and producers to be used in its program components.

With this novel, integrated, and common sense approach to child nutrition, Farm to School will provide far more cross-sectoral benefits than other regular health and nutrition programs of the government. It is the hope of this Representation, that this bill be approved for the benefit of the school children and their communities.



SHARON S. GARIN
AAMBIS-Owa Party-list



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7009

Introduced by Representative Sharon S. Garin

1 **AN ACT**
2 **ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM**
3 **AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

6 SECTION 1. **Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the
7 **“Farm to School Program Act.”**

8 SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the
9 policy of the State to protect the right to health of the people and
10 take appropriate action to promote their health and proper nutrition.

11 The State also recognizes the importance of agricultural
12 productivity and the valuable contribution of local and farm
13 producers in economic development, thus, it shall implement
14 programs to support and strengthen local agricultural industries.

15 Towards this end, the government shall establish a
16 comprehensive and integrated program that connects schools,

children, farmers and food entrepreneurs to local communities to promote nutrition, facilitate agricultural productivity, stimulate local economy and provide cross-sectoral benefits in areas of public health, economy, education and the environment to achieve the following objectives:

a) Ensure that proper health and nutrition information are given to school children throughout their childhood years;

b) Improve child nutrition by focusing on creating a health food environment in schools and early care educational institutions;

c) Support and influence children's development towards healthy eating habits through proper education on good food sources and teach them how to make informed food choices, such as preferences for fruits and vegetables;

d) Establish and maintain school gardens as accessible and readily-available sources of healthy and nutritious vegetables and food for school children;

e) Ensure access of students to healthy and nutritious food through supplementary school-based feeding programs to mitigate malnourishment among school children; and

f) Enhance the general well-being of the community by encouraging schools, their students and their families to purchase from local producers of healthy and nutritious foods at the same time

stimulating local economies and providing economic development opportunities to local food producers and laborers, distributors, processors and others who support the local food system.

SEC. 3. ***Farm to School Program.*** – To carry the out the policy mentioned under Section 2 of this Act, there shall be established a Farm to School Program through which primary and secondary schools provide education to school children on food and nutrition, health and agriculture and undertake activities to ensure the availability of and accessibility to safe, healthy, nutritious and locally produced agricultural food products in school. The Farm to School Program shall have the following components:

- a) In-School Farm Program;
- b) National School Feeding Program; and
- c) Farm Visits Program.

For the purpose of this Act, “*farm to school program*” refers to an alternative approach of enriching the connection that school communities have with fresh and healthy agricultural food and their local producers by educating and undertaking experiential learning activities with the goal of improving the nutrition and food purchasing practices of children and at the same time strengthening the local economy. It includes health and nutrition promotion through integrated academic lesson on vegetable production, farming and

animal rearing as well as hands-on and practical application through in-school projects and out-of-school excursions, provision for supplementary nourishment for school children, sectoral collaboration and partnership with community organizations.

SEC. 4. ***In-School Farm Program.*** – As one major component of Farm to School Program, the Department of Education (DepEd) shall establish and maintain an in-school farm or garden in every primary and secondary school and implement an In-School Farm Program to:

- a) Establish and promote vegetable production in public elementary and secondary schools;
- b) Serve as a hands-on educational laboratory in teaching agriculture and agricultural concepts; and
- c) Raise the awareness of school children on the nutritional and health value of agricultural food products and instill the importance of good health, proper nutrition, and hard work.

The DepEd shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the in-school farm program and shall formulate a guideline of requirements in the implementation of the program. The DepEd shall structure a timetable to ensure that primary and secondary schools have their own garden for healthy fruits and vegetables.

82 In line with this, the DepEd shall closely coordinate with the
83 Department of Agriculture, the National Nutrition Council, the
84 Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and local
85 government units (LGUs) for the construction and funding
86 requirements necessary in the proper implementation of the
87 program.

88 SEC. 5. ***Role of the Department of Agriculture.*** – The
89 Department of Agriculture shall identify and accredit farmer
90 organizations and cooperatives who may supply the provisions for
91 gardening. It shall also provide technology and technical assistance
92 and conduct trainings and seminars to teach students, teachers and
93 parents about school gardening.

94 SEC. 6. ***Role of the National Nutrition Council.*** – The
95 National Nutrition Council shall provide a list of preferred vegetables
96 that help address malnutrition problems in schools that prioritize
97 planting.

98 SEC. 7. ***Role of the Department of the Interior and Local***
99 ***Government.*** – The Department Interior and Local Government
100 and the local government units shall assist the schools by providing
101 idle government lands and land resources to be used in the in-
102 school farm program.

103 SEC. 8. ***Inclusion of Vegetable Production in Academic***

104 ***Curriculum.*** – Subjects and lessons in vegetable production shall
105 be included in the academic curriculum for primary and secondary
106 level students of both public and private schools to develop the skills
107 and knowledge in vegetable production and promote agricultural
108 literacy.

109 SEC. 9. ***Product Utilization.*** – Products from in-school farm

110 program shall be primarily used for the national school feeding
111 program. Surplus vegetables may be sold to generate income for
112 the purchase of other food supplies for the national school feeding
113 program or additional resources for the improvement of the school
114 gardens.

115 SEC. 10. ***National School Feeding Program (NSFP).*** – The

116 National School Feeding Program is hereby established as an
117 alternative approach of providing free supplementary meals to
118 students. The DepEd shall design a program menu using the
119 product from the in-school farm program and other healthy foods
120 sold by local producers.

121 In coordination with the DepEd, the following national
122 government agencies are tasked to make available such resources
123 as may be necessary to ensure the successful implementation of
124 the NSFP:

a) The DA and the National Food Authority shall tap farmers associations and cooperatives in the locality for possible sources of food supplies and shall share with the DepEd any available resources and facilities that may be used for the NSFP;

b) The DILG shall enlist the support of LGUs as DepEd partners in the operation of the NSFP, including the possibility of utilizing the services of barangay nutrition scholars and barangay health workers; and

c) The National Nutrition Council, in coordination with the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI), shall provide the menu consisting of a combination of foods that meet the recommended energy and nutrient intake of children and use locally produced food and food products as far as possible.

SEC. 11. *Priority LGUs.* – In case of shortage of funds, priority in the implementation of the NSFP shall be given to municipalities and cities which are determined by the National Nutrition Council or by any competent government agency to have high malnutrition rates.

SEC. 12. *Participation of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs).* – The DepEd shall promote the involvement of parents through the PTAs in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the school feeding program.

SEC. 13. ***Procurement, Storage and Handling System.*** –

The procurement, storage and handling of appropriate food supplies by the DepEd shall be upon the recommendation of the National Nutrition Council, the FNRI and other appropriate government agencies.

In the procurement process, priority shall be given to the utilization of locally produced food supplies, as well as the products of the in-school farm program and the products of community gardens as part of convergence efforts to increase food supplies at the local level.

The DepEd shall issue the guidelines necessary for the effective implementation of the procurement, storage and handling system.

SEC. 14. ***Farm Visits Program.*** – The DepEd shall require

that at least 25% of educational tours and field trips to be conducted by public and private primary and secondary schools every academic year shall be devoted to local farms and factories of local food producers or in those places involved in the planting, growing, harvesting, processing, packaging or distribution of food products from agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries; this also includes those involved in the raising, rearing or of animals and livestock including pork, beef, poultry, and other farm animals.

This further includes Farm Tourism Camps, as defined in RA 10816, which refer to any farm area that allows visitors and tourists to visit, get involved in farm activities, and to enjoy and learn rural lifestyle.

SEC. 15. *Monitoring and Evaluation System.* – The DepEd shall establish a monitoring and evaluation system for the nationwide implementation of the Farm To School Program, which shall incorporate periodic reports from the schools division and regional offices. The report provides, among others, the needed information that may determine whether or not the program has achieved its objectives, including the identification of issues and constraints as well as the corresponding appropriate recommendations.

SEC. 16. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriation of the DepEd. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Education shall, in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture and consultation with the heads of government agencies, formulate the

191 necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of
192 this Act.

193 SEC. 18. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act
194 is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so
195 declared shall remain in full force and effect.

196 SEC. 19. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders,
197 rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions
198 of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

199 SEC. 20. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
200 days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of
201 general circulation.

202
203 Approved,