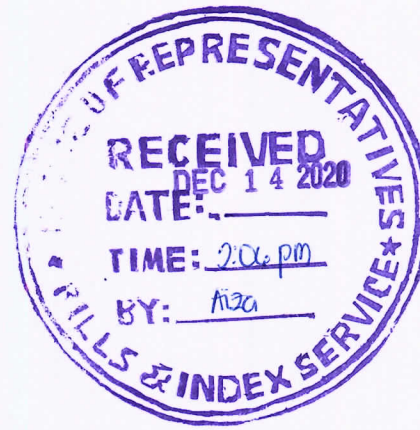


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8232



Introduced by **HON. JOY MYRA S. TAMBUNTING**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Nine months since our lock-downs began and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our country is still experiencing a steady increase of COVID-19 infections, with a total of more than 448,000 cases at present. As we continue to navigate our way to beating this pandemic, we proactively try to propose measures and policies which could help our nation combat COVID-19. This bill seeks to legislate free access to two of our weapons in bringing an end to this pandemic: testing and vaccination.

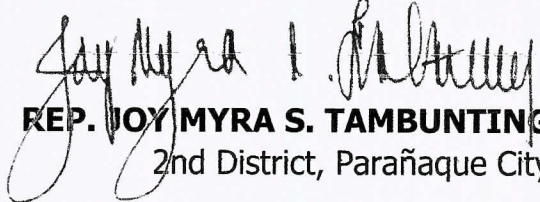
In our fight against COVID-19, free and accessible testing is indispensable. We know this from the experience of other countries who have successfully controlled the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, many of our countrymen do not have access to COVID-19 testing given the high prices. Recently, the government tried to make it more accessible by setting a price cap ranging from P3,800 to P5,000 per RT-PCR swab test. In spite of these price caps, these swab tests remain unaffordable for most of our countrymen. This Representation believes we will only make these RT-PCR swab tests within the reach of our countrymen by making it free. Government must subsidize it in all government hospitals for us to get a better picture of where we are in the fight against this pandemic.

On the side of the vaccination, foreign pharmaceutical companies are presently racing to develop a vaccine for COVID-19. The first vaccine was recently administered in the United Kingdom. The Department of Health has since reported that Philippines' purchase and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines can only be made starting the second quarter of 2021.

Considering the current progress in the vaccine race and the DOH's timeline regards the purchase and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, this Representation believes that it is only appropriate that the Department of Health, in coordination with local government units and other the Department of Interior and Local Government, plan for the safe, efficient and timely distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine by creating a program that would ensure the maximization of the impact of the vaccines on minimizing the transmission of the disease.

The early preparation of a comprehensive vaccination plan will allow for the speedy distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines; and will consequently hasten the resumption of normal activities which would greatly help our economy's recovery. We must make the vaccine free and accessible to our countrymen if we are to put an end to this pandemic.

On behalf of the people of Parañaque City's Second District, and for the common good of the Filipino people, the approval of the said measure is earnestly sought.



REP. JOY MYRA S. TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8232

Introduced by **HON. JOY MYRA S. TAMBUNTING**

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FREE AND ACCESSIBLE COVID-19 TESTING AND
VACCINATION PROGRAM NATIONWIDE AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

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

Sec. 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "The Free and Accessible COVID-19 Testing and Vaccination Act of 2020".

Sec. 2. Coverage. – Every person within the Philippine territory who requests to be tested shall be entitled to a free COVID-19 RT-PCR diagnostic test. Every person within the Philippine territory who requests to be vaccinated shall be entitled to a free COVID-19 vaccine.

Sec. 3. COVID-19 Testing Program. - The Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases shall create a program to make COVID-19 testing free and accessible for every person within the Philippine territory. No person shall be denied a COVID-19 RT-PCR diagnostic test due to its cost, with the said cost to be borne by the government from the current appropriations of the Department of Health.

Sec. 4. COVID-19 Vaccination Program. – The Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases shall create a program for the safe, efficient and timely distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to every Filipino. The program shall include a comprehensive plan which identifies the logistical needs for the transport, storage, and distribution of vaccines, and the strategic, scientific and ethical prioritization of the distribution of vaccines towards maximizing the impact of the vaccines on minimizing the transmission of the disease.

Sec. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – To ensure the safe delivery of COVID-19 Vaccines, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases is

directed to collaborate with the local government units. The Department of Health shall thereby formulate and promulgate the pertinent rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act within forty-five (45) days from the effectivity of this Act.

Sec. 6. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against current appropriations of the Department of Health. Thereafter, such sums necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act. Private sector funding for the COVID-19 Testing Program and COVID-19 Vaccination Program shall be permitted. Private companies may avail of any tax incentives/credits present under current tax laws for their financing of the COVID-19 Testing Program and COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

Sec. 7. Separability Clause. – If, for any reason, any part, section or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Sec. 8. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or part or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 9. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect immediately after its publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,