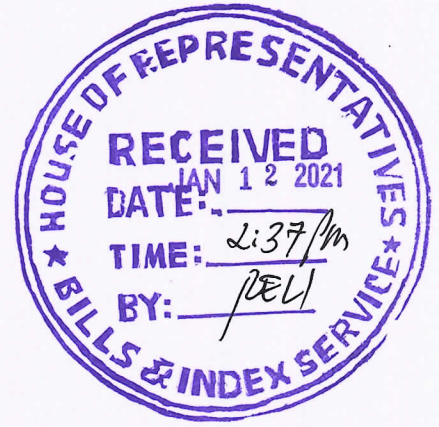


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8347



Introduced by **HON. LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING PROGRAMS REGARDING EARLY HEARING LOSS DETECTION,
DIAGNOSIS, AND INTERVENTION FOR NEWBORNS AND INFANTS

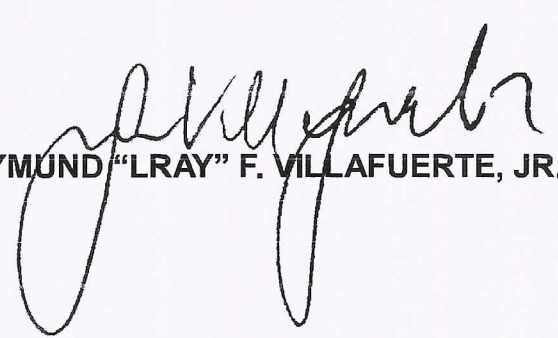
The Constitution, Article XIII, provides:

Section 11. The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, disabled, elderly, women and children, The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.

There is a need to increase the awareness of the general public on the welfare of the deaf. They are a vital segment of our society and a significant force in the efforts for national development.

Studies show that infants, toddlers, and children, who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, have unique language, learning, and communication needs. They need not grow up mute, if only proper care and attention is given.

This bill seeks to establish a comprehensive program regarding early detection, diagnosis, and interventions for newborns with hearing loss. Through the program, the State can effectively provide special care and training for their rehabilitation and subsequent integration into the mainstream of society.


LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Early Hearing Loss Detection, Diagnosis, and Intervention Act.”

SECTION 2. Purposes. – the purposes of this Act are to authorize nationwide early detection, diagnosis, referral, and intervention networks, technical assistance, national applied research program, and inter-agency and private sector collaboration for policy development, in order to assist in making progress toward the following goals:

- (A) All babies born in hospitals in the Philippines should be screened for hearing loss before leaving the hospital (unless the parents of the children object to the screening);
- (B) Babies who are not born in hospitals should be screened within first three (3) months of life;
- (C) Diagnostic audiologic testing, if indicated, should be performed in a timely manner to allow appropriate referral for treatment/intervention before the age of six (6) months;
- (D) All universal newborn hearing screening programs should include a component which ensures linkages to diagnosis and the community system of early intervention services; and
- (E) Public policy in early hearing detection, diagnosis, and intervention should be based on applied research and the recognition that infants, toddlers, and children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing have unique language, learning, and communication needs, and should be the result of consultation with pertinent public and private sectors.

SECTION 3. Nationwide Early Detection, Diagnosis, and Intervention Networks. – The Secretary of Health shall make awards of grants or cooperative agreements to develop

nationwide early detection, diagnosis, and intervention networks for the following purposes:

- (A) To develop State capacity to support newborn hearing loss detection, diagnosis, and intervention;
- (B) To monitor the extent to which hearing detection is conducted in birthing hospitals throughout the country, and assist in the development of universal newborn hearing detection programs in birthing hospitals and non-hospitals birthing sites;
- (C) To develop models which ensure effective screening, referral, and linkage with appropriate diagnostic, medical, and qualified early intervention services, providers, and programs within the community; and
- (D) To collect data on early detection, diagnosis, and intervention that can be used for applied research and policy development.

SECTION 4. Technical Assistance, Data Management, and Applied Research. – The Secretary shall make awards of grants or cooperative agreements to provide technical assistance to agencies to complement an intramural program and to conduct applied research related to infant hearing detection, diagnosis, and treatment/intervention. The program shall carry out the following:

- (A) Provide technical assistance on data collection and management;
- (B) Develop standardized procedures for data management to ensure quality monitoring of infant hearing loss detection, diagnosis, and intervention programs;
- (C) Study the costs and effectiveness of hearing detection conducted by programs in order to answer issues of importance to policymakers;
- (D) Identify the causes and risk factors for congenital hearing loss that might lead to the development of preventive interventions;
- (E) Study the effectiveness of early hearing detection, diagnosis, and treatment/intervention programs by assessing the health, developmental, cognitive, and language status of these children at school age; and
- (F) Promote the sharing of data regarding early hearing loss with birth defects and developmental disabilities monitoring programs for the purpose of identifying previously unknown causes of hearing loss.

SECTION 5. Coordination and Collaboration.

(A) In General. – In carrying out programs under this Act, the Department of Health shall coordinate with consumer groups serving individuals who are deaf and hard-of-hearing; persons who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and their families; qualified professional personnel who are proficient in deaf or hard-of-hearing children's language and who possess the specialized knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to serve deaf and hard-of-hearing infants, toddlers, children, and their families; other health and education professionals and organizations; third party payers and managed care organizations; and related commercial industries.

(B) Policy Development. – The department shall coordinate and collaborate on recommendations for policy development with the private sector, including consumer and professional based organizations, with respect to early hearing detection, diagnosis, and treatment/intervention.

SECTION 6. Authorization of Appropriations.

(A) Nationwide Early Detection, Diagnosis, and Intervention Networks. – For the purpose of carrying out this act, there are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Health Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) for the current fiscal year, Twenty Million Pesos (P20,000,000.00) for the next fiscal year, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the succeeding fiscal years.

(B) Technical Assistance, Data Management, and Applied Research-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. – For the purpose of carrying out this act, there are authorized to be appropriated Five Million Pesos (P5,000,000.00) for the current fiscal year, Seven Million Pesos (P7,000,000.00) for the next fiscal year, and such sums may be necessary for each of the succeeding fiscal years.

SECTION 7. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act 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 rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions 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 newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,