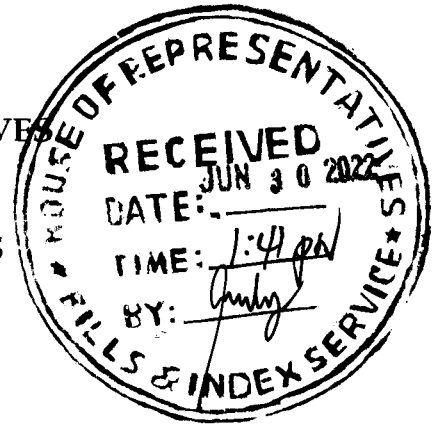


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

House Bill No. 131



**Introduced by Representatives PAOLO Z. DUTERTE, ERIC G. YAP,
EDVIC G. YAP, and JEFFREY SORIANO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As the concept of family is central to Filipino culture, the death of a family member is commemorated with the practice of certain death rituals and traditions. The funeral provides an opportunity for families to properly grieve the loss of their loved one. Further, it serves as an avenue for them to pay respect to and honor their relationship with the deceased.

For many poor families, death comes with debt. Some argue that the cost of passing away is just as costly as living. Evidently, many poor families find paying for funerals difficult, even impossible for some. While they have to cope with grief and loss, they also struggle to find the means to pay for proper memorial services. The cost of funeral and burial services (usually starting from P10,000) burdens the family financially. In order to pay for proper memorial services, some are left with no choice but to borrow money from lenders who sometimes take advantage of their grief and immediate need to put on high interest rates.

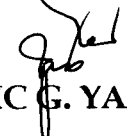
This bill seeks to institutionalize the provision of burial assistance by granting a fifty percent (50%) discount from funeral services to indigent families and free funeral services to extremely poor families nationwide. They can avail of the free or discounted funeral services upon submission of the following: Certificate of Indigency, Death Certificate, and Funeral Contract between the beneficiary-family, the accredited mortuary, and the authorized DSWD personnel. The funeral services

shall include the preparation of funeral documents, embalming, viewing, interment or burial services, cremation and inurnment services, including the provision of a casket or urn, as the case maybe, offered by accredited mortuaries.

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



PAOLO Z. DUTERTE



EDVIC G. YAP



ERIC G. YAP



JEFFREY SORIANO

Republic of the Philippines
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NINETEENTH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. 131

Introduced by Representatives PAOLO Z. DUTERTE, ERIC G. YAP,
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AN ACT
GRANTING A FIFTY PERCENT (50%) DISCOUNT FROM FUNERAL SERVICES TO
INDIGENT FAMILIES AND FREE FUNERAL SERVICES TO EXTREMELY POOR
FAMILIES NATIONWIDE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as "Free and Discounted Funeral Services Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. As part of fulfilling this, the State shall give discounts from funeral services to indigent families and free funeral services to extremely poor families.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* The following terms as used in this Act shall mean the following:

- a. "Poor" refers to families whose income falls below the poverty threshold as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and/or who cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic needs of food, health, education, housing or other essential amenities of life, as defined under Republic Act No. 8425, otherwise known as the "Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act". The Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) established under Republic Act No. 11315 of the local government unit, with the supervision of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), shall be used to determine the degree of indigency of the family, whether indigent or extremely poor;

b. "Funeral Services" refers to preparation of funeral documents, embalming, viewing, interment or burial services, cremation and inurnment services, including the provision of a casket or urn, as the case maybe, offered by mortuaries. The standard package of funeral services will cover:

1. Transfer of deceased from place of death to the mortuary for embalming and applying of cosmetics within a 25-kilometer radius of mortuary;
2. An Ordinary Plain Casket and casket stand for viewing of body or urn in case of cremation;
3. Two (2) to three (3) days viewing outside the funeral chapels such as the Barangay Hall or residence of the family;
4. Use of funeral viewing equipment including lighting and arania;
5. Use of funeral vehicle for interment within a 25-kilometer radius from the place of viewing to the place of burial; and
6. Unless for compelling reason, interment only on weekdays and on official time, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., except on regular holidays.

SEC. 4. *Free Funeral Services for Extremely Poor Families* Free funeral services shall be provided for extremely poor families by accredited mortuaries anywhere in the country. The said free services shall be given to only one (1) family member per month per mortuary branch. Provided, said funeral service does not exceed the cost of the mortuary's minimum funeral service package. Provided further, that the grant of free funeral services under this Act is without prejudice to the right of the beneficiary to avail of upgraded funeral services given by the mortuary. The difference in cost shall be borne by the family of the deceased.

SEC. 5. *Discounted Funeral Services for Indigent Families.* A fifty percent (50%) discount on funeral services shall be granted to indigent families by mortuaries anywhere in the country but would only be applicable to At-Need funeral services only. Provided, said funeral service does not exceed the cost of the mortuary's minimum funeral service package. The grant of a discount under this Act is without prejudice to the right of the beneficiary to avail of other financial assistance given by the government.

SEC. 6. *Requirements for Availing Free or Discounted Funeral Services.* Before an indigent or extremely poor family can avail of the free or discounted funeral services, the following documents shall be submitted: (a) certificate of indigency issued by the barangay or the local social welfare office of the local government unit (LGU), stating whether the family is either indigent or extremely poor as defined under Section 3; Provided, however, that the certification shall not be a requirement before any member of the family of the deceased could avail the services of the

mortuary; (b) death certificate; and (c) funeral contract between the beneficiary-family, the accredited mortuary and the authorized DSWD personnel.

SEC. 7. *Reimbursement.* Mortuaries granting discounted or free services to indigent or extremely poor beneficiaries may seek reimbursement for the cost of the services from any regional office of the DSWD upon the approval of the Regional Director. The reimbursement will be based on the stipulations of the signed contract between the poor family, the mortuary, and the authorized DSWD personnel.

SEC. 8. *Lead Agency.* The DSWD shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the provisions of this Act and shall engage the funeral services of mortuaries in the country.

SEC. 9. *Role of Local Government Units (LGUs).* Notwithstanding the preceding section, the local government units are enjoined to fulfill their devolved function as mandated by Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code, and Presidential Decree No. 856 otherwise known as the Sanitation Code, in providing assistance to indigent and extremely poor families in their respective areas at their own expense. Further, the LGUs will waive fees and charges which include burial or interment permit, cremation permit, transfer permit, disinterment permit, and cost of Death Certificate.

SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the allocation in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DSWD shall, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Philippine Mortuary Association, with the participation of local government units, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* If any portion or provision of the Act is declared void or unconstitutional, the remaining portions or provisions hereof shall not be affected by such declaration.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* Any provision of law or regulations inconsistent herewith is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,