

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

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 346



Introduced by Rep. DANILO RAMON S. FERNANDEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This measure represents another important intervention on the part of the State to increase prenatal care for pregnant women and decrease infant mortality, particularly for those belonging to the low income group.

The bill seeks to provide a “maternity package” (or a kit) to all expectant parents who are too poor to afford the same. The package contains necessary items such as a blanket, diapers, gauze, towels, nappies, bedding, cloth / fabric (which could be used to make clothing for the baby) and child care products. The kit is given to all mothers-to-be, provided they visited a health facility for pre-natal services and post-natal care. The contents of the package are updated approximately every two (2) years.

Otherwise known as the “baby box”, the maternity package began to receive international attention in June 2013, following a BBC story. First implemented in Finland in 1938, with positive results, the program has since been trialed / adopted in other countries, such as Argentina, Australia, Scotland and the United States.

To be availed of by expectant mothers who have already qualified as poor or near-poor based on the Standardized Targeting System under Republic Act No. 11310, otherwise known as the “Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act”, this Maternity Kit for Pregnant Filipino

Women Program is to be viewed as a companion measure to the said statute.

In view of the foregoing considerations, the early approval of this bill is fervently requested.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by a series of loops and a final checkmark-like stroke.

HON. DANILO RAMON S. FERNANDEZ
First District of Santa Rosa City, Laguna

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HOUSE BILL NO. 346

Introduced by Rep. DANILO RAMON S. FERNANDEZ

AN ACT
MANDATING THE PROVISION OF MATERNITY PACKAGES
TO PREGNANT FILIPINO WOMEN BELONGING TO THE LOW
INCOME GROUP, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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
“Maternity Kit for Pregnant Filipino Women Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building. Further, 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, elderly, disabled, women, and children. Finally, the State shall endeavor to provide medical care to paupers.

SEC. 3. *Maternity Kit for Pregnant Filipino Women Program.* –

This Act hereby establishes the Maternity Kit for Pregnant Filipino Women Program which may be availed of by expectant mothers who have already been identified as poor or near-poor based on the Standardized Targeting System under Republic Act No. 11310, otherwise known as the “Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act.” In order to qualify, pregnant women must avail of pre-natal services, give birth in a health facility attended by a skilled health professional, and receive post-partum care and post-natal care for her newborn.

The maternity package / kit, to be distributed once free of charge to qualified beneficiaries, shall contain necessary items such as a blanket, diapers, gauze, towels, nappies, bedding, cloth / fabric (which could be used to make clothing for the baby) and child care products. The contents of the package shall be updated by the implementing agency every two (2) years.

SEC. 4. *Objectives of the Program.* – The Program shall have the following objectives:

(a) Improve prenatal care for poor or near-poor pregnant Filipino women;

(b) Reduce child mortality, especially for those belonging to families in the low income group; and

(c) Empower women to perform their role, more meaningfully, in nation-building.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Agency.* – The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall serve as the central planning, implementing and monitoring body of the Program.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current and subsequent General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, the DSWD shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation hereof.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions not so affected.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication either in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,