

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 1553

Introduced by
REPRESENTATIVE JOSE MARIA R. ZUBIRI, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Age is the best predictor of blindness and visual impairment.¹ As such, our elderly or senior citizens are the ones who are most exposed to such predicament.

If left untreated, visual impairment may lead to blindness which in turn leads to physical handicap. And having a handicap also means increased expenses not only for the household caring for the elderly but also for health services to be shouldered by the State.

Therefore, providing the appropriate services which will prevent and even alleviate the visual handicap or ailments of the elderly is a path towards a healthier citizenry and country.

Thus, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

JOSE MARIA R. ZUBIRI, JR.
Representative
Third District, Bukidnon

¹ Loh KY, Ogle J. Age related visual impairment in the elderly. Med J Malaysia. 2004 Oct;59(4):562-8, quiz 569. PMID: 15779599.

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A NATIONAL EYE SERVICE PROGRAM FOR THE
ELDERLY WITH FUNCTIONAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

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 “Eye Service Program for the Elderly Act”.

SECTION 2. Definition of Terms – For purposes of this Act, the term:

- a) “Eye services for the elderly” means the provision of medical and non-medical but essential services to elderly persons who have a functional visual impairment.
- b) “Functional visual impairment” means an impairment of sight that substantially interferes with an elderly person’s ability to perform specific daily living skills and tasks. Persons who are not regarded as legally blind, pursuant to this paragraph, but who experience such an impairment of sight, shall be deemed eligible for the program pursuant to this Act; and
- c) “Elderly” means an individual over sixty (60) years of age.

SECTION 4. National Eye Service Program for the Elderly. – There is hereby established a National Eye Service Program for the Elderly with functional visual impairments.

SECTION 5. Implementing Agency. – The Department of Health (DOH) shall implement the program enunciated in the preceding section of this Act in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) as part of its services intended to benefit the elderly.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DOH shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 7. Appropriations. – The sum of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury for the first three (3) years of implementation of this Act immediately following its enactment. Thereafter, the sums necessary for the continuous implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual appropriations of the Department of Health as a separate and distinct item.

Section 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to this Act are hereby deemed accordingly repealed or amended.

Section 10. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,