

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **1704**



Introduced by Representatives
HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR. and MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING

AN ACT
INCREASING THE MONTHLY SOCIAL PENSION OF SENIOR CITIZENS AND
EXPANDING ITS COVERAGE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine population is steadily aging, with more than 12 million Filipinos who are over 60 years old.¹ Laws have been put in place to ensure that the welfare of our senior citizens will be protected, such as Republic Act No. 10645, providing for mandatory PhilHealth coverage for senior citizens, and Republic Act No. 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, which provides for social pension to indigent senior citizens to augment their daily subsistence and other medical needs.

However, it should be underscored that more than half of the country's senior citizens still receive no pension, whether contributory or social.² The increasing health risks, limited livelihood opportunities and rising costs of services put our senior citizens in the most vulnerable position. This economic vulnerability was further highlighted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when most of them relied on economic support from their families or other informal sources of income. For instance, in a Rapid Needs Assessment conducted by the Coalition of Services of the Elderly in partnership with HelpAge International last May 2020, the assessment of 120 older people revealed that 65% of them have difficulty accessing health services, especially those with disabilities (83%), in their 60s (78%), and those aged 80+ (73%). In addition, 57% of these older people have difficulty accessing food, especially those in their 50s (83%) and those with disabilities (61%). It further reported that 52% have difficulty accessing medicines and there were significant challenges accessing medicines for older people with disabilities (73%).³

¹ Retrieved from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1497408/ph-senior-citizens-in-a-time-of-pandemic>

² Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)

³ Retrieved from: https://cose.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COVID-19-RNA_COSE_Philippines.pdf

With rising fuel prices and inflation uptick, it is expected that these numbers will substantially increase, adding more burden and further depleting the already scarce financial resources of senior citizens.

This bill seeks to address these concerns by increasing the monthly social pension of senior citizens from PhP 500.00 to PhP 1,000.00. The amount of monthly social pension of senior citizens will then be reviewed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management and other relevant stakeholders, taking into account the various and changing needs of senior citizens and other relevant socio-economic indicators, such as the national inflation rate, national poverty rate, crude oil prices, among others.

Further, this bill seeks to expand the coverage of R.A. 9994 to include all senior citizens regardless of their economic status and social security, essentially making it a universal social pension for all senior citizens. This is in response to the clamor that regardless of one's social standing, old age certainly makes one inherently vulnerable and marginalized, as a result of deteriorating physical and mental health, thereby restricting their ability to earn a living and to take care of themselves. Likewise, while some older people currently receive pension from other social security programs, the same is still not sufficient since the amount of pension is dependent on the contributions made by pensioner. This holds true for pensioners who were low-income and minimum wage earners when they retired from employment. Through this increased social pension, all senior citizens in their twilight years will be insured of financial support from the State.

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


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2nd District of Sultan Kudarat


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1st District of Nueva Ecija

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

SECTION. 1. Section 2 of Republic Act No. 7432, as amended by Republic Act Nos. 9257 and 9994, otherwise known as the ‘Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010’, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 2. *Definition of Terms.* — For the purposes of this Act, these terms are defined as follows:

“XXX

[**(h)** indigent senior citizen refers to any elderly who is frail, sickly, or with disability, and without pension or permanent source of income, compensation or financial assistance from his/her relatives to support his/ her basic needs, as determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in consultation with the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board.]

“(H) SOCIAL PENSION REFERS TO THE MONTHLY STIPEND OR MONETARY GRANT FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO AUGMENT THE DAILY SUBSISTENCE AND OTHER MEDICAL NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS WHICH SHALL NOT BE LESS THAN ONE THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 1,000) PER MONTH.”

SEC. 2. Section 5 of the same Act, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 5. *Government Assistance.* — The government shall provide the following:

“XXX

“(h) Additional Government Assistance

“(1) Social Pension

“[Indigent] **ALL** senior citizens shall be entitled to a monthly [stipend amount to Five hundred pesos (500.00)] **SOCIAL PENSION OF AT LEAST ONE THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 1,000.00)** to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs of senior citizens, [subject to a review every two (2) years by Congress, in consultation with DSWD].

“THE AMOUNT OF SOCIAL PENSION SHALL BE REVIEWED AND, WHEN NECESSARY, ADJUSTED OR INCREASED BY THE DSWD EVERY TWO (2) YEARS AFTER THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT (DBM) AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VARIOUS NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS, THE NATIONAL INFLATION RATE, AND OTHER RELEVANT ECONOMIC INDICATORS, AS REPORTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE PERTINENT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OR AUTHORITIES: PROVIDED, THAT THE SOCIAL PENSION SHALL NOT BE LESS THAN THE AMOUNT INITIALLY SPECIFIED IN THIS ACT.

“THE COVERAGE OF THE SOCIAL PENSION PROGRAM SHALL ALSO BE REVIEWED BY THE DSWD, IN CONSULTATION WITH DBM AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS, AND WHEN NECESSARY, ADJUSTED TO INCLUDE THOSE WHO ARE RECEIVING BELOW BASIC PENSION.”

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SEC. 3 *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC 4. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders or rules and regulations contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,