

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH (19th) CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2050



Introduced by **HONORABLE LORETO “AMBEN” S. AMANTE**
Third (3rd) Legislative District, Province of Laguna

AN ACT
TO AMEND PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1569
ENTITLED “STRENGTHENING THE BARANGAY NUTRITION
PROGRAM BY PROVIDING FOR A BARANGAY NUTRITION SCHOLAR
IN EVERY BARANGAY, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES”

Explanatory Note

For nearly thirty (30) years, the rates of both wasting and stunting in the Philippines have been nearly flat. For 2019, the rate of stunting among children under five (5) years of age (28.8%) was only slightly lower than in 2008 (32%)—the prevalence of underweight in 2019 was 19% and that of wasting was 6%. Based on the World Health Organization’s classification of undernutrition rates, the stunting prevalence of children in the Philippines is of “very high” public health significance. The Philippines’ 29% stunting rate places it 5th among countries in the East Asia and Pacific Region, and among countries the top 10 countries globally. The Philippines’ high levels of childhood undernutrition can lead to a staggering loss of the country’s human and economic potential.¹ These data provide evidence of why it is critical that the government prioritizes tackling this persistent challenge.

Undernutrition is, and has always been, a serious problem in the Philippines. There are regions with levels of stunting that exceed 40% of the population. In Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, 45% of children below five (5) are stunted, in Southwestern Tagalog Region (MIMAROPA) 41%, Bicol Region has 40%, Western Visayas 40% and in the south-central Mindanao Region (SOCCSKARGEN) 40%.²

Good nutrition is a foundation for economic prosperity, and investments in nutrition are highly cost-effective. The key determinants of undernutrition are multi-sectoral. At the immediate level, a child becomes undernourished because of inadequate or inappropriate food, health and care.³

¹ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/undernutrition-philippines-scale-scope-opportunities-nutrition-policy-programming_en;

² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/philippines/publication/-key-findings-undernutrition-in-the-philippines>;

³ *Ibid.*

While the Government, at present, has the National Nutrition Council (NNC) which is categorically mandated by law to act as the country's highest policy-making and coordinating body on nutrition, the same admits that it requires collaboration in creating and recreating ideas, *i.e.*, seeking unity and totality of approach toward nutritional adequacy among Filipinos.

And aimed to strengthen the nutrition program at the barangay level, Presidential Decree No. 1569 was handed down and initiated the appointment of a Barangay Nutrition Scholar (BNS) for every barangay in the country. The Barangay Nutrition Scholar (BNS), aside from possessing certain qualifications prescribed by law, is a trained barangay worker, with nominal stipend and other allowances in return to their crucial role in barangay to deliver nutrition services and other community health programs.

Prescinding from these perspectives, it is undoubtedly imperative that the BNS should have an unhampered, continued and apolitical position in the community if and when the Government aspires to publicly convey its vigorous efforts to advance successful nutrition intervention schemes in the entire country. And as a pressing step towards attaining the mentioned objective, it is highly essential that the BNS must be accorded with the right to fully enjoy a ***Security of Tenure***, among others.

This Bill thus seeks to grant the BNS of such right to a ***Security of Tenure*** as a compelling reason for them to be an effective and efficient instrument to alleviate the various malnutrition predicaments in the country, taking into consideration, in the meantime, to refrain from any significant budgetary allocation, given the current national economic condition primarily brought about by the continuing health emergency.

Foregoing premises considered, the approval of this proposed measure is hereby most solemnly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script that appears to read 'LORETO "AMBEN" S. AMANTE'.

LORETO "AMBEN" S. AMANTE

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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 Presidential Decree No. 1569 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 2. Barangay Nutrition Scholar. The barangay nutrition scholar shall be a barangay based **FULL-TIME AND TRAINED** worker responsible for delivering nutrition services and other related activities such as community health, backyard food production, environmental sanitation, culture, mental feeding, and family planning to the barangay.”

SECTION 2. Section 3 of Presidential Decree No. 1569 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 3. Service. The barangay nutrition scholar, while continuously learning under this program **PURSUANT TO PERIODIC TRAININGS/SEMINARS TO BE PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL**, shall serve the barangay **AT LEAST EIGHT (8) HOURS OF WORK A DAY FROM MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS AND SHALL REMAIN ON-CALL DURING SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS.**”

SECTION 3. Section 4 of Presidential Decree No. 1569 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 4. Qualification. The qualifications of a Barangay Nutrition Scholar shall be as follows:

- (a) Bonafide residence in the barangay for at least four (4) years, with ability to speak the dialect;
- (b) Possession of leadership potentials and the initiative and willingness to serve the barangay for at least one (1) year;
- (c) Willingness to learn, and to teach what he has learned to the barangay people;
- (d) At least **HIGH** school graduate;
- (e) Physical and mental fitness;
- (f) At least eighteen (18) years old but not more than sixty (60) years old.”

SECTION 4. Section 6 of Presidential Decree No. 1569 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 6. Benefits **AND INCENTIVES**. The barangay nutrition scholar shall be granted a civil service eligibility equivalent to second grade after the completion of at least two years of continuous and satisfactory service in the barangay. He shall also be entitled to a training stipend, kit and travel allowance **ALLOCATED FOR SUCH PURPOSE BY THE NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL, ASIDE FROM THE MONTHLY CASH ALLOWANCE GRANTED BY THE CONCERNED CITY/MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.**”

SECTION 5. A new section denominated as Section 7 of the same Decree is hereby added to read as follows:

“SECTION 7. SECURITY OF TENURE. CONSEQUENT TO THE GRANT OF CIVIL SERVICE ELIGIBILITY, THE BARANGAY NUTRITION SCHOLAR SHALL FULLY ENJOY HIS RIGHT TO SECURITY OF TENURE. FOR THIS PURPOSE, NO BARANGAY NUTRITION SCHOLAR SHALL BE REMOVED FROM POST WITHOUT JUST CAUSE AND DUE PROCESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PERTINENT LAWS, RUELS AND REGULATIONS.”

SECTION 6. Sections 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the same Decree are hereby renumbered as Sections 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15, respectively;

SECTION 7. Section 15 of the same Decree is hereby renumbered as Section 16 and hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 16. Appropriation. **THE AMOUNT NECESSARY FOR THE INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT SHALL BE CHARGED TO THE CURRENT YEAR’S APPROPRIATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. THEREAFTER, SUCH AMOUNT AS MAY BE NECESSARY FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL GENERAL APPROPRIATION ACT.** Local

governments are likewise **ENJOINED** to appropriate such amount necessary for the successful implementation of this **ACT.**”

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or void, the rest of the provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules or regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

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

Approved.