

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3924



Introduced by HON. MARK O. GO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XV, Sec. 4 of the 1987 Constitution provides, “The family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security.”

Senior citizens remain one of the most vulnerable sectors of Philippine society. According to PSA data, around 800 thousand, or about 9.1% of senior citizens in the Philippines live below the poverty threshold. By region, the highest poverty incidence among senior citizens was in ARMM (now BARMM) at 41.7%, followed by Caraga at 30.3%, and Region VIII at 26.9%. Meanwhile, poverty incidence among senior citizens in CAR is at 7.2%.

A study by the PIDS shows that in 2020, only 5.3% of senior citizens are receiving pension from the GSIS, 19.9% are SSS pensioners, while 37.9% receive pension from the DSWD’s Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens (SPISC) program. By this account, close to two fifths or 36.9% of Filipino senior citizens do not receive any pension at all. It should be noted that beneficiaries of the SPISC program are only receiving a monthly stipend of P500. These pension benefits are also not indexed to inflation which has recently shot up to 5.1%.

While the Constitution provides that the family is primarily responsible for the care of the elderly, a study by the Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE) shows that in reality, children constitute the main source of income only for a minority of the elderly, and that many Filipinos either rely on their measly pension for survival or through some sort of economic activity even at their advanced age. It further shows that the extent of support the family can give to its elderly is limited by a broad variety of competing priorities such that in many cases, economic dependence has created tension, anxieties, and disempowerment among the elderly. Meanwhile, many senior citizens simply have no family whom they can rely for support.

The CHR has also noted that elder abuse has increased during the pandemic, which includes physical abuse, financial abuse, abandonment, neglect, and serious loss of dignity and respect.

It is against these present-day realities that the State must intervene to ensure that its elderly is taken care of and that their human rights are protected. This bill seeks to contribute in addressing the gaps in our social protection system by establishing a wellness for the elderly in the City of Baguio. After years of contributing to national productivity, the establishment of a wellness shelter will ensure that Filipino senior citizens will have a place where they can live with dignity and

security. Apart from providing living accommodations and healthcare specific to its residents' geriatric needs, the wellness shelter will also provide a sense of community which is vital in maintaining the physical, psychological, and mental well-being of the elderly.

As the country continues to strive for sustainable and inclusive growth, the elderly should not be left out of the equation.

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



MARK O. GO

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Introduced by HON. MARK O. GO

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A SENIOR WELLNESS CENTER IN THE CITY BAGUIO

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.-- It is hereby declared as the policy of the State to provide adequate care and protection to our elderly persons and senior citizens, and to ensure that their welfare are adequately considered and prioritized in the implementation of projects, programs and social services of the government.

SEC. 2. Establishment of the Baguio City Senior Wellness Center.-- The Baguio City Senior Wellness Center is hereby established under the control and supervision of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). It shall set the policies and guidelines for the qualification of residents.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), in coordination with the DSWD, shall identify the location of the wellness center and undertake its construction.

SEC. 3. Funding.-- The budgetary allocation needed to carry out the provisions of this Act is hereby authorized to be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year immediately following its enactment into law.

SEC. 4. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

