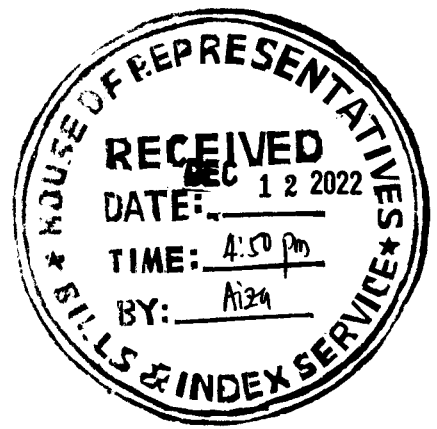


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. **6614**



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE MILAGROS AQUINO – MAGSAYSAY

**AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7876, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
“SENIOR CITIZENS CENTERS ACT”, PROVIDING FOR ITS MANDATORY
ESTABLISHMENT AND CONTINUED OPERATION, MAXIMIZING ITS
FUNCTIONALITY UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to amend Republic Act (RA) No. 7876, otherwise known as the “Senior Citizens Centers Act”, reiterating its mandatory establishment, providing for its resources and clarifying its management and supervision at the local government level.

RA 7876 or the Senior Citizens Center Act was passed together with the original Senior Citizens law, RA 7432 in the early 1990s. RA 7432, has since been amended twice through Republic Act No. 9257 and the current prevailing RA 9994, expanding the benefits and privileges of senior citizens, and providing for more responsive programs and services to address their needs. However, RA 7876 which was a “complementary” law, aimed at providing a definite facility for senior citizens to conduct their activities and as an added government resource for extending elderly programs and services, was never revisited nor improved to maximize its functionality.

With the increasing ageing population of the Philippines, more and more senior citizens require the services and assistance of the government from its programs. A concrete venue and allotted space for conducting these programs and services is vital to ensure effective and efficient implementation of these mandated government assistance. After almost thirty (30) years, it is imperative that this law is amended to make it operational once again, and to be optimized to provide adequate social services and ultimately improve the quality of life for our beloved Filipino senior citizens.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly recommended.


MILAGROS AQUINO-MAGSAYSAY

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

SECTION 1. Section (4) of RA 7876 on the establishment of centers is hereby amended
to read as follows:

“Section 4. Establishment of Centers. — There is hereby established a senior citizens center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, in every city and municipality of the Philippines, under direct supervision of the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO), in collaboration with the local government unit concerned and technical assistance of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) regional or Field Office.”

SECTION 2. Section (5) on the Functions of the centers is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 5. Functions of the Centers. — The centers shall now be solely under the local government units’ supervision and management, particularly the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office. As an identified facility and venue specifically for the benefit of the senior citizens in the community, they shall be recognized as the place to conduct and carry out recreational, educational, health and social protection programs and services for the full enjoyment and benefit of the senior citizens in the city or municipality.

These may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- (a) Identify the skills trainings, learning needs or self-improvement opportunities of senior citizens in the cities and municipalities;
- (b) Initiate, develop and implement economically productive activities, income-generating or work schemes for senior citizens in order to provide additional sources of livelihood or otherwise supplement their earnings in the local community;
- (c) Promote better coordination with provincial government units and other instrumentalities of government and the city and municipal councils for the elderly, by utilizing the Center as the office space or location of the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCAs);
- d) Facilitate networking and linkages with the Federation of Senior Citizens Association of the Philippines (FSCAP), or any other legitimate and duly-registered senior citizens organizations, including People's Organizations or Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) catering to the needs and concerns of the elderly through the delivery of health care services, professional counseling services, volunteer training and community self-help projects; and
- (e) Encourage the utilization of the space or facility for any other relevant activity or functions which are necessary to carry out the purpose for which the centers are established, and which will benefit the community's senior citizens.
- (f) Recreational, educational, health, and social functions.

SECTION 3. Section (6) of RA 7876 on Center Workers is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 6. Center Workers and Volunteers. — The Provincial Governor may designate social workers as the workers of the centers: Provided, however, That the Provincial Governor may appoint other personnel who possess the necessary professional qualifications to work efficiently with the elderly of the community. The Governor may also call upon private volunteers who are responsible members of the community, preferably from the duly recognized senior citizens organizations or local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to provide medical, educational and other services and facilities for the senior citizens."

SECTION 4. Section (7) on the Qualification/Disqualification of senior citizens from the use of the Center, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 7. Utilization of the Center and Availment of Services. — A senior citizen who suffers from a contagious disease, or who is mentally unfit or unsound or whose actuations are inimical to other senior citizens as determined by the City or Municipal Social Welfare Officer of the locality, on the basis of an appropriate certification by a qualified government or private volunteer physician, including the Barangay Health Center authorities, may be denied access to and use of the Center. However, the above-mentioned officials must refer the senior citizen concerned to the appropriate government agency for the needed medical care or confinement, or any other relevant service or intervention.

For this purpose, it is hereby emphasized that ANY or ALL senior citizens of the community are entitled to the use and benefits of the services provided in the Center, without discrimination, whether affiliated or not with any senior citizens organization in the locality as long as the activities or projects are relevant or related to senior citizens rights and welfare.”

SECTION 5. Section (8) on the Exemptions of the Center is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 8. Exemptions and Entitlements of the Center. — The Center shall be exempted from the payment of customs duties, taxes and tariffs on the importation of equipment and supplies used actually, directly and exclusively by the Center pursuant to this Act, including those donated to the Center.

The Center shall likewise enjoy the utility discounts for electricity consumption, water supply, and telecommunications services as provided for under Republic Act No. 9994 as a form of institutional support and incentive for all facilities and venues which are solely utilized for the benefit of senior citizens, subject to the technical requirements and practical arrangements with the utility service providers, such as separate meters and billing statements.”

SECTION 6. Section (9) on the rules and regulations of this Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the National Commission for Senior Citizens (NCSC), and proper consultation with the League of City Mayors of the Philippines (LCP), League of Municipal Mayors of the Philippines (LMP) and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), shall issue the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act. Any violation of this section shall render the concerned official(s) liable under Republic Act No. 6713, otherwise known as the "Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees" and other existing administrative and/or criminal laws.”

SECTION 7. Section (10) of RA 7876 on the coordination of government agencies is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 10. Coordination of Government Agencies. — The DILG, together with the DSWD and National Commission for Senior Citizens (NCSC), shall coordinate with other relevant government agencies like the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Agriculture (DA) or other government agencies and local government units, which shall be tasked to extend related programs and services to the senior citizens shall assist in the effective implementation of this Act and provide the necessary support services.”

SECTION 8. Section (11) of RA 7876 on the appropriation or fund source is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 11. Appropriations. — The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year pertaining to the above-mentioned government agencies and local government units involved following its enactment into law and every year thereafter. The sum necessary for the continuous operation of the centers shall be taken from the increased Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) of the local government units concerned as part of the greater share in the national tax revenues generated in accordance with the Mandanas Supreme Court ruling of 2018.”

SECTION 9. Separability Clause – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules or regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. Effectivity – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in newspaper of general circulation.

Approved