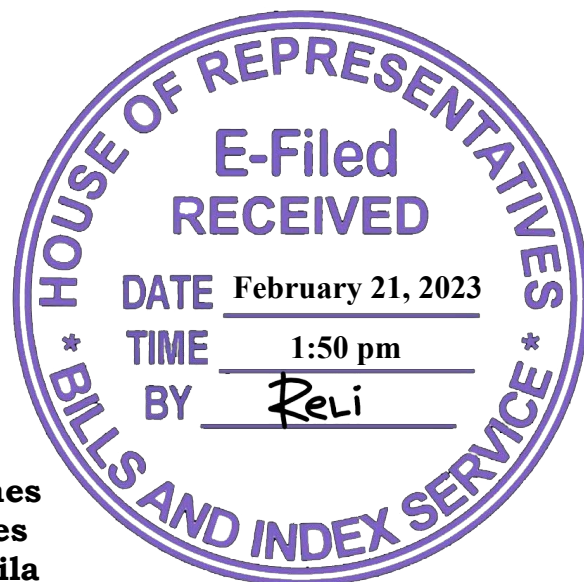




**Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila**

**Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL NO. 7268



Introduced by Representative Rudys Caesar G. Fariñas I

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill establishes a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program that shall support and empower young farmers and fisherfolk to be active partners in food security, agricultural development, and modernization. The Program shall encourage the youth to pursue a career or engage in activities related to agriculture, ensure young farmers and fisherfolk participation in policy formulation and program implementation relative to the agriculture sector, and provide institutional support for agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship initiatives of the youth to realize their role as agents and partners for development fully.

This bill also creates the Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Council. The Council is empowered, among others, to identify and streamline access to relevant capacity-building and livelihood programs across the different departments and agencies of government, including on-the-job training, job fairs, employment in farm tourism and agro-industrial zones, and other employment-bridging initiatives.

The powers also include the Council's ability to ensure scholarships and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and fisherfolk in state universities and colleges (SUCs). Similarly, the Council can provide on-the-job training programs for young farmers and fisherfolk in areas such as "green jobs," reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other rural-based jobs, through the DOLE's Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) and other livelihood and training programs. Hence, this representation seeks the passage of this measure.


RUDYS CAESAR G. FARIÑAS I



**Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
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**Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL NO. 7268

Introduced by Representative Rudys Caesar G. Fariñas I

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK
CHALLENGE PROGRAM, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE
YOUNG FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK CHALLENGE COUNCIL, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short title.** This Act shall be known as the “*Young Farmers*
2 *and Fisherfolk Challenge Act*”.

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** It is hereby declared the policy of the State
5 to ensure that the rights of young farmers and fisherfolk are recognized,
6 protected and promoted. Pursuant to this, the State shall engage the youth in
7 nation building and rural development, providing for this purpose access to
8 knowledge, information and education, access to land, new sources of financial
9 services and capital, green jobs, access to new and niche markets, and
10 participation in policy dialogue.

11
12 **SEC. 3. Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program.** There is
13 hereby established a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge Program,
14 hereinafter referred to as the Program, that shall support and empower the
15 young farmers and fisherfolk to be active partners in food security and
16 agricultural development and modernization. The Program shall encourage the
17 youth to pursue a career or engage in activities related to agriculture, ensure
18 young farmers and fisherfolk participation in policy formulation and program
19 implementation relative to the agriculture sector, and provide institutional

1 support for agri-business and agri-entrepreneurship initiatives of the youth to
2 fully realize their role as agents and partners for development.

3
4 **SEC. 4. Beneficiaries of the Program.** The Program is intended to
5 support young farmers and fisherfolk between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of
6 age, who are engaged in farming and fisheries activities, and are included in the
7 Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA). The Department of
8 Agriculture (DA) shall update its existing database to reflect these indicators.

9
10 **SEC. 5. Creation of a Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge**
11 **Council.** There is hereby created the Young Farmers and Fisherfolk Challenge
12 Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council, to properly oversee the
13 implementation of the Program.

14
15 The Council shall be composed of the following:

- 16
17
18 a. Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) or a duly authorized
19 representative who is at least an Undersecretary, who shall be the Chair;
20 b. Representative of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) who shall
21 likewise be an Undersecretary;
22 c. Representative of the Department of Education (DepEd) who shall likewise
23 be an Undersecretary;
24 d. Representative of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
25 e. Representative of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
26 f. Representative of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR);
27 g. Representative of the Technical Education and Skills Development
28 Authority (TESDA);
29 h. Representative of the Department of the Interior and Local Government
30 (DILG);
31 i. Representative of a national organization of young farmers' cooperative or
32 association, provided that the representative shall be between fifteen (15)
33 to forty (40) years of age;
34 j. Representative of a national organization of fisherfolk's cooperative or
35 association, provided that the representative shall be between fifteen (15)
36 to forty (40) years of age;
37 k. Representative of a farmers' women organization or cooperative, provided
38 that the representative shall be between fifteen (15) to forty (40) years of
39 age;
40 l. Representative of a national organization for agritourism; and
41 m. Representative of a national organization for food, restaurant, and
42 business sectors.

43 The Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries shall serve as its
44 Secretariat.

45
46 **SEC. 6. Powers and Functions of the Council.** The Council shall have
47 the following powers and functions:

- a. Formulate the Program, in consultation with research institutions such as the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), University of the Philippines - Los Baños (UPLB) and other relevant state universities and colleges (SUCs);
- b. Identify and streamline access to relevant capacity-building and livelihood programs across the different departments and agencies of government, including on-the-job trainings, job fairs, employment in farm tourism and agro-industrial zones, and other employment-bridging initiatives;
- c. Identify and streamline access to possible sources of credit across the different departments, agencies, and instrumentalities, including access to start-up capital;
- d. Monitor initiatives in emerging best practices in agriculture such as smart farming, farm tourism in compliance with RA 10816, or the “Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016,” agroponics, aquaponics, hydroponics, and organic and boutique vegetables;
- e. Improve and facilitate access to marketing services such as through product packaging, promotions including branding and advertising, networking events, provision of subsidies to enable participation in trade fairs and exhibits, and linkage with media;
- f. Coordinate with local government units (LGUs) in providing subsidized rental rates for public retail areas and public markets to farmers and fisherfolk;
- g. Serve as a conduit between stakeholders and national and international leaders including Congress and the private sector in formulating policies directly addressing the concerns of young farmers and fisherfolk;
- h. Propose subjects related to agriculture and agribusiness such as gardening, backyard farming, urban farming, reforestation, agricultural appreciation, agricultural entrepreneurship, smart farming, farm tourism, and coastal management in all pertinent levels of the DepEd’s K-12 system with the end goal of increasing enrollment in the technical-vocational track in Senior High School in courses related to agriculture, CHED, including the National Service Training Program (NSTP) and TESDA;
- i. Ensure scholarships and subsidized tuition fees for young farmers and fisherfolk in SUCs;
- j. Provide on-the-job training programs for young farmers and fisherfolk in areas such as “green jobs”, reforestation, coastal management, fisheries, and other rural-based jobs, through the DOLE’s Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES) and other livelihood and training programs;
- k. Explore and facilitate the extension of short-term leases for public land to young farmers and fisherfolk, providing free or subsidized land for cultivation and for aquaculture, and developing other packages such as, lease-to-buy schemes that would allow young farmers and fisherfolk to use

1 available or unutilized agricultural land or fishing ground for the purposes
2 of said Program;

- 3
4
5 1. Expedite the leasing, distribution, and award of agrarian reform land to
qualified beneficiaries;
- 6
7
8 m. Facilitate the use of excess land holdings of SUCs and PEIs for agricultural
training and developmental processes;
- 9
10
11 n. Foster the formation of new ideas and technologies by assisting
12 agricultural enterprises of qualified young farmers and fisherfolk
13 entrepreneurs, pursuant to Republic Act No. 11337, otherwise known as
the “Innovative Start-up Act of 2018”;
- 14
15
16 o. Initiate social partnerships and rural development initiatives in
partnership with the private sector;
- 17
18
19 p. Optimize existing loan guarantee funds administered by various
20 government entities to increase the credit worthiness of young farmers and
21 fisherfolk experiencing difficulty in obtaining loans from banks due to lack
of acceptable collaterals, credit knowledge and credit track record; and
- 22
23
24 q. Accept donations, contributions, grants, bequests or gifts, in cash or in
25 kind, from various sources, domestic or foreign, for purposes relevant to
26 the functions of the Council. Said donations shall be deemed automatically
27 appropriated for purposes specified by the donor or in the absence thereof,
28 for the programs and projects as may be approved by the Council subject
29 to the usual accounting and auditing rules and regulations: *Provided,*
30 *That,* cash donations shall not be used to fund the personal services
requirements of the Council.
- 31

32 **SEC. 6-A. Tax Exemption on Donations.** All grants, bequests,
33 endowments, donations and contributions made to and used actually, directly
34 and exclusively by the Council shall be exempt from donor’s tax and the same
35 shall be considered as allowable deduction from gross income for purposes of
36 computing the taxable income of the donor, in accordance with the provisions of
37 the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, as amended.

38

39 **SEC. 7. Waiver of Government Fees and Charges.** Subject to the
40 exceptions provided in Section 8 of Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as
41 the “First-Time Jobseekers Assistance Act”, all government agencies and
42 instrumentalities, including government-owned and controlled corporations,
43 LGUs, and government hospitals shall not collect fees or charges from young
44 farmers and fisherfolks who are first-time jobseekers: *Provided,* That such fee or
45 charge is in connection with the application for and the granting of licenses,
46 proofs of identification, clearances, certificates or other documents usually
47 required in the course of employment locally or abroad: *Provided further,* That
48 the benefit provided shall only be availed of once.

49

50 **SEC. 8. Annual Report.** The Council shall submit to the President and to
51 both Houses of Congress, not later than the 30th of March of every year following
52 the effectivity of this Act, a report giving a detailed account on the effective

1 implementation of this Act, and recommended legislation where applicable and
2 necessary.

3
4 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** Within ninety (90) days
5 from the effectivity of this Act, the DA and DAR shall, in coordination with the
6 DOST, DOLE, DENR, DepEd, CHED, Land Bank of the Philippines, and National
7 Youth Commission, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the
8 implementation of this Act.

9
10 **SEC. 10. *Appropriations.*** The funds necessary to carry out the initial
11 implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's budget of
12 the Department of Agriculture. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for
13 the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General
14 Appropriations Act.

15
16 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act is declared
17 invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration
18 shall remain in full force and effect.

19
20 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, executive orders, administrative
21 orders, and rules and regulations inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed
22 or amended accordingly.

23
24 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
25 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,