

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7490**



Introduced by

Senior Citizens Party-List Representative RODOLFO "OMPONG" M. ORDANES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Commission on Population and Development (POPCOM) has noted the Philippine population is aging with the decline in the rate of the number of young population members and at the same time, there is a doubling growth in the number of senior citizens for the past two (2) decades. As of the 2020 census of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the population of senior citizens accounts for 8.5% of the general population or a total of 9.22 million Filipino elderly. Compared to the 2015 census, there has been an increase of 7.5% in the senior citizen population, and with the projections from both institutions, it is expected that the number of Filipino elderly will increase over the years. The aging population also entails an increase in cases of abandonment, social neglect, and special needs among senior citizens. Such a reality was manifested in a study about senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas, findings show despite the existence of enabling laws for senior citizens, problems such as deprivation of income sources, inaccessibility to essential needs, inadequate physical space, and spoken negative perceptions are present.

Article XV Section 4 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that "*The Family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security*". With the protection provided by the constitution and the realities on the ground, it is necessary to legislate and institutionalize long-term policies that shall fill in the gaps in the current policies for the Filipino elderly and shall provide further provisions for social protection and security for our senior citizens. Moreover, with the paradigm shift brought about by the advent of technological advancements, the COVID-19 pandemic, and its underlying

problems such as the economic recession, these realities call for enacting a novel policy that shall deliver long-term care for Filipino senior citizens to enable them to cope up with contemporary challenges and undertakings.

This bill seeks to establish a national long-term care program framework, a set of multi-dimensional programs for senior citizens that aim to promote the quality and long-term care services for senior citizens through social protection, employment and livelihood, health and development, and enabling and conducive environment. Through these programs, the gaps in our national policies shall be addressed, existing issues and concerns among the senior citizens shall be dealt with, and further protection shall be provided for their welfare

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



RODOLFO "OMPONG" M. ORDANES

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AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING LONG-TERM CARE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as *“The Long-Term Care for Senior Citizens Act of 2023”*.

SEC 2. Declaration of Policies. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to adopt comprehensive and multi-dimensional social services for the elderly members of the general population that shall promote and protect their welfare and well-being as valuable members of society. For this purpose, the State undertakes to establish and institutionalize programs and support mechanisms that seek to protect senior citizens from socioeconomic risks and vulnerabilities.

SEC 3. Definition of Terms. - For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. Senior Citizen - refers to any person as defined in Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7876, otherwise known as the *“Senior Citizen Center Act”*.
- b. Long-term Care - refers to a sustained provision of comprehensive programs and services to senior citizens with the view of enabling them to have dignified, healthy, and secured lives.

- c. Dependent Senior Citizen - refers to those senior citizens who are either frail, sickly, suffering from any disability, and has no other means to support his/her/their basic needs.

SEC 4. National Long-Term Care Program Framework. A national long-term care program for senior citizens is hereby established which shall embody core programs and/or services, among others:

- a. Social Protection shall cover programs that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of senior citizens by promoting and protecting them against hazards and sudden loss of income and improving the capacity of senior citizens to manage risk.
 1. Social Welfare. - Curative and preventive interventions that seek to support the special needs of senior citizens and to reduce risks associated with old age shall be provided. These shall include activities aimed at protecting senior citizens from abuse, exploitation, and discrimination. Moreover, prevention and provision of support services against physical, emotional, and financial abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, and abandonment of senior citizens shall be established within the family and at the community level. Towards this end, training and awareness campaigns shall be initiated to raise the public's awareness of the problems confronting senior citizens and to equip the public with the necessary know-how to prevent and detect problem areas concerning senior citizens.
 2. Livelihood and Job Generation Program. - Senior citizens shall be specifically targeted in livelihood programs and other poverty alleviation programs. Further, livelihood programs and other poverty alleviation programs shall guarantee a minimum income and shall be designed in a manner that increases the productivity of senior citizens.
 3. Social Insurance. - Existing social insurance programs shall be modified and expanded to guarantee that senior citizens shall be adequately protected from loss of income and unemployment as a result of old age. Economic and financial support through other innovative social insurance and pension schemes designed for families caring for dependents/disabled senior citizens shall likewise be endeavored.
 4. Social Safety Nets. - Stop-gap mechanisms or urgent and immediate responses shall be instituted to shield senior citizens from vulnerabilities arising from disasters,

emergencies, and displacement due to development projects, natural, and man-made calamities.

- b. **Senior Citizens and Development.** - This shall include mainstreaming activities such as life-long technical education and skills development programs for aging preparation and non-formal education for those sixty (60) years old and above; and the development of programs that shall allow senior citizens to remain actively engaged in as many social, economic, political, and community activities as possible. In pursuit of this, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) shall create programs and projects to ensure access of senior citizens into their courses and programs and design courses and programs that are specifically designed for them.

- c. **Advancing Health and Well-Being.** - Integrated and innovative elderly-focused health and social services shall be made available at the local level. Particular emphasis shall be made on disease prevention health promotion, and wellness of mind, body, and spirit. Health services shall comprise preventive, curative, and rehabilitative health care services in all government and private hospitals, local health facilities, and other community-based facilities. The said program shall contemplate the following, among others:
 - 1. Homecare and assisted living programs for the frail and dependent elderly and medical and psychological support for patients requiring continued medical assistance after discharge.
 - 2. Free geriatric training for the family, health workers, and other relevant persons who are tasked to take care of an elderly.

- d. **Enabling and Supportive Environment.** - Provision of home nursing for the elderly, facilities for respite care, programs on counseling, professional guidance, and emotional support, and low-cost, community-based activities integrated into existing community health programs as well as strengthening of inter-generational relationships in every local government unit.

SEC 5. Implementing Agencies. - The National Long-Term Care Program for Senior Citizens shall be implemented jointly by the Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Health

(DOH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), various local government units (LGUs), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The National Commission for Senior Citizens created under Republic Act No. 11350, otherwise known as the "*National Commission for Senior Citizens Act*", shall take the lead in monitoring the implementation of this Act.

SEC 6. *Appropriation.* - The amount necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act following its enactment into law.

SEC 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NCSC and other relevant government agencies shall, after due consultations with other implementing agencies, promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC 8. *Suppletory Application.* - For purposes of this Act, the Revised Penal Code, and other applicable laws, shall have suppletory application.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such declaration shall not invalidate other parts thereof which shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC 10. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,