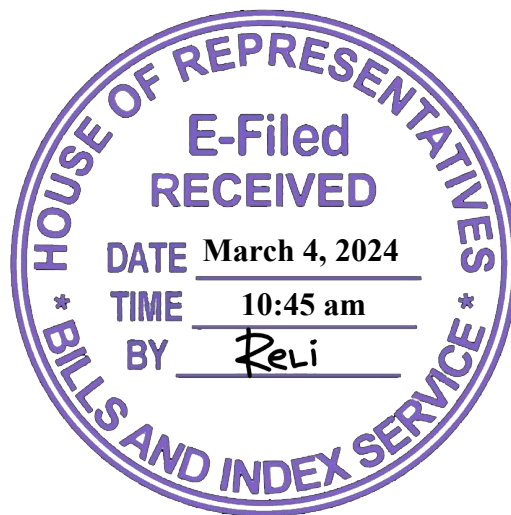




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. **10010**

Introduced by Representative TEODORICO "NONONG" T. HARESCO, JR.

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

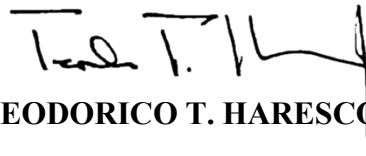
The United Nations reported that about two billion people did not have regular access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food in 2019. Hunger and malnutrition persist as a barrier to sustainable development since this leads to a vulnerable population which is prone to disease. Recognizing the urgency of addressing this issue, this proposed House Bill aims to provide a comprehensive approach to combat hunger and malnutrition in the Philippines.

According to a survey performed by the Social Weather Stations, the number of Filipino families experiencing involuntary hunger declined from 3 million in December 2022 to 2.7 million in March 2023, however, this number is still higher than the 2.1 million families in December 2019, prior the COVID-19 pandemic. This indicates that there is still a pressing need to take further actions to address the root causes of food insecurity in the country.

Social welfare is a basic function of the State. It is responsible for its citizenry's basic social and economic security. Thus, through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Philippine government provides social protection to the poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged sector. In its efforts to combat poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, the DSWD launched the *Walang Gutom 2027: Food Stamp Program* which aims to fight food scarcity and reduce hunger, leading to healthier and food secure Filipinos.

Recognizing the importance of such programs and the need for a more comprehensive, and sustainable approach to address these critical issues, this bill seeks to complement and institutionalize the Food Stamp Program of the DSWD. This bill is also in consonance with President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr.’s prioritization of food security. Ultimately, these concerted measures aim to fortify the nation's resilience and capacity to confront the challenges of hunger and malnutrition, propelling the Philippines towards a brighter and more nourished future.

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



TEODORICO T. HARESCO, JR



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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “***Food Stamp Program Act***”.

2
3 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to alleviate
4 hunger and mitigate the adverse impacts of extreme poverty among the most vulnerable sectors
5 of society. The State shall ensure access to nutritious food for Filipino families with limited
6 financial resources. It shall provide essential food assistance to eligible households, fostering
7 a healthier and more secure environment for citizens of the country through a national Food
8 Stamp Program. This program shall be designed and implemented with equity, inclusivity, and
9 transparency as guiding principles, adapting to the unique socioeconomic contexts of different
10 areas within the nation. The State recognizes that this initiative is a critical step towards
11 eradicating hunger, promoting social welfare, and enhancing the overall quality of life for its
12 citizens.

13
14 **SECTION 3. *Food Stamp Program.*** - There is hereby established a Food Stamp Program,
15 hereinafter referred to as the "Program," under the Department of Social Welfare and
16 Development (DSWD). The Program shall be the primary vehicle for addressing hunger and
17 extreme poverty by providing electronic benefit transfers loaded with food credits to eligible
18 beneficiaries.

19
20 **SECTION 4. *Eligibility of Beneficiaries.*** – The Program shall primarily target households
21 with a monthly income not exceeding P8,000 or those classified as Food-Poor Families based
22 on the criteria established by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The eligibility criteria
23 shall be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect prevailing economic
24 conditions.

25
26 **SECTION 5. *Lead Agency.*** – The DSWD shall serve as the lead agency responsible for the
27 design, coordination, and implementation of the Food Stamp Program. The DSWD shall have
28 the following roles and functions in the implementation of the Program:

- a) Develop comprehensive guidelines, policies, and procedures for the efficient and equitable operation of the Program. These guidelines shall include eligibility criteria, benefit levels, and mechanisms for electronic benefit transfers;
- b) Establish a transparent and accountable system for identifying eligible households, conducting beneficiary assessments, and maintaining an up-to-date registry of Program beneficiaries;
- c) Ensure the timely and accurate disbursement of food credits to eligible households through electronic benefit transfers, in coordination with financial institutions or service providers;
- d) Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the Program's implementation, including assessing its impact on beneficiaries' food security and overall well-being. The results of these evaluations shall inform necessary adjustments and improvements to the Program;
- e) Collaborate with relevant government agencies, local government units, and other partners to ensure the smooth operation of the Program, including data sharing, logistical support, and information dissemination;
- f) Maintain transparency and accountability in all aspects of the Program, including financial management, procurement, and reporting. It shall establish mechanisms for beneficiary feedback and grievance redressal; and
- g) As needed, enter into agreements or partnerships with other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations to enhance the effectiveness and reach of the Program.

SECTION 6. *Annual Report of the Program.* – The DSWD shall annually publish a full report of the Program covering the implementation of the previous fiscal year. The said report shall include financial disclosures, number of clients/beneficiaries served, and recommendations to the President and to both chambers of Congress on how to further enhance it. This report shall be submitted to Congress before the submission of the President's Budget Message.

SECTION 7. *Program Transparency.* – The DSWD shall regularly and timely post and update on its website a report of financial disclosures and information about beneficiaries based on geographical area, social, economic, and cultural circumstances.

SECTION 8. *Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.* - Upon the effectivity of this Act, a Congressional Oversight Committee, hereafter referred to as the FSP Oversight Committee is hereby constituted. This Committee shall set the overall framework to review the implementation of this Act. It shall likewise determine inherent weaknesses in the law and recommend necessary remedial legislation or executive measures.

The FSP Oversight Committee shall be composed of six (6) members with the chairpersons of the Committee on Poverty Alleviation of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development of the Senate as Co-Chairpersons; and two (2) members from each Chamber, to be designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Senate President, respectively.

For purposes of determining remedial legislation, the FSP Oversight Committee shall, within six (6) years after the effectivity of this Act, conduct a review which shall include a systematic evaluation of the impact of this Act, accomplishments of the program, and the performance of its implementing agency

79 **SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within thirty (30) days from the
80 effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development shall, in coordination
81 with appropriate government departments and agencies with the participation of local
82 government units, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions
83 of the Act.
84

85 **SECTION 10. *Appropriation.*** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this
86 Act shall be charged under the DSWD. Thereafter, funds for this purpose shall be included in
87 the annual General Appropriations Act.
88

89 **SECTION 11. *Non-Impairment Clause.*** – Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to
90 diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or made available to disadvantaged,
91 marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.
92

93 **SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision is held invalid or unconstitutional, the
94 remainder of the law or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.
95

96 **SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.*** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,
97 letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with
98 the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.
99

100 **SECTION 14. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in
101 the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
102

103 *Approved,*