

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL 10109

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women's Party Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS,
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL**

AN ACT
INCREASING THE MONTHLY SOCIAL PENSION OF SENIOR CITIZENS
EXPANDING THE COVERAGE THEREOF

EXPLANATORY NOTE

More than ninety percent of our population continues to work hard for a living.

Under the term of President Duterte, the Philippines experienced the worst economic situation since 1945. Based on the report of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 16.9% during the second quarter of 2020, which is even lower than the -7.3% GDP growth rate posted in 1984 and 1985.

Moreover, even before the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine GDP was already slowing down. From 7.1% in 2016, it went down to 6.1% in 2019 and pummeled down to -9.5% in 2020. Coming from a drastic drop in GDP growth rate in 2020, the PSA recorded a 5.7% and 7.6 GDP growth rate in 2021 and 2022, respectively. Under the second year of the Marcos Jr. administration (2023), only 5.6% GDP growth rate was recorded, which is below the targeted 6.5-8.0% GDP growth rate under the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework 2022-2028.

According to the independent think-tank IBON, the Philippines has the 5.7% unemployment rate as of April 2022, second highest in Southeast Asia following Indonesia with 5.8% as of February 2022. Even though the Philippine economy posted 7.1% year-on-year gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the third quarter of 2021,

the Filipino people are not feeling the effects of the economic recovery. Based on their observations, informal work became more prevalent as employment dropped significantly.

The prospects for the majority of Filipinos can only worsen with slowing economic growth. Additional taxes—especially consumption taxes—and very low wages have further decreased the income of the poorest sectors of the society. What is worse though is that one sector heavily affected by this situation are our senior citizens or the elderly.

There is therefore a felt need to provide our senior citizens additional and better benefits than what are presently provided under present laws, especially now that with old age their health starts to fail, yet they could no longer or they are hard put to provide for themselves.

The proportion of the older population is rising worldwide. The same is happening in the Philippines where from 3.7 million or 5.4% of the population in 1995, the senior citizen population has increased to 5.8 million or 6.5% of the population as of 2010. According to the 2020 survey of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there are an estimated 9.2 million senior citizens. Based on the National Expenditure Program FY 2024, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) targets that 4,085,066 senior citizens will receive social pension. Moreover, it is projected that around 80% of the senior citizens are using social pension to augment their daily living subsistence and medical needs.

Based on the study of Coalition of the Services of the Elderly (COSE),¹ only 17% of senior citizens receive a social pension at ₱500, while the majority or 54% do not receive any pension at all. Even among those who are receiving pension (SSS, GSIS and others), for SSS pensioners in particular, a third or 34% receive less than ₱2,000/month while more than half or 52% receive less than ₱3,000.

According to the PSA, poverty incidence among Filipino families in the first semester of 2023 was estimated at 22.4%. But these figures are based on a very low poverty threshold set by the government which was ₱13,797/month for a family of five, or ₱91.98/day or ₱2,759.40/month per person. Even this very low poverty threshold shows how inadequate the present ₱1,000-social pension is.

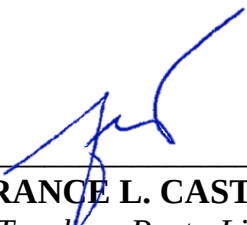
In response to the clamor of indigent senior citizens, this Bill was filed by the Makabayan Bloc during the 17th Congress and was approved at the committee level. It was refiled in the 18th Congress by Bayan Muna Representatives Ferdinand R. Gaite, Carlos Isagani T. Zarate and Eufemia C. Cullamat as House Bill 241, which was substituted by House Bill 9459.

¹ Aksyon sa Pensyon. “Aksyon sa Pensyon (AkaP) Coalition and various organizations in the Philippines call for a Universal Social Pension of one thousand pesos for all senior citizens.” *Coalition of Services of the Elderly*. Retrieved from <https://cose.org.ph/resource/>

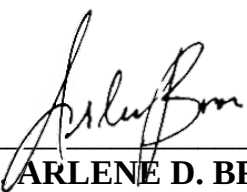
On 1 June 2021, during the second reading of the legislative measure, Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate successfully removed from the definition of “indigent senior citizen” the discriminatory requirement that the senior citizen must be “frail, sickly or with disability” in order to receive the ₱1,000-monthly social pension. In effect, the amount of social pension was not only doubled, the coverage was further expanded. The amended House Bill 9459 was approved by the House of Representatives on third reading last 2 August 2021 with a vote of 227-0-0.

The House of Representatives adopted the Senate version of the legislative measure—Senate Bill 2506, which lapsed into law as Republic Act 11916 on 30 July 2022. Sadly, the Senate version of the Bill did not include the anti-discriminatory amendment introduced by Bayan Muna Party-List.

In view of the foregoing, as well as the need to further increase the meager ₱1,000-monthly social pension to at least ₱2,000, the immediate passage of this Bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Party-List



Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party



Rep. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL
KABATAAN Party-List

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL 10109

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women's Party Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS,
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL**

AN ACT
INCREASING THE MONTHLY SOCIAL PENSION OF SENIOR CITIZENS
EXPANDING THE COVERAGE THEREOF

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

SECTION 1. Section 2 of Republic Act No. 7432, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 2. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, these terms are defined as follows:

(a) xxx;

xxx;

(h) *Indigent senior citizen*, refers to any elderly who is [frail, sickly or with disability, and] without pension or permanent source of income, compensation or financial assistance from his/her relatives to support his/her basic needs, as determined by the Department of Social Welfare and development (DSWD) in consultation with the [National Coordinating and Monitoring Board] **NATIONAL COMMISSION OF SENIOR CITIZENS (NCSC). THEREAFTER, THE DETERMINATION OF QUALIFIED INDIGENT ELDERLY SHALL BE TRANSFERRED FULLY FROM THE DSWD TO THE NCSC WITHIN A PERIOD NOT EXCEEDING THREE (3) YEARS**

FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT;

(i) Social Pension refers to the monetary grant from the government to support the daily subsistence and medical needs of senior citizens which shall not be less than **[One] TWO** thousand pesos **[(P1,000.00)] (P2,000.00)** per month.”

SEC. 2. Section 5 of the same Act, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“**Section 2. Definition of Terms.** — For purposes of this Act, these terms are defined as follows:

(a) xxx;

xxx;

(h) Additional Government Assistance

(1) Mandatory Social Pension

[Indigent] ALL senior citizens WITHOUT PENSION OR WHO ARE RECEIVING PENSION IN THE AMOUNT OF FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00) AND BELOW FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM (GSIS), SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) AND PENSION AND GRATUITY MANAGEMENT (PGMC), shall be entitled to a monthly stipend amounting to not less than **[One] TWO** thousand pesos **[(P1,000.00)] (P2,000.00)** to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs of senior citizens.

The DSWD shall, subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), in consultation with other stakeholders, review and, when necessary, adjust the amount of the social pension every two (2) years after the effectivity of this Act, taking into account the present consumer price index as published by the PSA and relevant economic indicators, as reported and published by pertinent government agencies and authorities.

ANY SENIOR CITIZEN MAY OPT NOT TO RECEIVE THE MONTHLY SOCIAL PENSION, AND DONATE TO THE OSCA OR TO ANY GOVERNMENT-ACCREDITED NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION (NGO) FOR SENIOR CITIZENS OPERATING IN THE SAME CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT WHERE THE DONOR RESIDES. PROVIDED, THAT THE DONATION SHALL BE UTILIZED TO AUGMENT THE MEDICAL NEEDS OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT WHERE THE OSCA AND THE GOVERNMENT-ACCREDITED NGO FOR SENIOR CITIZENS ARE SITUATED.

x x x”

SEC. 3. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NCSC shall, in consultation with the DSWD, DBM and other concerned government agencies, as well as non-government organizations and people’s organizations of senior citizens duly accredited by the DSWD, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Appropriations.* — The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DSWD. Thereafter, such amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, executive orders, or rules and regulations, contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,