Republic of the Philippines

House of Representatives

Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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HOUSE BILL NO. **10455**

Introduced by Representative LORDAN G. SUAN

AN ACT
MANDATING THE PROVISION OF MATERNITY PACKAGES TO PREGNANT FILIPINO WOMEN BELONGING TO THE LOW-INCOME GROUP, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to a representative of UNFPA Philippines, a concerning 14 percent of pregnant women in our country lack access to crucial prenatal check-ups and necessary medical care during pregnancy. Shockingly, in 2019 alone, 1,458 women tragically lost their lives due to maternal causes. This distressing figure escalated to 2,478 in 2021.

To address this pressing issue, we propose the implementation of a program that provides maternity packages to expectant mothers from low-income groups. These program would ensure access to essential items for both prenatal and postnatal care.

Improving prenatal care for pregnant women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds is paramount. This initiative aims to address maternal health disparities, reduce the risk of complications during childbirth, and ultimately lower child mortality rates, particularly among families in the low-income bracket. Additionally, by providing necessary supplies for infant care, we can further support these vulnerable families.

Furthermore, it is imperative to empower women by recognizing their pivotal role in nation-building and ensuring they receive adequate support throughout the childbirth process.

This bill is crucial in bridging the gaps in maternal healthcare access faced by low-income pregnant women. By providing essential maternity packages free of charge to qualified beneficiaries, it promotes equity in healthcare and safeguards the well-being of both mothers and infants. Additionally, it aligns with the government's commitment to prioritize the needs of marginalized sectors, including women and children, thus emphasizing the importance of maternal and child health in our national development agenda.

In light of the preceding, this bill's approval is fervently sought.

LORDAN G. SUAN
Cagayan de Oro City – 1st District

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the *"Maternity Kit for Pregnant Filipino Women Act of 2024."*

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the role of women in nation- building. Further, the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women, and children. Finally, the State shall endeavor to provide medical care to paupers.

SEC. 3. *Maternity Kit for Pregnant Filipino Women Program.* – This Act hereby establishes the Maternity Kit for Pregnant Filipino Women Program which may be availed of by expectant mothers who have already been identified as poor or near-poor based on the Standardized Targeting System under Republic Act No. 11310, otherwise known as the "Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act." In order to qualify, pregnant women must avail of pre-natal

services, give birth in a health facility attended by a skilled health professional, and receive post-partum care and post-natal care for her newborn.

The maternity package / kit, to be distributed once free of charge to qualified beneficiaries, shall contain necessary items such as a blanket, diapers, gauze, towels, nappies, bedding, cloth / fabric (which could be used to make clothing for the baby) and child care products. The contents of the package shall be updated by the implementing agency every two (2) years.

SEC. 4. *Objectives of the Program.* **-** The Program shall have the following objectives:

(a) Improve prenatal care for poor or near-poor pregnant Filipino women;

(b) Reduce child mortality, especially for those belonging to families in the low- income group; and

(c) Empower women to perform their role, more meaningfully, in nation-building.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Agency.* - The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall serve as the central planning, implementing and monitoring body of the Program.

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current and subsequent General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Relevant agencies in coordination with the stakeholders, covered establishments, and institutions shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this act within Thirty (30) days from promulgation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* — Any portion or provisions of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions or provisions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, memoranda, circulars, and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette, in a newspaper of general circulation, or on a website provided for by law.

Approved,