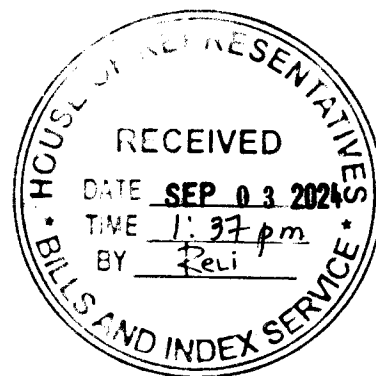




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 10857

Introduced by Representative **HON. ATTY. GERVILLE "JINKY BITRICS" LUISTRO**

AN ACT GRANTING A FIFTY PERCENT (50%) DISCOUNT FROM FUNERAL SERVICES TO INDIGENT FAMILIES AND FREE FUNERAL SERVICES TO EXTREMELY POOR FAMILIES NATIONWIDE, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

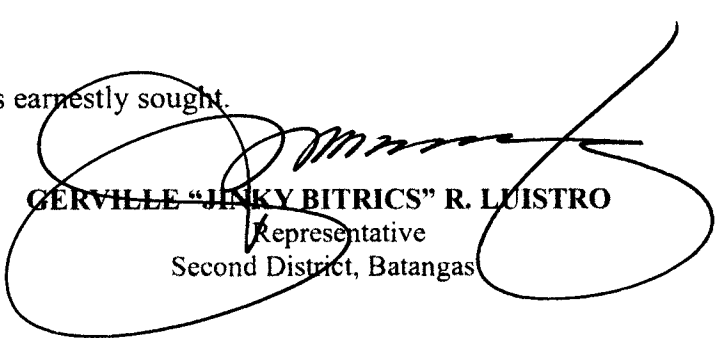
EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the Philippine Statistics Agency, there is, in average, 1,862 Filipinos dying per day – This is only the registered figure.¹ With more than 20 million Filipinos below the poverty line along with continuous increase of primary expenses like food, utilities, and education, an unfortunate yet inevitable expense of death is not one most Filipinos can arrange.

In Filipino culture, discussing money, especially in the context of death, is often considered improper. This cultural norm contributes to limited awareness of the financial aspects of death.² Despite an upward trend in the total premiums of the insurance industry in the Philippines³, the price to arrange for death care hovers between P15,000 – P500,000⁴; a substantial amount inaccessible to most Filipinos.⁵

This bill aims to provide crucial support to indigent Filipino families by offering a 50% discount on funeral services and ensuring that extremely poor families receive these services at the lowest cost, nationwide.

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


GERVILLE "JINKY BITRICS" R. LUISTRO
Representative
Second District, Batangas

¹ <https://psa.gov.ph/content/registered-deaths-philippines-20220#:~:text=An%20average%20of%201%2C862%20deaths%20registered%20per%20day&text=This%20is%20equival>

ent%20to%20a,about%201%20death%20per%20minute.

² <https://www.goldenhaven.com.ph/blog/how-much-does-it-cost-to-die-in-the-philippines/>

³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1423317/philippines-total-value-of-insurance-premiums/>

⁴ <https://www.goldenhaven.com.ph/blog/how-much-does-a-funeral-service-cost-in-the-philippines/>

⁵ <https://www.rappler.com/business/charts-cost-dying-grieving-philippines/>



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

SECTION. 1. *Short title.* – This Act shall be known as "Free and Discounted Funeral Services Act."

SECTION. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. As part of fulfilling this, the State shall give discounts from funeral services to indigent families and free funeral services to extremely poor families.

SECTION. 3. *Definition of Terms* – The following terms as used in this Act shall mean the following:

- a) "Poor" – refers to families whose income falls below the poverty threshold as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and/or who cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic needs of food, health, education, housing or other essential amenities of life, as defined under Republic Act No. 8425, otherwise known as the "Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Ad". The Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) established under Republic Act No. 11315 of the local government unit, with the supervision of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), shall be used to determine the degree of indigency of the family, whether indigent or extremely poor;
- b) "Funeral Services" refers to preparation of funeral documents, embalming, viewing, interment or burial services, cremation and inurnment services, including the provision of a casket or urn, as the case maybe, offered by mortuaries. The standard package of funeral services will cover:
 - a. Transfer of deceased from place of death to the mortuary for embalming and applying of cosmetics within a 25-kilometer radius of mortuary;
 - b. An Ordinary Plain Casket and casket stand for viewing of body or urn in case of cremation;

- c. Maximum of three (5) days viewing residence of the family;
- d. Use of funeral viewing equipment including lighting;
- e. Use of funeral vehicle for interment within a 15-kilometer radius from the place of viewing to the place of burial; and

SECTION 4. Free Funeral Services for Extremely Poor Families. – Free funeral services shall be provided for extremely poor families by accredited mortuaries anywhere in the country. The said free services shall be given to only one (1) immediate family member per month per mortuary branch. Provided, said funeral service does not exceed the cost of the mortuary's minimum funeral service package of fifteen thousand pesos (P20,000). Provided further, that the grant of free funeral services under this Act is without prejudice to the right of the beneficiary to avail of upgraded funeral services given by the mortuary. The difference in cost shall be borne by the family of the deceased.

SECTION 5. Discounted Funeral Services for Indigent Families. – A fifty percent (50%) discount on funeral services shall be granted to indigent families by mortuaries anywhere in the country but would only be applicable to At-Need funeral services only. Provided, said funeral service does not exceed the cost of the mortuary's minimum funeral service package; The grant of a discount under this Act is without prejudice to the right of the beneficiary to avail of other financial assistance given by the government.

SECTION 6. Requirements for Availing Free or Discounted Funeral Services. – Before an indigent or extremely poor family can avail of the free or discounted funeral services, the following documents shall be submitted: (a) certificate of indigency issued by the barangay or the local social welfare office of the local government unit (LGU), stating whether the family is either indigent or extremely poor as defined under Section 3; Provided, however, that the certification shall not be a requirement before any member of the family of the deceased could avail the services of the mortuary; (b) death certificate; and (c) funeral contract between the beneficiary's family, the accredited mortuary and the authorized DSWD personnel.

SECTION 7. Reimbursement. – Mortuaries granting discounted or free services to indigent or extremely poor beneficiaries may seek reimbursement for the cost of the services from any regional office of the DSWD upon the approval of the Regional Director. The reimbursement will be based on the stipulations of the signed contract between the poor family, the mortuary, and the authorized DSWD personnel.

SECTION 8. Lead Agency. – The DSWD shall be the lead agency in the implementation of the provisions of this Act and shall engage the funeral services of mortuaries in the country.

SECTION 9. Role of Local Government Units (LGUs). – Notwithstanding the preceding section, the local government units are enjoined to fulfill their devolved function as mandated by Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code, and Presidential Decree No. 856 otherwise known as the Sanitation Code, in providing assistance to indigent and extremely poor families in their respective areas at their own expense. Further, the LGUs will waive fees and charges which include burial or interment permit, cremation permit, transfer permit, disinterment permit, and cost of Death Certificate.

SECTION 10. Appropriations. – The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the allocation in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SECTION 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the DSWD shall, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Philippine Mortuary Association, with the participation of local government units, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12 Separability Clause. – If any portion or provision of the Act is declared void or unconstitutional, the remaining portions or provisions hereof shall not be affected by such declaration.

SECTION 13. Repealing Clause. – Any provision of law or regulations inconsistent herewith is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 14. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,