

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 372



Introduced by Representative Richard I. Gomez, DPA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The consumption of soft drinks and sugary beverages has been consistently linked to numerous health issues, which pose a significant public health challenge. The high sugar content in these beverages contributes to excessive caloric intake without providing essential nutrients, leading to weight gain and obesity. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), obesity rates have been increasing globally, and the Philippines is not exempt from this trend.

Regular consumption of beverages sweetened with sugar, high fructose corn syrup and other unhealthy sweeteners is associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. High sugar concentrations can cause spikes in blood glucose levels, leading to insulin resistance over time. The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) has highlighted the rising prevalence of diabetes in the Philippines, which has significant economic and social implications.

Studies have shown that high sugar intake is linked to various cardiovascular diseases, including hypertension, heart attacks, and strokes. Sugar is also known to increase blood pressure and inflammation, contributing to the development of heart disease. Consuming such beverages on a regular basis is also a leading cause of dental caries and cavities. As such, it promotes the growth of harmful bacteria in the mouth, leading to tooth decay and other dental issues.

Given these health risks, it is imperative for the government to take proactive measures to reduce the consumption of soft drinks and sugar-sweetened beverages, particularly within its own institutions. This bill seeks to ban the procurement of these unhealthy beverages by government offices, agencies, and institutions, thereby setting a positive example and fostering a culture of health and wellness.

By banning the procurement of soft drinks and sugar-sweetened drinks, the government can significantly reduce the consumption of these unhealthy drinks among its employees and the public. This initiative aligns with the broader public health goals of reducing non-communicable diseases and promoting healthier lifestyles.

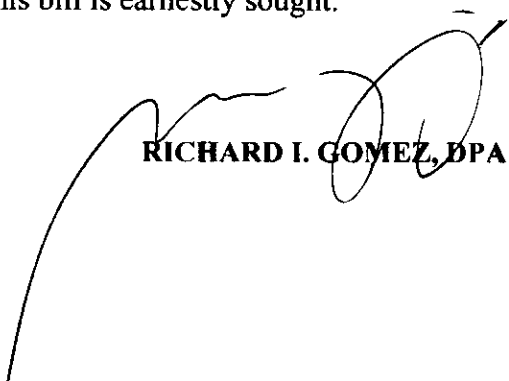
Reducing the consumption of sugary beverages can lead to lower healthcare costs associated with treating obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and dental problems. These savings can be redirected towards more productive and preventive health initiatives.

This bill complements current health policies and programs, such as the National Nutrition Council's initiatives to promote healthy eating habits and the Department of Health's campaigns against lifestyle-related diseases.

The government, by implementing this policy, sets a standard for other sectors to follow, including private institutions, schools, and households. It demonstrates a commitment to public health that can inspire similar measures in other areas.

The "No to Sugar-sweetened Drinks Act" is a necessary step towards creating a healthier environment in government workplaces and institutions. It reflects the government's commitment to safeguarding the health of its citizens and addressing the growing burden of diet-related diseases. By implementing this policy, the government can lead by example and promote a culture of health and wellness across the nation.

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



RICHARD I. GOMEZ, DPA

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AN ACT
BANNING THE PROCUREMENT OF SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES USING
PUBLIC FUNDS FOR GOVERNMENT EVENTS AND CATERING SERVICES TO
ADVANCE PUBLIC HEALTH

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 "*No to Sugar-sweetened Drinks Act.*"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote public health and nutrition, especially in government workplaces and institutions. The government recognizes the adverse health impacts of excessive sugar consumption, particularly from soft drinks and sugar-sweetened beverages, and aims to reduce these through preventive measures.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act:

- a. **"Soft drinks"** refers to non-alcoholic beverages that contain carbonated water, a sweetener, and a natural or artificial flavoring.
- b. **"Sugar-sweetened drinks"** refers to drinks that contain added sugar or other sweeteners such as high fructose corn syrup, including but not limited to sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, and sweetened coffee or tea.

SEC. 4. *Prohibition.* – No government office, agency, or institution, including but not limited to national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs), government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), and

public hospitals, shall procure drinks listed in the "Sugar-sweetened Drinks List," as referred to in Section 6 of this Act, for official use, events, or any other government-related activities.

SEC. 5. *Monitoring and Compliance.* – The Commission on Audit (COA) shall include compliance with this Act in their regular audit of government offices, agencies, and institutions. Non-compliance shall be reported to the appropriate authorities for necessary action.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity. The IRR shall include, but not limited to:

- a. A list of beverages that are not eligible for procurement by any government office, agency or institution to be referred to as the "Sugar-sweetened Drinks List,"; and
- b. Monitoring and compliance mechanisms.

SEC. 7. *Appropriation.* – The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,