

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

Twentieth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1135



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Introduced by **Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez**

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Human milk banks provide safe breast milk to infants in emergency situations, such as those who are affected by disasters, are critically ill or born prematurely. Breast milk provides all the nourishment that infants need in their first six months of life.<sup>1</sup> In human milk banking, human milk collected from donors were pasteurized and dispensed to those babies in need.

Under Section 2, Declaration of State Policy of Republic Act No. 10028 otherwise known as the “Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009, “Breastmilk is the best food since it contains essential nutrients completely suitable for the infant’s needs. It is also nature’s first immunization, enabling the infant to fight potential serious infection. It contains growth factors that enhance the maturation of an infant’s organ systems.

“Towards this end, the State shall promote and encourage breastfeeding and provide the specific measures that would present opportunities for mothers to continue expressing their milk and/or breastfeeding their infant or young child.”

Republic Act No. 10028 was enacted in 2009 to encourage, promote, and support the practice of breastfeeding. In 2015, however, UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO) urge Philippine government to improve public investment in support for breastfeeding because in that year, around 2.8 million Filipino children under 2 years of age were undernourished due to sub-optimal breastfeeding practices. As a result, around 7,500 Filipino children under 2 years of age die annually due to undernutrition resulting from inadequate breastfeeding practice. In 2017, a report by UNICEF and the World Health Organization, only 34% of children under six months in the Philippines are exclusively breastfed. With these data, we can conclude that breastfeeding is still an ongoing concern in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Milanes, Vittorio. “How A Human Milk Bank Works.” 20 March 2019. UNICEF Philippines, <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/stories/how-human-milk-bank-works>.

This bill aims to support breastfeeding in critical and emergency situations and to raise awareness about human milk banking. With the establishment of regional human milk banks, displaced mothers with infants are assured that during calamities and disasters, there is an available breastmilk.

Therefore, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charisse', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ**  
Lone District, Calamba City

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR BREASTMILK COLLECTION AND STORAGE FACILITIES**  
**AND REGIONAL MILK BANKS FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO.**  
**7600, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “AN ACT PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO ALL**  
**GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE HEALTH INSTITUTIONS WITH ROOMING-IN**  
**AND BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES,” AS**  
**AMENDED**

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

**SECTION 1.** A new chapter to be numbered as Chapter V is hereby added to Republic Act No. 7600, to read as follows:

**“CHAPTER V**

**HUMAN MILK BANK**

**Section 18. Provision of Facilities for Breastmilk Collection and Storage.** – Health institutions adopting rooming-in and promoting breastfeeding shall provide equipment, facilities, and supplies for breast milk collection, storage and utilization, the standards of which shall be defined by the Department of Health.

**Section 19. Establishment of Regional Milk Banks.** - The Local Government Unit coordination with the Department of Health shall establish at least one milk bank per region and establish guidelines in proper storage and distribution of breast milk.”

**SEC. 2.** Chapter V of the same Act shall be renumbered as Chapter VI and Sections 18, 19, 20, 21 are hereby renumbered as 20, 21, 22, and 23 respectively.

**SEC. 3.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,