

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1296**



Introduced by Representative MARK ANTHONY G. SANTOS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XV, Section 4, of the 1987 Constitution states that “The family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security”.

The National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) together with the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted a workshop and stated that as of July 2023, NCSC has registered 2,274,531 senior citizens aged 60 to 100 years old across the country. Data estimates the proportion of Filipinos aged 60 and above will increase from 7.4 percent in 2015 to 11.4 percent by 2030 and 15.9 percent by 2045.

Senior citizens are more prone to illness and medical expenses, increasing their vulnerability to poverty. In 2018, the Philippines Statistical Authority’s (PSA) National Health Accounts reported that health spending for senior citizens amounted to P171.55 billion, or 22% of the P779.22 billion in health expenditures in 2018. 59% of their expenses were out of pocket.

This bill seeks to give eligibility for social pension as mandatory for all Filipino senior citizens. Currently, under Republic Act No. 9994, also known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act, only indigent senior citizens are eligible for this social pension. With this proposed measure all senior citizens are entitled to a mandatory social pension.

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

MARK ANTHONY G. SANTOS
Representative, Lone District of Las Piñas

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**AN ACT GRANTING UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PENSION TO SENIOR
CITIZENS, FURTHER AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS
AMENDED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9257, REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994,
AND REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11916, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR**

*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 “Universal Social Pension for Senior Citizens Act.”

SECTION 2. *Universal Social Pension.* — Section 5(h) paragraph (1) of Republic Act (RA) No. 7432, as amended by RA 9257, 9994 and 11916, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 5. *Government Assistance.* - The government shall provide the following:

"(h) Additional Government Assistance

“(1) MANDATORY Social Pension

“~~[Indigent]~~ **ALL** senior citizens **REGARDLESS OF FINANCIAL STATUS OR
ECONOMIC BRACKET, UPON REACHING THE AGE OF 60,** shall be
AUTOMATICALLY entitled TO RECEIVE A MONTHLY SOCIAL PENSION.

~~[to a monthly stipend amounting to not less than One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) 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.]~~

“THE MANDATORY SOCIAL PENSION SHALL AMOUNT TO NO LESS THAN FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P500.00) AT THE FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION AND SHALL INCREASE TO NO MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND PESOS (P1000.00) IN THE SUCCEEDING YEARS, AS THE BUDGET WILL ALLOW, TO SUPPORT THE DAILY SUBSISTENCE AND MEDICAL NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS.

“PRIORITY SHALL BE GIVEN TO INDIGENT SENIOR CITIZENS AND THOSE WHO ARE CURRENTLY NOT RECEIVING ANY PENSION.

“UPON REACHING THE ONE THOUSAND PESOS (P1000) LIMIT, THE MANDATORY SOCIAL PENSION SHALL BE SUBJECT TO A REVIEW BY CONGRESS, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DSWD.

“THE DSWD SHALL ROSTER INDIVIDUALS THAT ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE MONTHLY SOCIAL PENSION BASED ON A CENTRAL DATABASE WHICH INCLUDES THE CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING AND A COMPILATION OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF ALL PENSION PROVIDERS. THE SSS, GSIS, PGMC AND OTHER PENSION PROVIDERS SHALL PROVIDE THE DSWD WITH ACCESS TO THEIR ROSTER OF BENEFICIARIES EVERY MONTH FOR THIS PURPOSE. THE PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY WILL LIKEWISE PROVIDE THE DSWD WITH TIMELY ACCESS TO PERTINENT DATA FOR THIS PURPOSE.

“xxx”

SECTION 3. *Form and Manner of Payment.* — The monthly stipend shall be released to target beneficiaries either in cash, direct remittance, electronic transfer, or other modes of delivery, whichever is more practical and acceptable to the beneficiary, ensuring its release in the most expeditious and efficient manner, through any services offered by the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Any senior citizen may present their National Identification Card to claim their monthly mandatory social pension.

SECTION 4. *Waiver of Fees.* — Any transaction or service fee arising from the engagement of a service provider for electronic transfer, or other modes of delivery which service fees for the release of the monthly stipends and other forms of assistance to target beneficiaries shall not be charged against the target beneficiaries.

SECTION 5. *Transfer of Functions from the DSWD.* — The implementation, distribution, and management of the social pension for senior citizens shall, in accordance with Section 11 of Republic Act No. 7742, as amended by Republic Act No. 11350, be transferred from the DSWD to the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NCSC) within a period not exceeding two (2) years from the effectivity of this Act.

The absorption or transfer of regular or permanent and other employees of the affected offices and programs of DSWD shall be done in accordance with applicable laws, including civil service laws, rules, and regulations and subject to the approval of DBM.

SECTION 6. *List of Beneficiaries.* — The DSWD, and thereafter upon full transfer of its functions and programs to the NCSC, with the assistance of the PSA through community-based monitoring system established under Republic Act No. 11315, otherwise known as the “Community-Based Monitoring System Act,” and validation by the LGUs, shall prepare the list of target beneficiaries which shall be updated and validated annually.

SECTION 7. *Waiver of Pension.* — Any senior citizen may opt not to receive the mandatory social pension. Any senior citizen who does not claim within forty-five (45) days are considered to have opted out to receive the mandatory social pension. Unclaimed mandatory pension fund shall be preserved by the DSWD for the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Undisbursed Fund.* — Undisbursed funds shall not be reverted to the National Treasury and shall be used to augment appropriation for the following year.

SECTION 9. *Appropriations.* — The mandatory social pension within a period not exceeding two (2) years from the implementation of this Act shall be added to the regular appropriation of the DSWD budget in the General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, the regular appropriation for the monthly social pension for senior citizens shall be included in the budget of the NCSC.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the NCSC shall formulate and adopt amendments to the existing rules and regulations implementing Republic Act No. 11916 to carry out the objectives of this Act, in consultation with the Departments of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Budget and Management and other concerned government agencies, as well as nongovernment 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.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,