

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1438



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Introduced by the **Honorable ANIELA BIANCA D. TOLENTINO**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The 1987 Constitution highlights the importance of women in the society. Women are crucial to national development. As such, there is a need to protect their health and wellness. One of the health issues that Filipino women face nowadays is the prevalence of breast cancer.

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) revealed that 27,000 Filipino women are affected with breast cancer yearly. Studies also show that the Philippines has the highest rate of cancer prevalence in Asia and ranks ninth worldwide. News reports also reveal that seventy (70%) of breast cancer cases are among indigent Filipino women. These data are alarming and the State should give a more focused attention in solving the breast cancer problem among Filipino women.

One step in solving this issue is early screening for breast cancer among women. Studies show that early screening of breast cancer helps in its treatment. Another step towards freeing Filipino women from breast cancer is providing affordable and accessible breast cancer treatment. As such, this representation is proposing for the approval of the Free Filipino Women from Breast Cancer Act. The bill herein establishes a mechanism which will provide free breast cancer screening and treatment for qualified indigent Filipino women.

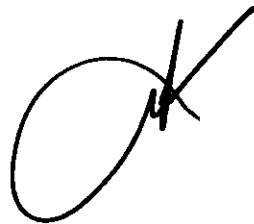
When approved, all government hospitals shall be mandated to provide free breast cancer screening to Filipino women. The proposed law also mandates that our national health insurance to have a comprehensive breast cancer treatment package.

To make sure that Filipino women who are inflicted with breast cancer will fully recover, the Office of President – Office of the First Lady shall provide the additional financial assistance to qualified Filipinas. Mandating such task to the Office of the First

Lady will give a laser-focused approach in the aim of the State to free Filipino women from breast cancer, as other government agencies are already flooded with other duties and responsibilities. This approach is also symbolic as Filipino women and the First Lady embody the importance of being mothers.

The time to increase the efforts of the State to solve breast cancer prevalence is now. Children are left without mothers, parents mourn, and families are distraught when breast cancer strikes. Let us work hand-in-hand and fight together to free Filipino women from breast cancer.

For Filipino women, approval of the foregoing bill is earnestly being sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'O' followed by a series of loops and a final upward stroke.

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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR FREE BREAST CANCER SCREENING AND  
AFFORDABLE TREATMENT OF BREAST CANCER FOR FILIPINO WOMEN,  
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 "*Free Filipino Women from Breast Cancer Act.*"

**SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to promote the health and wellness of Filipino women by giving importance to the early detection of breast cancer. The State shall likewise provide for accessible and affordable medical treatment for breast cancer. The State shall also endeavor in providing researching to improve screening and treatment of breast cancer of Filipino women.

**SECTION 3. *Free Breast Cancer Screening.*** – Breast cancer screening in all national, regional, and provincial government hospitals shall be provided free of charge to the following qualified indigent Filipino women:

- a) All Filipino women who are at least forty-five (45) years old.
- b) Indigent Filipino women under forty-five (45) years old.

**SECTION 4. *Affordable and Accessible Breast Cancer Treatment.*** – Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), shall develop a comprehensive breast cancer treatment package for all Filipino women. The

comprehensive breast cancer treatment package must cover all the needs for recovery of Filipino women affected with breast cancer.

**SECTION 5. *Free Breast Cancer Treatment.*** Qualified indigent Filipino women shall be provided with free breast cancer treatment by the State. Notwithstanding the benefits provided for by other laws and provisions in this Act, qualified indigent Filipino women with breast cancer shall be granted Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P250,000.00) as financial assistance for their treatment and recovery. The fund for the financial assistance for qualified indigent Filipino women with breast cancer shall be managed and handled by the Office of the President – Office of the First Lady.

**SECTION 6. *Qualified Indigent Women.*** – For purposes of this Act, a Filipina patient can be considered indigent if she has no visible means of income or her income is insufficient for the subsistence of her family, as assessed and certified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, local government, or medical social worker of the health facility.

**SECTION 7. *Appropriation for Free Breast Cancer Screening.*** – Upon the approval of this Act, the Department of Health shall immediately appropriate the necessary amount to implement the provisions of this Act and it is hereby authorized to appropriate the same from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of the Department of Health.

**SECTION 8. *Appropriation and Funds for Free Breast Cancer Treatment.*** The Office of the President shall include in its annual budget the necessary funds for the financial assistance to be given to qualified Filipino indigent women with breast cancer. For the sole purpose of providing free breast cancer treatment for qualified indigent Filipino women, the Office of the First Lady may solicit and receive donations.

**SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Office of the President, the Department of Health and Department of Social Welfare and Development shall issue rules and regulations implementing the provisions of this Act.

**SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.*** – Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

**SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulation or part thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 12. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*