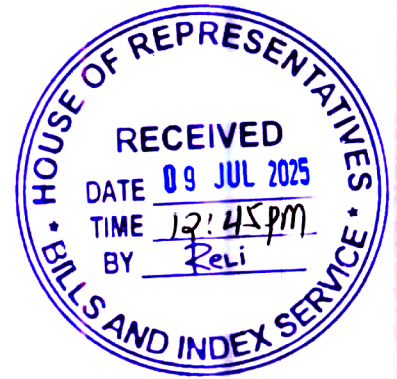


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1638



Introduced by Representative Paolo Henry M. Marcoleta

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution provides under Section 15, Article II that, “The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them”. Therefore, to address the rampant malnutrition among the Filipino youths, it is incumbent upon our administration to provide programs that will promote awareness about the benefits of proper nutrition.

According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF 2023), 95 Filipino children die each day due to malnutrition, with 27 out of every 1,000 children failing to survive beyond the age of five. In 2019, the Department of Education logged a total of 1,836,793 undernourished pupils, from kindergarten to Grade 6. This number coincides with the recent report stating that the Philippines is among the ten countries with the highest number of stunted children globally, with one out of four Filipino children, under the age of five, affected by stunting.

In response to these upsetting data, the World Health Organization, in 2021, has labeled the occurrence of stunting among Filipino children to be a public health issue of great significance.

This rising rate of malnutrition is now being linked to the low academic performance among Filipino children. As these children lack the essential nutrients needed by their bodies, it often leads to them also having undernourished minds. Thus, it must be an urgent action from the government to take a proactive and solid measure that can help Filipino students to actively participate in battling this public health dilemma.

The establishment of vegetable gardens in schools can serve as an effective approach for mitigating hunger, while also providing a practical learning environment where children can also gain knowledge about the art and science of planting, and its nutritional importance and other various benefits.

This bill aims to mandate the establishment of instructional gardens in all elementary and secondary schools in the country, as a measure to help address hunger and malnutrition. It will also serve as an interactive educational tool that will help impart students with fundamental concepts of nutrition and its importance to academic learning and early exposure to farming which is a valuable skill for citizens of an agricultural nation such as the Philippines.

Additionally, this bill seeks to promote agriculture in urban areas, through vertical farming, and in other areas of the country, as a mechanism to further address food security and environmental concerns of the country.

For the above reasons, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



PAOLO HENRY M. MARCOLETA
Representative, SAGIP Partylist

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AN ACT
ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY CONCERNS THROUGH
INTEGRATING INSTRUCTIONAL GARDENS IN PRIMARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULA AND PROMOTING THE USE
OF URBAN AGRICULTURE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Instructional*
2 *Gardens and Urban Agriculture Act.*”

3
4 **Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It shall be the policy of the State to promote
5 food security, food quality, improved health, fight hunger and malnutrition,
6 poverty alleviation, improved quality of environment through greening, reduction
7 in pollution, and creation of savings in household expenditures. Towards this end,
8 key reforms for the development of appropriate, cost-effective, and
9 environmentally safe agricultural practices are hereby encouraged in order to
10 ensure the food security of the country.

11
12 **Sec. 3. Definition of Terms.** – For purposes of this Act, the following terms
13 shall be defined as follows:

- 14
15 a. *Instructional Gardens* refer to a program of instruction in all
16 elementary and secondary schools, where knowledge and skills, not
17 only in urban agriculture and vertical farming, but in agricultural food

production in general, are imparted to school children through relevant theories and actual engagement in agricultural cultivation/production. The theories and actual production shall revolve around the concepts of composting, waste management techniques, healthy and nutritious farm produce, sustainable farm practices, among others;

b. *Urban Agriculture* refers to the practice of cultivating, processing and distributing of food in or around a village, town or city. Urban agriculture also involves animal husbandry, aquaculture, agro-forestry and horticulture; and

c. *Vertical Farming* refers to the method of farming that is brought to the urban space by employing the concepts of indoor agriculture in skyscrapers and other modern buildings.

Sec. 4. *Promotion of and Comprehensive Research on Urban Agriculture and Vertical Farming.* – For purposes of this Act, the respective Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) are hereby mandated to promote the use of urban agriculture and vertical farming in the country's urban areas and in other areas in the country where such farming methods are suited, as an intervention mechanism for further addressing food security concerns of the country.

Idle and/or abandoned government lots and buildings owned by either the national government or local governments or available land resources in state universities and colleges shall be considered for growing crops, raising livestock, and producing food using the said methods.

Sec. 5. *Institutionalization of Instructional Gardens in School Curricula.* – Instructional Gardens program shall be integrated in the academic curricula for elementary and secondary level students of both public and private academic institutions, particularly in subjects in agriculture, practical arts, home economics, and/or other related subjects.

The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the DA, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Section within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act.

55
56 **Sec. 6. *Local Government Units' Participation.*** – Local government units
57 (LGUs) shall formulate a policy on the practice of urban agriculture and vertical
58 farming, utilizing unused spaces and idle lands.
59

60 This shall require the enactment of local legislation institutionalizing urban
61 agriculture in all levels of the LGU. LGUs shall also grant necessary incentives
62 to their constituents who actively participate in urban farming activities.
63

64 **Sec. 7. *Tax Incentives.*** – All allocations of grants, endowments, donations,
65 or contributions and technical assistance provided by private individuals or
66 corporations to schools for the promotion and implementation of Institutional
67 Gardens in the school curricula, as certified by the DepEd, shall be exempt from
68 taxes and duties.
69

70 **Sec. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days
71 from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd shall, in coordination with DA and the
72 DOST, promulgate the implementing rules and regulations to effectively
73 implement the provisions of this Act.
74

75 **Sec. 9. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions
76 of this Act shall be included in the annual budget of DepEd.
77

78 **Sec. 10. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is
79 declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected shall remain
80 in full force and effect.
81

82 **Sec. 11. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive
83 orders, letters of instructions, administrative orders, proclamations or
84 administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
85 hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.
86

87 **Sec. 12. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
88 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
89

90 ***Approved,***