

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE BILL No. 2913



INTRODUCED BY HON. RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the primary duty of parents to nurture, guide and support their children. Regardless of economic status, parents make daily sacrifices to secure a better future for their sons and daughters, beginning with access to quality education, proper care, and emotional support. Through hard work and perseverance, parents nurture their children into capable and morally upright citizens.

The State stands in strong support of this noble responsibility. As enshrined in Article II, Section 12 of the 1987 Constitution, “The natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the support of the Government”. Further, the Constitution mandates the protection of children's rights to assistance, care, nutrition, and freedom from abuse, and recognizes the “vital role of the youth in nation-building.”

Despite the protective framework of existing laws, many children—those orphaned, abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed—are left without the care and protection they deserve. From January to November 2024, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) provided shelter and services to over 7,200 such vulnerable children in its residential care facilities.¹ DSWD data also shows that there were 1,999 abandoned and 3,344 neglected Filipino children from 2016 to 2021.² Meanwhile, the non-government organization Philippines Without Orphans estimates that there are around 5 to 7 million abandoned, neglected, or orphaned children in the country. According to latest data from the National Authority for Child Care (NACC), as of 15 June 2025, there are 1,199 children legally available for adoption.³ But according to Rohei Foundation, a non-profit group that advocates for adoption, only about 237 Filipino children are adopted each year.^{4, 5}

¹ DSWD. (2025, January). Over 7K disadvantaged, vulnerable given refuge in DSWD care facilities in 2024. Retrieved from: <https://old.dswd.gov.ph/over-7k-disadvantaged-vulnerable-given-refuge-in-dswd-care-facilities-in-2024/>

² International Social Service / International Reference Centre for the Rights of Children Deprived of their Families (ISS/IRC). (2024, December). Country situation: The Philippines (Revised by local contacts). Retrieved from: https://extranet.iss-ssi.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/PHL_SITU_ENG.pdf

³ Official Letter of the NACC addressed to Sen. Alan Cayetano dated 18 June 2025.

⁴ Beltran, B. (2023, February 6). Left in limbo: Breaking the stigma surrounding adoption in the Philippines. Philstar.com. Retrieved from: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/02/06/2242952/left-limbo-breaking-stigma-surrounding-adoption-philippines>

⁵ ROHEI Foundation. (n.d.). Addressing the orphan crisis [Interview or feature]. CNN Philippines. Retrieved from: <https://roheifoundation.org/addressing-the-orphan-crisis-rohei-foundation-on-cnn-philippines/>

Alarmingly, several fetuses were recovered and found in dumpsites in recent years due to unplanned pregnancies, mostly of poor mothers.⁶

While there are mechanisms to uphold children's rights, much more must be done to address the specific needs of those who lack parental care. These children deserve what every child does: a safe, nurturing, and stable environment, the chance to live with dignity, and the opportunity to dream and contribute to nation-building for the future of our country.

It is therefore the duty of the State to empower parents through decent work and livelihood opportunities, so that they can fulfill their roles and equip them with the financial capacity to support their children. At the same time, the State must fulfill its obligation as *parens patriae*, to ensure that children who have no one to care for them are given adequate assistance and support.

This bill seeks to institutionalize the National Child Support and Care (NCSC) Program, led by the DSWD with support from key agencies. It ensures shelter, education, health care, psychosocial support, family tracing, and transition aid for children in need, reinforcing the State's duty to uphold every child's right to care and protection. Crucially, the proposed measure proposes the creation of a trust fund for every orphaned, abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed minor under the care of DSWD-accredited child-caring institutions and care centers funded by regular State contributions, this account will be accessible once the child reaches the age of majority, serving as seed capital for education, livelihood, or personal growth.

Our vision for inclusive, equitable nation-building must include every child—especially those without families to rely on. Just as the government sustains programs like 4Ps, it must also invest in the future of these children.

In line with the policy adopted by its original proponent Senator Alan Peter “Compañero” S. Cayetano, this bill therefore serves as a counterpart measure. It is for the reason stated above that the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


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⁶ Compio, J. P., & Fuerzas, E. E. (2025, March 22). 2 newborns abandoned, rescued. SunStar Davao. Retrieved from: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/davao/2-newborns-abandoned-rescued>

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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL PROGRAM TO SUPPORT AND
CARE FOR THE ABANDONED, NEGLECTED, AND VOLUNTARILY
COMMITTED CHILDREN, CREATING A SPECIAL TRUST FUND,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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 “*Trust Fund for the Abandoned, Neglected, or Voluntarily Committed Child.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is a declared policy of the State to recognize the vital role of the youth in nation-building and promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. The State shall defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and special protection from all forms of neglect and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

Towards this end, the State shall provide support and care for children who have been abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed in accordance with the duty of the State under the doctrine of *parens patriae* or guardian of the rights of the people. The State shall thereby establish a trust fund for such children to be withdrawn only upon their reaching the age of majority.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined:

- a. *Abandoned Child* refers to a child who has no proper parental care or guardianship, a foundling, or one who has been deserted by one's parents for a period of at least three (3) continuous months, and has been declared as such by the National Authority for Child Care (NACC), as defined under Republic Act (R.A.) 11642 otherwise known as the “Domestic Administrative Adoption and Alternative Child Care Act;”
- b. *Child* refers to a person below eighteen (18) years of age;
- c. *Child-Caring Institution* refers to any twenty-four-hour resident group care service for the physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of nine or more abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed children that is coordinated

with the DSWD, as defined under Presidential Decree No. 603 otherwise known as the “Child and Youth Welfare Code;”

d. *Guardian* refers to a person lawfully invested with the power and charged with the duty of taking care of the abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed child;

e. *Neglected Child* refers to a child whose physical and emotional needs have been deliberately unattended or inadequately attended within a period of three (3) continuous months. A child is unattended when left without the proper provisions or proper supervision, as defined under R.A. 11642;

f. *Trust Entity* refers to a government financial institution with a proven track record in the banking industry which accepts deposits and offers trust services;

g. *Trust Fund for the Abandoned, Neglected, or Voluntarily Committed Child* refers to a special fund set aside for the children under the care of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or any DSWD-accredited child-caring institution. The said fund shall operate as a special trust fund managed by a reputable trust entity;

h. *Voluntarily Committed Child* is one whose parent or legal guardian knowingly and willingly relinquished parental authority to the NACC, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), or any duly accredited child-placing or child-caring agency or institution, as defined under R.A. 11642.

SEC. 4. Coverage. – This Act shall cover all abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed children, under the care of the NACC, the DSWD or DSWD-accredited child-caring institutions that may be recognized by the DSWD in accordance with the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SEC. 5. National Child Support and Care Program. – There is hereby established a National Program to Support and Care for Abandoned, Neglected, and Voluntarily Committed Children (NCSC) Program, to be primarily administered by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and other relevant agencies.

The Program shall include the following components:

- a. Provision of shelter, nutrition, health care, psychosocial services, and education;
- b. Family tracing and reintegration programs;
- c. Alternative family care arrangements, such as foster care or adoption;
- d. Capacity building for care workers and social welfare officers; and
- e. Support for transitioning youth who age out of care facilities.
- f. Employment assistance programs to of-age abandoned, neglected, and voluntarily committed children for their reintegration, and after-care programs for monitoring of their conditions outside the program.

SEC. 6. Trust Fund for Abandoned, Neglected, or Voluntarily Committed Children. – There is hereby created a Special Trust Fund for the NCSC Program, to be sourced from the following:

- a. Annual appropriations under the General Appropriations Act (GAA);

- b. Donations, legacies, grants, and endowments from domestic or foreign sources;
- c. Contributions from private sector partnerships; and
- d. Unclaimed child support funds and other child-related government recoveries.

This Fund shall be administered by the DSWD, with separate accounting and auditing protocols in accordance with government accounting and auditing standards.

A trust fund account, with an initial fund in the amount of PHP 15,000.00, in a duly accredited trust entity shall be opened in the name of every covered abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed child in the custody of a child-caring institution, based on a verified list submitted by such child-caring institution, provided that such trust fund account shall be opened only for children who have been in the custody of the institution for at least three (3) months from the time such children was subjected to the custody of the institution. These accounts shall be established under a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the DSWD and the trust entity with the exclusive purpose of securing the fund in trust for the child.

In addition to the initial fund, the DSWD shall deposit the sum of Fifteen Thousand Pesos (Php 15,000.00) quarterly into every individual trust fund account, sourced from the Special Trust Fund. Deposits shall continue until the account matures, unless terminated earlier due to the death or ineligibility of the recipient as determined by the DSWD.

To maintain the real purchasing value of the quarterly deposit through the years, the DSWD, in coordination with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), shall adjust the amount every three (3) years in proportion to the average inflation rate for the said period, as certified by the NEDA.

In addition, the DSWD shall conduct a comprehensive review of the adequacy of the base quarterly amount every five (5) years, taking into account the cost of living, education, health care, and reintegration support. The findings and recommendations shall be submitted to Congress in a report, including performance data, challenges, and suggestions for improving program delivery.

Each covered abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed child shall be entitled to the said quarterly deposit for the entire duration of their stay in a DSWD-accredited child-caring institution until they reach the age of eighteen (18).

Should a child be legally adopted before the age of eighteen (18), he or she shall remain entitled to receive the lump sum amount of the trust fund, corresponding to the duration of institutional care prior to adoption.

In the event that a covered child has died or becomes ineligible, the balance of the trust fund shall be forfeited in favor of the State, and returned to the Trust Fund to support other eligible beneficiaries.

SEC. 7. *Child Find System for the Abandoned, Neglected, or Voluntarily Committed Children.* – The DSWD, in coordination with other government

agencies tasked with caring for the welfare and development of children and the youth, shall come up with a comprehensive child find and monitoring system to identify and locate abandoned, neglected and voluntarily-committed children for the purpose of including them in the general database to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

This system shall include, but not limited to, coming up with an updated data on the number, location, and personal profile of abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed children; profiling of child-caring institutions nationwide; and establishing a transparent mechanism that would provide a grant of a reasonable lump sum grant to abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed children who already turned 18 years old and are ready to lead a life on their own.

SEC. 8. Appropriations. – The DSWD shall incorporate the budgetary requirements of this Act in its annual budget proposal.

SEC. 9. Disqualification from the Grant. – The DSWD shall issue the guidelines enumerating the grounds and procedure for disqualification from the grant under this Act.

SEC. 10. Release of the Grant. – The grant envisioned for every abandoned, neglected, or voluntarily committed child under this Act shall be released in tranches starting from the date the intended recipient turns eighteen (18) years old.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from approval of this Act, the DSWD, in consultation with the DOH, DepEd, CWC, and DILG and other relevant stakeholders, shall formulate and promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SEC. 12. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 13. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 14. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,