

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

20th CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3157



Introduced by REP. JUAN CARLOS "ARJO" C. ATAYDE

AN ACT EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF THE NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM TO INCLUDE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11037 OR THE "MASUSTANSYANG PAGKAIN PARA SA BATANG PILIPINO ACT"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Section 13, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that: *"The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being."*

In fulfillment of this constitutional duty, the State enacted Republic Act No. 11037, or the *Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act*, which institutionalized a school-based feeding program (SBFP) for undernourished public kindergarten and elementary school children. Since its implementation, the program has demonstrated measurable benefits. A 2022 World Bank report reiterated that undernutrition costs the Philippines billions annually in lost human potential, and that investing in child nutrition is among the most cost-effective interventions a country can make.

Local assessments echo these findings. A 2021 evaluation published in the *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development* revealed that over 85% of SBFP beneficiaries showed improved weight-for-age status by the end of the 120-day feeding period. Similarly, a study by Jacutin and Espino (2020) in public schools in Bulacan recorded significant improvements in attendance, classroom focus,

and general academic behavior among previously undernourished children following the feeding program.

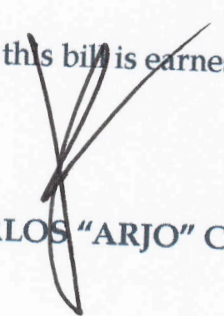
Despite these successes, the current scope of R.A. No. 11037 excludes learners in public secondary schools, leaving adolescents – many of whom are still vulnerable to food insecurity – without the same nutritional support. This omission is critical. Data from the Department of Science and Technology–Food and Nutrition Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) shows that stunting and underweight prevalence among Filipino adolescents remains alarmingly high, particularly in rural and low-income areas.

In response, a 2023 field study conducted by educators in Nueva Ecija piloted the SBFP for Grade 7 students and found that only 16% of severely wasted adolescents improved their nutritional status after the 120-day cycle, suggesting the need for longer feeding periods or more intensive nutrition support at the secondary level. Nonetheless, the study noted a positive trend in academic scores and attendance, with over 70% of participants posting higher general averages at the end of the program.

Furthermore, in a comprehensive program review published in 2022, Hontiveros et al. recommended that “feeding programs be expanded to include junior and senior high school learners as part of a rights-based approach to adolescent development,” citing the continued vulnerability of teenagers to hunger-related dropout and low performance.

This bill seeks to address these gaps by amending the current law to expand the SBFP’s coverage to include Grades 7 to 12 in public schools. Doing so will ensure continuity of nutritional support throughout the entire basic education cycle, promote equitable access to learning, and enhance the government’s commitment to nurturing the next generation of productive, healthy Filipinos.

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


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PARA SA BATANG PILIPINO ACT"

1
2 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in*
3 *Congress assembled:*

4 **SECTION 1.** Section 4(b) of Republic Act No. 11037, otherwise known as the
5 "*Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act*," is hereby amended to read as
6 follows:

7 "Section 4. (b) School-Based Feeding Program. — The DepEd shall
8 implement a school-based feeding program for undernourished public
9 school children from kindergarten to grade [six (6)] **TWELVE (12)**:
10 Provided, That the program shall include the provision of at least one (1)
11 fortified meal to all undernourished public **KINDERGARTEN**,
12 elementary, **AND SECONDARY** school children for a period of not less
13 than one hundred twenty (120) days in a year[;], **PROVIDED,**
14 **FURTHER, THAT THE COST OF THE AFOREMENTIONED MEALS**
15 **SHALL ENSURE THAT SCHOOL CHILDREN RECEIVE THE**
16 **APPROPRIATE AMOUNT OF NUTRITION, WHICH MAY BE**
17 **ADJUSTED EVERY YEAR TO ACCOUNT FOR INFLATION AND**
18 **FOR NUTRITIONAL ADJUSTMENTS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE**
19 **FNRI: PROVIDED, FURTHERMORE, THAT FOR EACH SCHOOL**
20 **DIVISION OF DEPED, MEAL DISTRIBUTION AND OTHER**
21 **OVERHEAD COSTS OF THE PROGRAM SHALL NOT BE MORE**
22 **THAN TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL MEAL COST:**
23 **PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT IN THE PREPARATION OF**

1 FORTIFIED MEALS, THE DEPED SHALL COLLABORATE WITH
2 RECOGNIZED PARENTS' ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS THE
3 PARENTS OF THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROGRAM,
4 WHENEVER APPLICABLE;

5 xxx. "

6 SEC. 2. *Separability Clause.* — Should any provision herein be declared
7 unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

8 SEC. 3. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or
9 other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
10 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

11 SEC. 4. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
12 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

13 Approved,