

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4039**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE *WALANG GUTOM* PROGRAM AS THE
GOVERNMENT'S FLAGSHIP FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to adequate food is a fundamental human right. Yet millions of Filipino households continue to suffer from involuntary hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity. This condition undermines human dignity, productivity, and social stability, and perpetuates the cycle of poverty.

The *Walang Gutom* Program was conceived by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to directly address involuntary hunger through food assistance and nutrition interventions for the poorest households. Piloted as a food stamp and electronic benefit transfer program, it has already demonstrated success in reducing hunger and improving access to nutritious food.

This bill seeks to institutionalize *Walang Gutom* as the permanent flagship program of the government for food security. It establishes the *Walang Gutom* Program not as a temporary or supplemental initiative, but as the central platform for eradicating hunger nationwide.

The measure builds on the lessons of existing pilots, but leaves flexibility to the DSWD to determine benefit levels, delivery modalities, and program innovations through policy and implementing rules and regulations. In this way, *Walang Gutom* can adapt to changing economic conditions, inflationary pressures, and the evolving needs of beneficiaries.

Importantly, the bill also makes clear that *Walang Gutom* is separate from, and not a substitute for, existing social welfare programs such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) or the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens. Beneficiaries of these programs are not disqualified from receiving *Walang Gutom* assistance. Hunger can persist even among households receiving cash transfers; this measure ensures that food security is addressed as a distinct but complementary priority.

The bill further requires strong convergence across government programs. The *Walang Gutom* Program shall:

1. **Converge with nutrition programs** of the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Nutrition Council (NNC) to combat malnutrition, stunting, and micronutrient deficiencies;
2. **Link with agriculture programs** of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to support local farmers and fisherfolk, stabilize supply chains, and make food assistance pro-farmer as well as pro-consumer;
3. **Complement education programs** of the Department of Education (DepEd) by integrating food assistance with school feeding and nutrition education, thereby improving learning outcomes; and
4. **Connect with livelihood and employment programs** of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to help households transition from food insecurity to sustainable self-sufficiency.

By institutionalizing the *Walang Gutom* Program, the Philippines takes a decisive step toward ending involuntary hunger. It ensures continuity across administrations, provides coherence to food security efforts, and aligns social protection with agricultural and human development goals.

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


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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 *Walang Gutom Act of 2025*.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to eradicate involuntary hunger, ensure food security, and protect the right to adequate food as a matter of human dignity. Toward this end, the State shall institutionalize a flagship national program to provide food assistance to the poorest households, promote nutrition, and strengthen linkages with agriculture, education, and livelihood.

SEC. 3. *Institutionalization of the Walang Gutom Program.* The *Walang Gutom* Program is hereby institutionalized as the government's permanent flagship program to address hunger and promote food security. It shall serve as the central platform for delivering direct food assistance to poor households and linking such assistance with nutrition, livelihood, agriculture, and education programs.

SEC. 4. *Program Objectives.* The *Walang Gutom* Program shall:

(a) Ensure that no Filipino household experiences involuntary hunger due to poverty or lack of access to food;

(b) Deliver food assistance through efficient, transparent, and accountable mechanisms such as electronic benefit transfers, vouchers, or other modalities as determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);

(c) Provide nutrition-sensitive interventions, including nutrition education, school feeding linkages, and access to fortified and diverse foods;

(d) Strengthen partnerships with farmers, fisherfolk, and local food producers to stabilize supply and support rural livelihoods;

(e) Complement food assistance with sustainable livelihood, employment, and skills development opportunities; and

(f) Integrate with education initiatives to improve school attendance, reduce child malnutrition, and support student learning outcomes.

SEC. 5. *Core Program Components.* The *Walang Gutom* Program shall consist of:

(a) *Food Assistance to Poor Households* – targeted distribution of electronic or in-kind food assistance, with amounts and modalities to be determined by the DSWD subject to appropriations and policy priorities;

(b) *Nutrition Support* – integration with the National Nutrition Council (NNC) and Department of Health (DOH) programs to address malnutrition, stunting, and micronutrient deficiencies;

(c) *Agriculture and Supply Chain Linkages* – convergence with the Department of Agriculture (DA) to source from local farmers and fisherfolk, including Kadiwa outlets and food-for-school programs;

(d) *Education and School Feeding Linkages* – coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd) to align food assistance with school feeding programs and nutrition education;

(e) *Productivity and Livelihood Linkages* – integration with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for skills training, jobs, and enterprise support; and

(f) *Monitoring and Accountability* – use of digital systems, audits, and community monitoring to ensure that food assistance reaches intended beneficiaries.

SEC. 6. *Relationship with Other Social Welfare Programs.* The *Walang Gutom* Program shall be distinct from, and shall not replace or reduce, the benefits provided under the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens, or other social welfare programs administered by the government.

Eligibility for the *Walang Gutom* Program shall not be denied on the ground that a household or individual is already a beneficiary of another social protection or welfare program.

SEC. 7. *Lead Implementing Agency.* The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall serve as the lead agency in implementing the *Walang Gutom* Program, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), National Nutrition Council (NNC), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and

Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and local government units (LGUs).

SEC. 8. *Funding.* The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the budget of the DSWD. Official development assistance (ODA), grants, and partnerships may also be mobilized consistent with the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Role of Local Government Units.* Local government units shall assist in identifying beneficiaries, monitoring implementation, and integrating *Walang Gutom* projects into their local development investment programs.

SEC. 10. *Reporting.* The DSWD shall submit to Congress an annual report on the *Walang Gutom* Program, including coverage, geographic distribution, budget utilization, nutrition and food security outcomes, and program evaluations.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DSWD, in consultation with concerned agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, and administrative issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,