

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4222**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A MAGNA CARTA FOR BARANGAY NUTRITION SCHOLARS
(BNS), PROVIDING FOR THEIR RIGHTS, BENEFITS, PROFESSIONALIZATION,
WELFARE, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS) are the community-based nutrition workers of the country. Created under Presidential Decree No. 1569, they are volunteers tasked with delivering basic nutrition and primary health services, monitoring child growth and malnutrition, conducting community health education, and mobilizing households to improve nutrition outcomes at the barangay level.

Over the years, the BNS network has become the backbone of local nutrition programs. They are frontliners in implementing national nutrition strategies, assisting the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Nutrition Council (NNC) in community-based operations. They monitor malnutrition cases, ensure compliance with food fortification and salt iodization laws, and serve as first responders in times of disaster, ensuring that nutrition remains a priority in relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Despite their indispensable role, Barangay Nutrition Scholars remain among the least supported in our public health system. Their honoraria are often minimal and inconsistent, depending largely on the fiscal capacity of barangays. Many serve without adequate insurance or retirement benefits, and only a fraction receive proper equipment or training to carry out their tasks effectively.

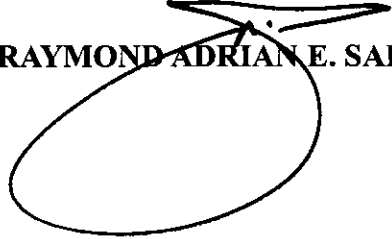
This bill seeks to address these long-standing gaps by enacting a Magna Carta for Barangay Nutrition Scholars. It consolidates and institutionalizes their rights and privileges, ensures minimum honoraria and allowances, mandates PhilHealth, SSS or GSIS, and Pag-IBIG coverage, and provides retirement gratuity as well as death and disability benefits.

It establishes a National BNS Training Program under the DOH and NNC, with modules on nutrition program management, maternal and child health, community mobilization, disaster response, and health promotion. It also creates a Barangay Nutrition Scholar Welfare Fund for medical assistance, scholarships for dependents, legal aid, and emergency support. Furthermore, it mandates modernization through the provision of nutrition kits, weighing scales, digital tools, and communication devices to standardize and improve frontline nutrition work.

Importantly, the bill provides a career development pathway by granting Civil Service Subprofessional Eligibility to Barangay Nutrition Scholars who have served at least five (5) years and completed mandatory training. This transforms BNS service into a stepping stone for government employment, recognizing the professionalism of their contribution to public service.

The Magna Carta for Barangay Nutrition Scholars is a long-overdue recognition of the essential role they play in building healthier, stronger Filipino communities. By passing this measure, we will not only honor their service but also strengthen our national nutrition programs at the grassroots level.

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


RAYMOND ADRIAN E. SALCEDA

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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 “Magna Carta for Barangay Nutrition Scholars.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to recognize the indispensable role of Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS) in delivering basic nutrition and primary health services at the community level. The State shall ensure their protection, welfare, and professional growth, and shall provide adequate support for the effective discharge of their duties.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* For purposes of this Act, a Barangay Nutrition Scholar (BNS) shall refer to the trained volunteer worker appointed by the punong barangay and deployed under the supervision of the National Nutrition Council (NNC), tasked with delivering basic nutrition and health services, conducting community-based nutrition programs, and assisting in monitoring and reporting nutrition-related data in the barangay.

SEC. 4. *Rights and Privileges.* Barangay Nutrition Scholars shall enjoy the following rights and privileges:

- (a) Legal recognition as community-based nutrition and health workers;
- (b) Protection from retaliation, harassment, or undue interference while performing official duties; and
- (c) Access to training, allowances, and welfare programs as provided in this Act.

SEC. 5. Compensation and Benefits.

(a) Honoraria and Allowances. Barangay Nutrition Scholars shall receive minimum honoraria, transportation, and communication allowances to be provided by the barangay and augmented by the Department of Health (DOH) and the NNC.

(b) Insurance and Benefits. Barangay Nutrition Scholars shall be covered by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), Social Security System (SSS) or Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund).

(c) Retirement Gratuity. Barangay Nutrition Scholars who have served at least fifteen (15) years shall be entitled to a retirement gratuity equivalent to one year of honoraria and allowances.

(d) Death and Disability Benefits. In case of death or permanent disability in the line of duty, the family or dependents shall receive financial assistance from the Barangay Nutrition Scholar Welfare Fund established under this Act.

SEC. 6. Training and Professionalization.

(a) The DOH and NNC, in coordination with state universities and colleges (SUCs), shall establish a National BNS Training Program.

(b) The training shall include nutrition program management, community health, maternal and child care, disaster response, and health promotion.

(c) Barangay Nutrition Scholars shall undergo initial training within six (6) months of appointment, and mandatory annual refresher courses thereafter.

SEC. 7. Civil Service Eligibility Pathway. Barangay Nutrition Scholars who have completed at least five (5) years of continuous and satisfactory service, and who have completed mandatory training and certification programs under this Act, shall be granted Barangay Official Eligibility (BOE) equivalent to Civil Service Subprofessional eligibility, pursuant to the rules of the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

SEC. 8. Barangay Nutrition Scholar Welfare Fund. There is hereby created a Barangay Nutrition Scholar Welfare Fund under the DOH and NNC for:

(a) Medical and hospitalization assistance;

(b) Scholarships for dependents;

(c) Legal assistance in cases filed in relation to official duties; and

(d) Emergency financial aid for injuries or deaths in the line of duty.

SEC. 9. Modernization and Equipment Support. The State shall ensure modernization of barangay nutrition services through the provision of:

- (a) Standardized uniforms and identification cards;
- (b) Weighing scales, nutrition kits, and digital tools for data monitoring; and
- (c) Communication devices for reporting and coordination.

SEC. 10. *Legal Assistance.* Barangay Nutrition Scholars shall be entitled to free legal representation and assistance in all administrative, civil, or criminal cases arising from the lawful performance of their duties.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Mechanism.* The DOH, in consultation with the DBM, CSC, and the NNC, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SEC. 12. *Appropriations.* The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act under the budget of the DOH and the NNC. Local government units are encouraged to provide counterpart funds and support.

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

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,