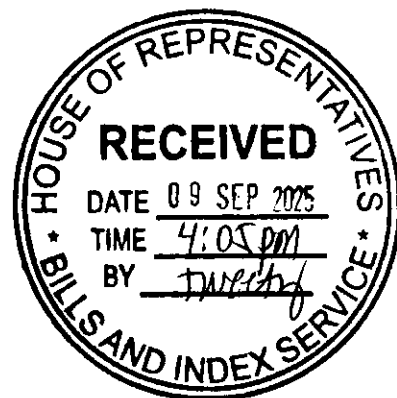




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4479

Introduced by Representative Nelson S. Legacion
Third Congressional District, Camarines Sur

The Philippines is facing a silent, but grave public health crisis, as the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and kidney and cardiovascular diseases is rising at an alarming rate. What is even more concerning is that these conditions are now affecting a younger population. A major factor contributing to this trend is the widespread consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs), which are often the default drink options in fast-food chains and restaurants.

The consumption of SSBs is directly linked to a range of severe health problems. The high sugar content in these drinks is a key precursor to insulin resistance and Type 2 diabetes. In fact, along with a sedentary lifestyle and an inadequate diet, the intake of sugary beverages and soft drinks have been described as triggers of obesity¹ which significantly increases the risk of heart disease and other chronic illnesses. In our country alone, there is a significant prevalence of obesity and being overweight in 6.8% of preschool children, 18.5% schoolchildren and 13.6% of adolescents whose consumption of sugary beverages are high. Furthermore, the acidic and sugary nature of these drinks erodes tooth enamel, causing cavities and other serious dental issues.

Conversely, the benefits of adequate water consumption are extensive and well-documented. A 2020 study confirmed that 12 weeks of additional water intake when walking and before sleeping improves health based on several indicators, such as decrease in blood pressure, rise in body temperature, dilution of waste materials and suppression of kidney function decline.²

Adequate water intake is a fundamental requirement for a healthy body. Without it, we cannot regulate our body temperature, detoxify our body, and maintain peak cognitive performance.

¹ De la Hoz, A. *et al.* (2023) 'The promotion of healthy hydration habits through educational robotics in university students', *Healthcare*, 11(15), p. 2160. doi:10.3390/healthcare11152160.

² Nakamura, Y. *et al.* (2020) 'Effect of increased daily water intake and hydration on health in Japanese adults', *Nutrients*, 12(4), p. 1191. doi:10.3390/nu12041191.

This proposed bill is grounded in the State's fundamental duty to protect and promote public health, as mandated by Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. It also aligns with national health policies, such as the *Universal Health Care Act (Republic Act No. 11333)*, which seeks to provide all Filipinos with access to quality and affordable healthcare.

Notably, this bill aims to combat these public health threats by making a simple yet impactful change: mandating that all food establishments provide free, adequate, and accessible drinking water. This measure empowers consumers to make healthier choices without additional cost, fulfilling the State's constitutional obligation to protect and promote public health. It is a crucial, cost-effective, and impactful step toward creating a healthier Philippines.

This bill is an enhanced and refined version of previous legislative efforts, notably those filed by Representative Evelio Leonardia in the 16th Congress and Senator Emmanuel "Manny" D. Pacquiao in the 18th Congress. It incorporates the core principles of those earlier measures while providing more detailed mechanics for effective implementation and enforcement.

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


NELSON S. LEGACION
Representative, Third District, Camarines Sur



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**AN ACT MANDATING ALL FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS TO
PROVIDE FREE, CLEAN, AND SAFE DRINKING WATER TO CUSTOMERS,
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 the "*Healthy Hydration Act.*"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them, as mandated by Article II, Section 15 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The State recognizes that the widespread consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and other unhealthy drinks is a significant public health concern. To address this, the State shall promote the availability of healthier and more affordable beverage options, specifically drinking water, in food establishments. This policy aligns with the principles of Republic Act No. 11333, or the Universal Health Care Act, which seeks to provide all Filipinos with access to quality and affordable healthcare. Furthermore, it supports the goals of Republic Act No. 9275, the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004, by ensuring the availability of clean and safe water for public consumption, and is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. By mandating the provision of free drinking water, the State advances consumer welfare, encourages healthier lifestyles, and takes a crucial step towards a healthier, more hydrated populace.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- (a) *Drinking Water* – refers to water that is safe for human consumption and meets the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water (PNSDW).

- (b) *Fast Food Chains and Restaurants* – refer to any establishment engaged in the business of preparing and serving food and beverages for public consumption, including, but not limited to, fast-food outlets, casual dining restaurants, cafes, and cafeterias.
- (c) *Accessible* – means the drinking water station is located in a common and easily locatable area within the establishment, free from any physical barriers, and available for use by all customers.
- (d) *Adequate* – means the drinking water supply is sufficient to meet the demand of customers and is replenished as needed.

SECTION 4. *Mandatory Provision of Drinking Water.* All fast-food chains and restaurants operating in the Philippines shall be mandated to provide free, adequate, and accessible drinking water to their customers. This drinking water shall be offered as a default option for a beverage, and establishments shall ensure that customers are aware of its availability.

SECTION 5. *Specifications for Drinking Water Stations.* To ensure compliance with this Act, fast-food chains and restaurants shall provide:

- (a) A designated drinking water station or dispenser that is clearly marked and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition;
- (b) A sign informing customers of the availability of free drinking water must be posted in a conspicuous location. The sign must be in English and Filipino, and also in the local dialect where the establishment is located;
- (c) Readily available clean glasses or cups for customers to use;
- (d) The drinking water provided must be of a quality that is safe for human consumption as per existing health and safety standards; and
- (e) The drinking water station must be positioned in a manner that is easily accessible to customers, including those with disabilities.

SECTION 6. *Penalties.* Any fast-food chain or restaurant that fails to comply with the provisions of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties:

- (a) For the first offense, a fine of not less than Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00).
- (b) For the second offense, a fine of not less than Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) but not more than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00).
- (c) For the third and succeeding offenses, a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00), and the suspension of the establishment's business permit for a period of six (6) months.

SECTION 7. *Mandatory Presentation of Drinking Water as Primary Accompanying Beverage for Meals in menus of fast-food chains and restaurants.* – All fast-food chains and restaurants are required to present drinking water as the primary accompanying beverage for all meals in their respective menus.

SECTION 8. *Enforcement and Inspection.* The Department of Health (DOH), through its regional and local health offices, and in coordination with the respective local government unit (LGU) health units, shall be the primary agencies responsible for the monitoring, inspection, and enforcement of this Act. They shall conduct regular and random inspections of all covered food service establishments to ensure compliance with the provision of free, adequate, and accessible drinking water that meets the quality standards set forth in this Act.

SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOH, in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and other relevant government agencies, shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any part of this Act is held unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,