

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO 5176



Introduced by: Hon. Keith Micah "Atty. Mike" D.L. Tan

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MANDATORY APPOINTMENT OF A NUTRITION OFFICER IN ALL PROVINCES, CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES OF THE COUNTRY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLE XXI, SECTION 491 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7160, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Undernutrition robs Filipino children of their chance for a bright future. According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index (HCI)— a Filipino child born today is likely to reach only 52% of their future potential economic productivity as an adult, compared to a child with access to complete education and full health. Children growing up in poverty need equalizing investments in their nutrition, health, education, and wellness, in order to reach their full potential as healthy, skilled adults who are able to improve their quality of life.

For nearly 30 years, there have been almost no improvements in the prevalence of undernutrition in the Philippines. One in three children (29%) younger than five years old suffered from stunting (2019), being small in size for their age. Moreover, 19% were underweight for their age, and 6% of children below five years old were classified as "wasted," being underweight for their height.¹

The Philippines is ranked fifth among countries in the East Asia and Pacific region with the highest prevalence of stunting and is among the 10 countries globally with the highest number of stunted children. Based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) classification of undernutrition rates, the stunting prevalence of children in the Philippines is of "very high" public health significance.

¹ World Bank. (n.d.). *Undernutrition in the Philippines*.

<https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/c8c10ff8b15291d1846cb8b73714aa08-0070062021/original/PH-Undernutrition-Report-Executive-Summary-2021.pdf>

It is said that the damage to health, physical growth and brain development of children affected by chronic under-nutrition—stunting in the first two years—is often irreversible, impairing them for life and leaving them with lower chances of finishing school and becoming highly-productive adults. Stunting, iron and iodine deficiencies impact learning abilities and intelligence of children. Studies show that populations affected by iodine deficiency have 10-15 IQ points less than those not affected.²

In view of the need to provide infant and young child feeding, micronutrient supplementation and food fortification and integrated management of acute malnutrition, this bill seeks the appointment of a nutrition officer which shall be mandatory in all provinces, cities and municipalities of the country.

The Local Government Code of the Philippines provides the list of appointive local officials common to all municipalities, cities and provinces. It includes the health officer who shall, among others, take charge of the office on health services and formulate and implement policies, plans, programs and projects to promote the health of the people in the local government unit concerned. The list, however, does not include the appointment of the nutrition officer to take charge of the office on nutrition services and formulate and implement policies, plans, programs and projects to promote the nutrition of the people.

The mandatory appointment of the nutrition officer is of utmost importance in view of the need to meet the fast-changing needs of promoting the nutritional well-being of the general public, especially of vulnerable individuals and groups within the framework of community life and consistent with the Millennium Development Goal of reducing the number of underweight children by half until 2015.

In view thereof, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



Keith Micah "Atty. Mike" D.L. Tan
4th District, Quezon

² Korean government and UNICEF launch First 1000 Days Program for vulnerable communities. Unicef, (<https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/korean-government-and-unicef-launch-first-1000-days-program-vulnerable-communities>) accessed on 29 July 2019

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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Title V of Republic Act No. 7160 is hereby amended by adding a new article and section at the end thereof to be denominated as Article XXI, Section 491, to read as follows:

"ARTICLE XX1

The Nutrition Officer

"Section 491. Qualifications, Powers, and Duties.

(a) No person shall be appointed nutrition officer unless he is a citizen of the Philippines, a resident of the local government unit concerned, of good moral character, and a registered nutritionist-dietitian. He must have acquired experience in the practice of his profession for at least five (5) years in the case of the provincial or city nutrition officer, and three (3) years in the case of the municipal nutrition officer.

The appointment of a nutrition officer shall be mandatory for provincial, city and municipal governments.

(b) The nutrition officer shall take charge of the office on nutrition and shall:

(1) Take charge of the office on nutrition services, supervise the personnel and staff of said office, formulate program implementation guidelines and rules

and regulations for the operation of the said office for the approval of the governor or mayor, as the case may be, in order to assist him in the efficient, effective and economical implementation of a nutrition services program geared to implementation of nutrition-related projects and activities;

(2) Formulate measures for the consideration of the sanggunian and provide technical assistance and support to the governor or mayor, as the case may be, in carrying out nutrition activities;

(3) Develop plans and strategies and upon approval thereof by the governor or mayor as the case may be, implement the same, particularly those which have to do with nutrition programs and projects which the governor or mayor, is empowered to implement and which the sanggunian is empowered to provide for under this Code;

(4) In addition to the foregoing duties and functions, the nutrition officer shall:

(i) Formulate and implement policies, plans, programs and projects to promote the nutrition of the people in the local government unit concerned;

(ii) Advise the governor or mayor, as the case may be, and the sanggunian on matters pertaining to nutrition;

(iii) Execute and enforce laws, ordinances and regulations relating to nutrition;

(iv) Recommend to the sanggunian, through the local health board, the passage of such ordinances as he may deem necessary for the delivery of services;

(v) Conduct nutrition information campaigns;

(vi) Coordinate with other government agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in the promotion and delivery of nutrition services; and

(vii) In the case of the provincial nutrition officer, exercise general supervision over nutrition officers of component cities and municipalities; and

(5) Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as may be prescribed by law or ordinance”.

SEC. 2. Section 491 of Republic Act No. 7160 is hereby renumbered as Section 492, all succeeding sections of the same Act are hereby renumbered accordingly.

SEC. 3. The Department of Interior and Local Government, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission, shall promulgate rules and regulations to implement this Act within ninety (90) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 4. All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,