

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE BILL NO. 5881**



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE MA. NINA FRANCESCA P. LACSON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Malnutrition remains a severe issue in the Philippines, impeding national progress. As of June 2025, 16.1% of Filipino families experienced involuntary hunger. Additionally, in May 2025, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) noted that nearly 600,000 Filipino children suffer from a life-threatening form of malnutrition. This crisis stunts their growth not just physically, but also mentally and all other aspects of their potential, creating an irreversible generational deficit.

The consequences of this nutritional deficiency manifest within our school systems. Studies indicate a link between chronic undernutrition and reduced cognitive development, lower IQ scores, and diminished academic performance. A comparative data from the Department of Education (DepEd) shows that students whose nutritional status was classified as stunted were up to 79% less likely to achieve high scores in academic assessments compared to their non-stunted peers. Furthermore, data from the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that only 24% of Filipino 15-year-olds attained the minimum proficiency in reading compared to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 74%. The Philippines’ performance in international assessments confirm that our students remain among the world’s weakest in math, science, and reading, underscoring the severe learning poverty fueled by hunger. Therefore, a generation suffering from learning poverty cannot evolve into the skilled, productive, and competitive workforce necessary to drive our very own national prosperity.

It is the duty of the State to ensure the well-being and health of its citizens, particularly children, and guarantee their right to adequate, nutritious food. Republic Act 11037, otherwise known as the “Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act”, was enacted to fulfill this vital mandate by establishing the comprehensive National Feeding Program.

Despite the enactment of the Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act in 2018, significant gaps remain in implementation and impact. Data from 2023 indicates

that 44.7% of the population faced moderate to severe food insecurity, a rate significantly higher than the global average of 28.9%. The consequences of which are severe: 23.6% of children under five years old were stunted in 2023, a rate the World Health Organization (WHO) has classified as having a “very high” public health significance. This persistent issue impacts health, development, and education. In 2019, DepEd reported that 1,836,793 pupils from kindergarten to Grade 6 were undernourished, which is directly linked to poor academic performance.

While the current law addresses the immediate need for meals and the procurement from our local farmers, fisherfolk, and small-scale producers, this proposed amendment seeks to enhance the program’s effectiveness and reach its full potential by recognizing a critical opportunity for synergy and sustainable development with other laws such as the Republic Act No. 11321, otherwise known as the “Sagip Saka Act”.

This amendment strengthens the existing mandate by enforcing direct sourcing from our local farmers, fisherfolk, and small-scale producers, bypassing middlemen, ensuring they receive a fairer price for their produce. Small-scale farms dominate the country’s agriculture with 57% of farmers cultivating 1 hectare or less. Empowering this vital sector is critical for national food security and economic resilience against volatile global food prices.

Through this bill, we seek to give aid and support not only the children, but the future of our nation as a whole. Given the situation of hunger crisis in our country, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



MA. NINA FRANCESCA P. LACSON
Manila Teachers Party-list

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**AN ACT
MANDATING THE PROCUREMENT FROM SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM,
AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11037, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE "MASUSTANSYANG PAGKAIN PARA SA BATANG
PILIPINO ACT"**

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote food and nutrition security through sustainable local food systems that empower small scale producers, support agrarian reform beneficiaries, and strengthen rural economies. The State recognizes that linking local food production to government feeding programs shall contribute to poverty reduction, agricultural productivity, and equitable economic growth.

SEC. 2. Republic Act No. 11037, otherwise known as the "Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino" Act is hereby amended by inserting the following provisions in Section 3:

SECTION 3 (F). *SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS* refer to farmers, fisherfolk, agrarian reform beneficiaries, and other food producers engaged in primary production with total assets not exceeding Three Million Pesos (PHP 3,000,000.00), and those registered under the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) or the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' (BFAR) Fish R.

SEC. 3. Republic Act No. 11037, otherwise known as the "Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino" Act is hereby amended by inserting the following provisions after Section 7:

SECTION 8. PROCUREMENT OF PRODUCE FROM SMALL SCALE PRODUCERS - THE GOVERNMENT IS, HEREBY, MANDATED TO ENSURE THAT 30% OR MORE OF THE SUPPLIES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM ARE PROCURED FROM SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS.

SECTION 9. REGISTRY OF SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS - THE DA SHALL KEEP AND REGULARLY UPDATE A LIST OF SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS. IT SHALL USE THE REGISTRY FOR BASIC SECTORS IN AGRICULTURE (RSBSA), THE REGIONAL FIELD OFFICE (RFO) LIST OF BENEFICIARIES, THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR MUNICIPAL FISHERFOLK REGISTRATION (BFAR FISH R) FOR FISHERFOLK, AND ANY OTHER LIST IT MAY DEEM NECESSARY TO KEEP THE REGISTRY UP TO DATE. FURTHERMORE, THE DA IS REQUIRED TO COORDINATE WITH THE DSWD TO CROSS-MATCH AND COMPARE THE REGISTRY WITH THE DSWD'S NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD TARGETING SYSTEM

FOR POVERTY REDUCTION (NHTS-PR) TO AVOID DUPLICATION AND REDUNDANCY.

SECTION 10. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES WHO ARE SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS - THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM (DAR) SHALL INSTITUTE THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS FOR AGRARIAN REFORM BENEFICIARIES WHO ARE SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS AS CONTAINED IN THEIR LIST OF BENEFICIARIES:

A. TRAINING ON PRODUCTION, HARVESTING, PROCUREMENT PROCESS OF THIS ACT, AND ANY OTHER TOPIC THE DAR SEES FIT;

- B. SUBSIDIZED FARM EQUIPMENT;
- C. FACILITIES FOR STORAGE AND HARVESTING;
- D. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SMALL-SCALE FARMER;
- E. ACCESS TO CROP INSURANCE;
- F. ACCESS TO CREDIT/LOW INTEREST RATES.

SECTION 4. Section 8 of Republic Act No. 11037 is hereby renumbered as Section 11, and all succeeding sections of the same Act are hereby renumbered accordingly.

SECTION 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA and the DAR, in consultation with DSWD, DEPED, the National Nutrition Council (NNC), the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and such other relevant government agencies, non-government organizations, and development partners, shall promulgate their respective rules and regulations for the efficient and effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,