

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6247



Introduced by
REPRESENTATIVE MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING

AN ACT
GRANTING UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PENSION TO SENIOR CITIZENS, AMENDING
FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7432, AS AMENDED, ENTITLED “AN
ACT TO MAXIMIZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF SENIOR CITIZENS TO NATION
BUILDING, GRANT BENEFITS AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine population is steadily aging, with more than 12 million Filipinos who are over 60 years old.¹ Laws have been put in place to ensure that the welfare of our senior citizens will be protected, such as Republic Act No. 10645, providing for mandatory PhilHealth coverage for senior citizens, and Republic Act No. 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, which provides for social pension to indigent senior citizens to augment their daily subsistence and other medical needs.

However, it should be underscored that more than half of the country's senior citizens still receive no pension, whether contributory or social.² The increasing health risks, limited livelihood opportunities and rising costs of services put our senior citizens in the most vulnerable position. This economic vulnerability was further highlighted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when most of them relied on economic support from their families or other informal sources of income. For instance, in a Rapid Needs Assessment conducted by the Coalition of Services of the Elderly in partnership with HelpAge International on May 2020, the assessment of 120 older people revealed that 65% of them have difficulty accessing health services, especially those with disabilities (83%), in their 60s (78%), and those aged 80+ (73%). In addition, 57% of these older people have difficulty accessing food, especially those in their 50s (83%) and those with disabilities (61%). It further reported that 52% have difficulty accessing medicines and there were significant challenges accessing medicines for older people with disabilities (73%).³

¹ Retrieved from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1497408/ph-senior-citizens-in-a-time-of-pandemic>

² Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE)

³ Retrieved from: https://cose.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COVID-19-RNA_COSE_Philippines.pdf

With rising fuel prices and inflation uptick, it is expected that these numbers will substantially increase, adding more burden and further depleting the already scarce financial resources of senior citizens.

This bill seeks to address these concerns by increasing the monthly social pension of senior citizens from P500.00 to P1,000.00, regardless of their economic status and social security. The Department of Social Welfare and Development, in consultation with the Department of Budget and Management and other stakeholders, shall review and, if necessary, adjust the amount of monthly social pension every two (2) years after the full implementation of this Act, taking into account the various needs of senior citizens and relevant economic indicators, as reported and published by pertinent government agencies and authorities. Furthermore, the implementation, distribution and management of the universal social pension shall be transferred from the DSWD to the National Commission of Senior Citizens (NSCS) within three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act.

This is in response to the clamor that regardless of one's social standing, old age certainly makes one inherently vulnerable and marginalized as a result of deteriorating physical and mental health, thereby restricting their ability to earn a living and to take care of themselves. Likewise, while some older people currently receive pension from other social security programs, the same is still not sufficient since the amount of pension is dependent on the contributions made by the pensioner. This holds true for pensioners who were low-income and minimum wage earners when they retired from employment. Through this increased social pension, all senior citizens in their twilight years will be insured of financial support from the State.

This bill was approved on Third and Final Reading during the 19th Congress. In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING
1st District of Nueva Ecija

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

SECTION 1. Section 2 of Republic Act No. 7432, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 2. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, these terms are defined as follows:

“(a) x x x

x x x

“(i) *Pension Provider* refers to any government office or agency, or any private entity which provides pensions to entitled recipients on the basis of contributions, gratuity, or as mandated by any governing law or issuance, including the Social Security System (SSS), the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), and the Pension and Gratuity Management Center (PGMC), **AMONG OTHERS**; and

“(j) *UNIVERSAL Social Pension* refers to [the] **A NON-CONTRIBUTORY MONTHLY** monetary grant from the government to support the daily subsistence and medical needs of senior citizens [which shall not be less than One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) per month]”.

SEC. 2. Section 5(h)(1) of Republic Act No. 7432, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 5. *Government Assistance.* – The government shall provide the following:

“(a) x x x

x x x

“(h) Additional Government Assistance

“(1) [Mandatory] **UNIVERSAL Social Pension**

(A) Indigent senior citizens shall be entitled to a monthly stipend amounting to [not less than] **AT LEAST** One thousand pesos (P1,000.00) to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs [of senior citizens].

(B) SENIOR CITIZENS WHO ARE PREVIOUSLY NOT CONSIDERED AS INDIGENTS SHALL BE ENTITLED TO A MONTHLY STIPEND AMOUNTING TO AT LEAST FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P500.00) UPON THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT: PROVIDED, THAT WITHIN FIVE (5) YEARS ALL SENIOR CITIZENS SHALL BE ENTITLED TO A UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PENSION EQUIVALENT TO A MONTHLY STIPEND OF AT LEAST ONE THOUSAND PESOS (P1,000.00) REGARDLESS OF ANY OTHER PENSION BENEFITS THEY MAY RECEIVE FROM OTHER PENSION PROVIDERS: PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT ANY SENIOR CITIZEN MAY WAIVE THIS UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PENSION.

[The DSWD shall, subject to the approval of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), in consultation with other stakeholders, review and, when necessary, adjust the amount of the social pension every two (2) years after the effectivity of this Act, taking into account the present consumer price index as published by the PSA and relevant economic indicators, as reported and published by pertinent government agencies and authorities.] **“THE DSWD SHALL, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT (DBM), AS WELL AS OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, REVIEW AND IF NECESSARY, ADJUST THE AMOUNT OF UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PENSION EVERY TWO (2) YEARS AFTER THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE VARIOUS NEEDS OF SENIOR CITIZENS AND RELEVANT ECONOMIC INDICATORS, AS REPORTED AND PUBLISHED BY PERTINENT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND AUTHORITIES: PROVIDED, THAT THE SOCIAL PENSION SHALL NOT BE LESS THAN THE AMOUNT INITIALLY SPECIFIED IN THIS ACT. THE IMPLEMENTATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIAL PENSION SHALL BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE DSWD TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION OF SENIOR CITIZENS (NCSC) WITHIN A PERIOD NOT EXCEEDING THREE (3) YEARS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT.**

“x x x.”

SEC. 3. Appropriations. – The universal social pension for senior citizens shall be added to the regular appropriations of the DSWD in the general appropriations act, and thereafter, to the National Commission of Senior Citizens, upon full transfer of the implementation, distribution, and management of the social pension.

SEC. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the National Commission of Senior Citizens shall formulate and adopt amendments to the existing rules and regulations implementing Republic Act No. 11916 to carry out the objectives of this Act, in consultation with other relevant agencies and stakeholders.

SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 6. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 7432, as amended by Republic Act Nos. 9257 and 9994, otherwise known as the “Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010”, and Republic Act No. 11916 are hereby amended. All other laws, ordinances, orders, rules, regulations and other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,