

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



HOUSE BILL NO. 6671

Introduced by Honorable Celso G. Regencia

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) established under Republic Act (RA) No. 11037 has shown consistent gains¹ in improving the nutritional status and school participation of undernourished kindergarten and elementary learners. Annual implementation reports indicate that beneficiaries regularly demonstrate improved weight-for-age and height-for-age outcomes after completing the required feeding cycle,² confirming the value of a well-targeted school nutrition intervention.

Despite these improvements at the early-grade levels, national nutrition data continue to point to a persistent burden of undernutrition among Filipino adolescents.³ The Expanded National Nutrition Survey shows significant levels of stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiencies among learners in secondary schools, particularly those coming from low-income households and geographically disadvantaged areas. These nutrition gaps, occurring during another period of rapid physical and cognitive development, directly influence academic performance, classroom engagement and long-term human capital outcomes.

¹ Department of Education. (2021, February 20). *DepEd's School-Based Feeding Program records 3.5 million student beneficiaries for SY 2020-2021*. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2021/02/20/depeds-school-based-feeding-program-records-3-5-million-student-beneficiaries-for-sy-2020-2021/>

² Florungco, J. K. E. (2019). *An evaluation of the School-Based Feeding Program (SBFP) in selected schools in the City of Malabon* [Master's thesis, Our Lady of Fatima University]. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386275031_AN_EVALUATION_OF_THE_SCHOOL-BASED_FEEDING_PROGRAM_SBFP_IN_SELECTED_SCHOOLS_IN_THE_CITY_OF_MALABON_CERTIFICATE_OF_ORIGINALLITY

³ Van, V. T. S., Siguin, C. P., Lacsina, A. C., Yao, L. F., Sales, Z. G., Gordoncillo, N. P., Advincula-Lopez, L., Sescon, J. T., & Miro, E. D. P. (2022, December 21). *A community-led central kitchen model for school feeding programs in the Philippines: Learnings for multisectoral action for health*. *Global Health: Science and Practice*, 10(6), e2100391. <https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-21-00391>

This bill proposes to expand the coverage of the SBFP to include undernourished learners in public secondary schools, from Grade 7 to Grade 12. The measure does not alter the structure or intent of RA 11037. Instead, it extends the same targeting rules, feeding modalities and institutional safeguards of the existing law to an age group that remains nutritionally at risk. Under the proposed amendments, the expansion continues to rely on established Department of Education (DepEd) and Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) nutrition assessment protocols and preserves the program's targeted approach, ensuring that resources remain focused on learners who need the intervention most.

The bill likewise reinforces inter-agency coordination by directing DepEd, the National Nutrition Council, the Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture and local government units to incorporate adolescent nutrition standards, monitoring indicators and reporting systems into the implementing rules and regulations. This ensures program coherence, accountability and alignment with the operational design of RA 11037.

By building on the evidence base and institutional mechanisms already in place, this measure provides a practical and fiscally responsible extension of the national feeding program to secondary learners who stand to benefit from improved nutrition and strengthened support for learning.

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



CELSO GOMERA REGENCIA
Lone District, Iligan City

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Introduced by Honorable Celso G. Regencia

**AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11037, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
“MASUSTANSYANG PAGKAIN PARA SA BATANG PILIPINO ACT,”
BY EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF THE SCHOOL-BASED FEEDING
PROGRAM TO INCLUDE UNDERNOURISHED LEARNERS IN
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “**Healthy Learners Act.**”

SECTION 2. *Amendment to Section 4(b) of Republic Act (RA) No. 11037.*
— Section 4(b) of RA No. 11037, otherwise known as the “*Masustansyang Pagkain para sa Batang Pilipino Act,*” is hereby amended to read as follows:

“(B) SCHOOL-BASED FEEDING PROGRAM (SBFP) – A PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES AT LEAST ONE (1) FORTIFIED MEAL TO UNDERNOURISHED LEARNERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FROM KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12, FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (120) FEEDING DAYS IN A SCHOOL YEAR. THE PROGRAM SHALL PRIORITIZE WASTED, SEVERELY WASTED, STUNTED, AND NUTRITIONALLY AT-RISK LEARNERS AS DETERMINED THROUGH THE NUTRITION ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED) AND THE FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH INSTITUTE (FNRI).

THE SBFP SHALL RETAIN THE MILK COMPONENT AND OTHER NUTRITION-BASED INTERVENTIONS AS PROVIDED UNDER THIS ACT AND SHALL CONTINUE TO SOURCE RAW MATERIALS LOCALLY WHENEVER PRACTICABLE. THE DEPED SHALL IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM IN COORDINATION WITH THE NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL, THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH), THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (DA), THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DILG), AND CONCERNED LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs)."

SECTION 3. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* — The DepEd shall develop adolescent-specific nutrition indicators, monitoring mechanisms, and reporting protocols for the expanded coverage of the SBFP.

An annual implementation report shall be submitted to Congress within sixty (60) days after the close of each school year.

SECTION 4. *Transition.* — In implementing the expanded SBFP, the DepEd shall identify capacity and facility gaps in secondary schools and may adopt appropriate delivery arrangements, including central kitchen models, partnerships with LGUs, or other modes consistent with existing laws and regulations.

SECTION 5. *Updating of the Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — The DepEd, in coordination with the National Nutrition Council, the FNRI, the DOH, the DA, the DILG, and concerned LGUs, shall update the implementing rules and regulations of RA No. 11037 to reflect the expanded coverage of the SBFP within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* — Should any provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances 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,