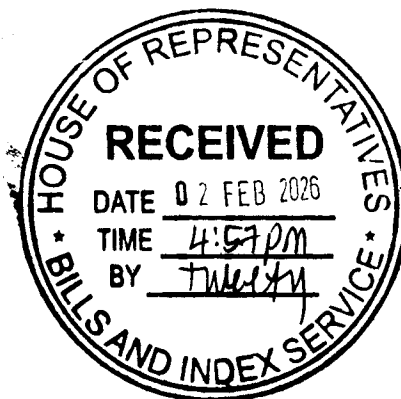




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7566



Introduced by Representative ROGER GAVIOLA MERCADO

AN ACT
CREATING THE NATIONAL FILIPINO FAMILY COMMISSION OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Filipino family is constitutionally recognized as the foundation of the nation. Article XV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution expressly mandates the State to strengthen the solidarity of the family and actively promote its total development, recognizing its indispensable role in social stability, human development, and nation-building.

Despite this clear constitutional policy, recent social indicators reveal that the Filipino family is experiencing increasing strain. Reports indicate a significant rise in online sexual abuse of children, including cases involving parents or parental figures as perpetrators.¹ Official statistics likewise show persistently high numbers of children born out of wedlock, a growing population of solo parents, predominantly women, and a steady decline in marriage rates despite population growth.²

At the same time, the country is experiencing a marked decline in its total fertility rate, reflecting both local and global trends that experts have warned may lead to long-term demographic, economic, and social challenges if left unaddressed. These developments collectively signal weakening family cohesion and diminishing parental support structures, particularly for children.

¹ <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/943495/online-sexual-abuse-of-children-increased-to-2-7m-report/story/>

² <https://www.bworldonline.com/opinion/2022/11/17/487884/a-nation-of-illegitimate-children/> and <https://psa.gov.ph/content/registered-live-births-philippines-2023>

Extensive empirical research, both local and international, consistently demonstrates that children raised by both biological parents in stable, low-conflict marriages tend to fare better across a wide range of outcomes, including physical and mental health, educational attainment, economic security, and socio-emotional development. Conversely, family instability, parental absence, and fragmented caregiving arrangements are associated with higher risks of abuse, neglect, emotional distress, early sexual activity, and adverse outcomes extending into adulthood.

While it is acknowledged that abuse and dysfunction may occur even within intact families, available data shows that such risks increase significantly when one or both biological parents are absent or when family structures are unstable. These realities underscore the importance of proactive State policies that strengthen families before breakdown occurs, rather than focusing solely on remedial or reactive interventions.

Existing laws already reflect this policy direction. Republic Act No. 11908, or the *Parent Effectiveness Service Program Act*, affirms the importance of educating and empowering families by emphasizing their roles, responsibilities, strengths, and functions within the community. Marriage, as an inviolable social institution, is likewise recognized under the Constitution as the foundation of the family and entitled to special protection by the State.

Consistent with these constitutional and statutory mandates, government programs, public communications, and policy initiatives must be aligned toward promoting family solidarity, responsible parenthood, marital stability, and the active involvement of both parents in the upbringing of children. While the State must address family-related social problems with compassion and evidence-based interventions, public policy should avoid normalizing family fragmentation or perpetually emphasizing dysfunction at the expense of promoting healing, restoration, and aspirational family ideals.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize a policy framework that prioritizes the strengthening, healing, and total development of the Filipino family. By doing so, it reaffirms the State's constitutional duty to protect not only individual family members, particularly women and children, but also the family as a vital pillar of Philippine society for a sustainable national development.

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



ROGER GAVIOLA MERCADO
First District, Southern Leyte



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

Section 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Filipino Family Commission Act."

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State recognizes the sanctity of family life. It shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution equally protecting the life of the mother and the unborn from conception. The State supports the primary role of parents in raising children, strengthening the family for civic efficiency and development of moral character.

The State shall strengthen the family's solidarity and actively promote its total development by protecting marriage and defending the right of parents to found a family in accordance with their religious convictions and the demands of responsible parenthood, right of children to be protected from conditions prejudicial to their development, a family living wage and income, rights of families and family associations to participate in the planning and implementation of policies and programs that affect them. The options provided or expressed in writing by the parents or guardians, religion shall be allowed to be taught to children or wards in public primary and

secondary schools by instructors designated or approved by the religious authorities to which the children or wards belong. The family has the duty to care for its elderly members though the State may also do so through social security programs.

The State protects religious freedom, practices neutrality, provides reasonable allowance for sincere beliefs maintaining balance for religious freedom and consistent with public order and compelling state interests.

Sec. 3. Creation of the Filipino Family Commission. – There is hereby created a Filipino Family Commission (FFC) which shall serve as the primary policy formulation and data collation agency geared towards fulfilling the constitutional mandate to strengthen and protect the family as a basic social unit of the Philippine society and attached to the Office of the President. The FFC shall serve as the secretariat of the herein organized National Coordinating Council for the Filipino Family (NCCFF) which shall replace the National Committee on the Filipino Family (NCCFF) created under Executive Order No. 241 as amended by Executive Order No. 238.

Sec. 4. Officers of the FFC. – The FFC shall be headed by a Commissioner and assisted by four (4) Assistant Commissioners. The Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners must be members in good standing of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines for at least five (5) years, must have track record of at least five (5) years advocating or working for the fulfillment of the constitutional mandates for the family and no record of any act or omission against the said constitutional mandates as provided under the declared policy of this Act in the last five (5) years.

They shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines for a one-time term of six (6) years with no re-appointment. A replacement term shall be served until the end of the replaced term of office only with no extension.

Sec. 5. Powers and Functions of the FFC. – The FFC, in collaboration with the members of the herein organized NCCFF, shall perform the powers and functions, as follows:

- a) Establish a national database of information on family matters, problems and implemented solutions and even those patterned from other jurisdictions;

- b) Formulate policies and programs on strengthening family ties and resolution of common family problems;
- c) Formulate and institute family programs that develop and strengthen the interrelationship of family members with each other and with other members of the community, with emphasis on how to face the challenges of the modern millennium, including the promotion of parental rights and duties in consideration of the rights and responsibilities of children according to Presidential Decree 603 or the "Child and Youth Welfare Code";
- d) Draw up mechanisms between and among the various national department and local government units (LGUs), and the private sector particularly civic and religious, marriage and family organizations, educational institutions and media groups for the mobilization, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of effective family life programs, including task forces, for the effective implementation of policies on family life and of this Act;
- e) Coordinate with educational institutions and the government for the promotion of pro-family content in curriculum and materials that would encourage life skills for the improvement of family relations and handling of family problems;
- f) Encourage opportunities for trainings on human relations development among groups and individual engaged in family life programs;
- g) Set up and administer a national family development fund for its programs and projects, while encouraging public-private partnerships to carry out the policies of this Act;
- h) Plan, coordinate and evaluate the various yearly family celebrations to include the National Family Week officially celebrated on every first week of September, the National Family Thanksgiving Day on every first Sunday of September, the international Mother's Day commonly recognized and celebrated nationwide on every

second Sunday of May, the Father's Day on every third Sunday of June, the National Grandparents Day on every second Sunday of September, and the International Year of the Family celebrated after every ten (10) years since 1994, and such other future declaration of celebration for the family;

- i) Examine and review national and local appropriations for the strengthening of the family and marriage as mandated under the Constitution;
- j) Ensure the celebration of Family Week in collaboration with government agencies concerned with family welfare, LGUs, schools, churches, and civil society through family-oriented programs, parenting seminars, values formation activities;
- k) Institutionalize Family Thanksgiving Day and declare a specific date within Family Week to express gratitude for family life, blessings and resilience of everyone, to strengthen parent-child and intergenerational relationships, and to promote positive family narratives amid social and economic challenges through dedicating a day for family reunion, interfaith thanksgiving activities, and recognition of exemplary Filipino families with the active participation of the national government agencies, LGUs, faith-based and civic organizations;
- l) Network with concerned government agencies and non-government organizations in the effective discharge of their functions and regularly, render reports of compliance based on their respective constitutional mandate of strengthening the family and marriage;
- m) Set-up and administer a national family development fund for its programs and projects, while encouraging public-private partnerships to carry-out the policy of this Act;
- n) Draw up mechanisms between and among the various national department, LGUs, private sectors particularly civic and religious, marriage and family organizations, educational institutions and media groups and task forces for the mobilization,

coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of effective family life programs and policies;
and

- o) Perform such other powers and functions as necessary to carry-out the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 6. Composition of the National Coordinating Council on the Filipino Family (NCCFF). - The NCCFF is hereby organized to formulate policies and guidelines to assist the FFC in carrying out its powers and functions under this Act. The NCCFF shall be composed of the following:

- a) Chairperson of the FFC – Chairperson;

Vice-Chairpersons:

- b) Undersecretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
- c) Undersecretary of the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DepDEV);

Members:

- d) Undersecretary of the Department of Justice (DOJ);
- e) Undersecretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
- f) Undersecretary of the Department of Health (DOH);
- g) Undersecretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- h) Undersecretary of the Department of Education (DepEd);
- i) Commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- j) National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA);
- k) Commissioner of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP);
- l) Executive Director of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW);
- m) Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of the National Youth Commission (NYC);
- n) Executive Director of the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC);
- o) Executive Director of the Office of the Muslim Affairs (OMA);

- p) Deputy Presidential Advisers of the Office of Presidential Adviser for Special Concerns (OPASC);
- q) Senate Committee on Youth, Women and Family;
- r) House of Representatives Committee on Population and Family Relations;
- s) One (1) representative each from a recognized parent organization, a faith-based association, and other non-governmental organizations identified by the FFC.

Sec. 7. Secretariat. – There is hereby created a secretariat composed of eight (8) personnel to be headed by the Commissioner of the FFC to assist the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners of the FFC and the officers of the NCCFF in the discharge of their functions.

Sec. 8. Family Development Fund. – A Family Development Fund shall be established, together with the help of individuals or organizations in the private sector with the corresponding tax or other incentives, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act to improve and strengthen the families. Any partnership with or contribution from the private sector would be deemed as included in the operation of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Code of the Philippines as provided under Republic Act No. 11966, as well as other related laws that allow tax or other incentives.

Sec. 9. Availability of Judicial Remedies. - Judicial remedies including injunction, restraining orders, certiorari, prohibition, mandamus, and quo warranto are available to any parent, parent organization, family association, taxpayer, or any person who has advocated or worked for the realization of constitutional mandates for the family to ensure the faithful compliance of this Act.

Sec. 10. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged from the current year's appropriation of the DSWD. Thereafter, such fund as may be necessary for the continuous implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commissioner of the FFC as Chairperson of the NCCFF, in collaboration with the

Vice-Chairpersons and members of the NCCFF, shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Sec. 12. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 13. Repealing Clause. – Any law, presidential decrees or issuance, executive orders, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec. 14. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,