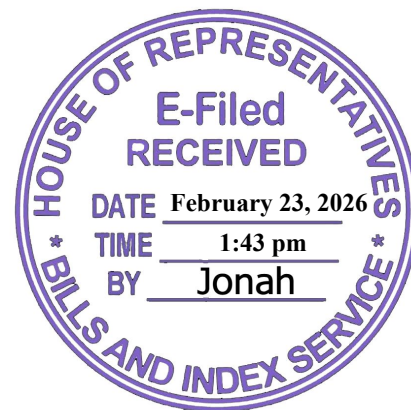




Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7940



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**Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre**

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**AN ACT**  
**EXPANDING THE NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11037 OR THE "MASUSTANSYANG PAGKAIN PARA SA BATANG PILIPINO ACT"**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Republic Act No. 11037 otherwise known as the “*Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act*” institutionalized the National Feeding Program to address the double burden of malnutrition among Filipino children. However, the present legal landscape limits this supplemental feeding to learners from Kindergarten to Grade 6. This leaves learners of junior and senior high school, particularly those from low-income households, no other sources of sustained nutritional assistance to attain full development.

According to Food and Nutrition Research Institute of Department of Science and Technology, adolescents demand highest recommended nutrients requirements due to rapid growth spurts, reproduction-related changes and cognitive development<sup>1</sup>. In education, persistent risk of lower academic performance, absenteeism and dropping out were seen associated with malnutrition aggravated by

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<sup>1</sup> National Nutrition Council. *FNRI issues Pinggang Pinoy to guide teens to eat healthy*. Retrieved from <https://nnc.gov.ph/luzon-region/fnri-issues-pinggang-pinoy-to-guide-teens-to-eat-healthy/>

poverty and food insecurity<sup>2</sup>. Eradicating stunting is critical as it not merely impacts health but also transcend economic productivity. Evidence shows that stunting perpetuate patterns of impaired cognitive ability which deteriorate academic performance<sup>3</sup> which subsequently increase vulnerability to low wage and reduced overall human capital productivity<sup>4</sup>.

At the macro level, the Philippines ranked 67th out of 113 countries in the 2022 Global Food Security Index<sup>5</sup>. This indicates country's relatively low food security performance, in terms of affordability, availability, quality and safety, and sustainability and adaption, compared to other Asia-Pacific economies. A United Nations report further reveals that about 51 million Filipinos experienced moderate or severe food insecurity from 2021 to 2023 — among the worst in Southeast Asia<sup>6</sup>. Subsequently, a study of Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) reported high cost of nutritious foods results in low consumption of fruits and vegetables among Filipino households. Worst dietary quality was observed among poorer household which led to malnutrition<sup>7</sup>.

Thus, this bill seeks to amend RA No. 11037 or the “*Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act*” by expanding the coverage of the country-wide feeding program to include Grade 7 to Senior High School learners. The rationale on this amendment is to improve Filipino learners' nutritional status, social protection system and facilitate their full potential from early childhood to adulthood. Likewise, it aims to strengthen the nation's nutritional intervention framework through a more comprehensive, sustainable and responsive program to combat poverty-related malnutrition.

This also grounded in 1987 Constitution Article XIII, Section 11 which obligates the state to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development, ensure access to essential goods and social services at affordable cost, and prioritize the needs of the underprivileged, including children. In like manner,

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<sup>2</sup> Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2017). Poverty, hunger are major causes of school dropouts in PH. <https://pids.gov.ph/details/poverty-hunger-are-major-causes-of-school-dropouts-in-ph-pids-study>

<sup>3</sup> Nikalansooriya, A., Waidyarathna, G. R. N. N., Kaththiriarachchi, L. S., & Chandrasekara, A. (2025). Role of Nutrition in Cognitive Development and Academic Performance During Adolescence: A Comprehensive Review. *Cureus*, 17(11), e96189. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.96189>

<sup>4</sup> Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2017). Preventing childhood stunting: Why and how?. <https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pidspn1716.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Economist Impact (2022). Global Food Security Index 2022. <https://impact.economist.com/sustainability/project/food-security-index/>

<sup>6</sup> Inquirer. Net (2024). UN says 51 million Filipinos ‘food insecure’. <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/243718/un-51m-filipinos-food-insecure>

<sup>7</sup> Philippine Institute for Development Studies (2022). Is Food Supply Accessible, Affordable, and Stable? The State of Food Security in the Philippines. <https://doi.org/10.62986/dp2022.21>

this amendment will align our legal landscape to international standard and commitment such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SGD 4(Quality Education), and Convention on the Rights of the Child to safeguard children's rights to health, adequate food and education.

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



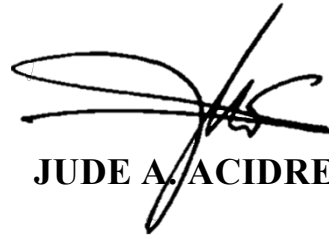
**FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ**



**YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ**



**ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ**



**JUDE A. ACIDRE**



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**EXPANDING THE NATIONAL FEEDING PROGRAM IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11037 OR 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.** Section 4 (b) Republic Act No. 11037 otherwise known as the "*Masustansyang Pagkain Para sa Batang Pilipino Act*" is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SECTION. 4 (b). School-Based Feeding Program. - The DepEd shall implement a school-based feeding program for

undernourished public school [children] **LEARNERS** from kindergarten to grade [six (6)] **TWELVE (12)**: Provided, That the Program shall include the provision of at least one (1) fortified meal to all undernourished public **KINDERGARTEN**, elementary, **JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, AND SENIOR HIGH** school [children] **LEARNERS** for a period of not less than one hundred twenty (120) days in a year;

**SEC. 2. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Health, National Nutrition Council, the Department of Science and Technology thru Food and Nutrition Research Institute, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and concerned Local Government Units, and 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.

**SEC. 3. Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SEC. 4. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

**SEC. 5. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,