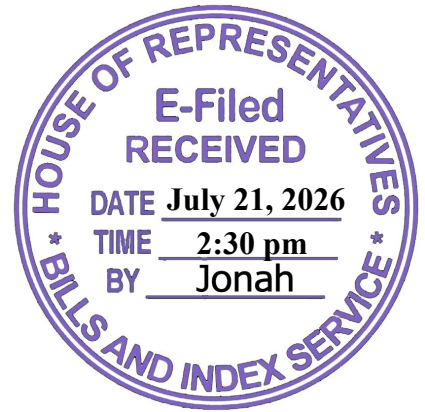


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10158



INTRODUCED BY REP. PATRICK MICHAEL "PM" D. VARGAS

AN ACT
PROVIDING A FREE CHILDCARE CENTER IN BARANGAY SAN
AGUSTIN, QUEZON CITY, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State recognizes its constitutional duty to defend and strengthen the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

As such, the government enacted into law the Republic Act 6972, otherwise known as the Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act, as well as signed the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990.

While these laws support the welfare of children, there is currently a gap in existing legislation that needs to be filled as regards the well-being of the parents of infants and toddlers who are struggling to find a balance between caring for their children while pursuing their respective careers.

It has been the primary goal of existing barangay daycare centers to prepare the children for formal schooling. With said primary goal in mind, existing barangay daycare centers have since only accommodated children between the ages of three years and four years and eleven months, despite being intended for all children below the age of five.

As a result of placing a minimum age to avail of the services of the designated barangay daycare centers, the parents of children below the age of three are forced to request help from their family members or hire domestic helpers to care for their child, while those who are not as fortunate are forced to stay at home and neglect their careers.

Recent World Bank and International Labor Organization estimates show that female labor force participation in the country remains at around 49% as of 2024-2025, reflecting minimal improvement over the past decades. Despite gains in education, a persistent gender gap of over 20 percentage points compared to men continues to characterize the Philippine labor market.

A large proportion of women are held back from gainful employment opportunities due to responsibilities to their respective families, more particularly, the caring of their children between the time they are born until two years of age¹. For women who cannot afford the cost of early childhood care, the most convenient option is to forego any economic opportunities to care for their infants and toddlers.

As the disparity in women's participation in the labor sector has been a constant hurdle in the State's goal of achieving gender equality, the present bill seeks to address this gap by providing a free childcare center to women and parents or guardians who are solo-parents, indigent, temporarily displaced, and/or are looking for job opportunities in Brgy. San Agustin, Quezon City. By establishing such infrastructure, infants and toddlers are given the care they are entitled to while giving their parents a fair chance to advance their respective careers.

It is the hope of this bill that the Philippines will eventually close the gender disparities in the country by providing full support to childcaring services. It is the intention of this bill to afford safe and nurturing spaces for infants and toddlers in our District, while giving the parents peace of mind as they work for a brighter future for their children.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is urgently sought.



REP. PATRICK MICHAEL "PM" D. VARGAS
Fifth District, Quezon City

¹ Investing in Women. Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation in the Philippines

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Barangay San Agustin Childcare Center Act*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to recognize the sanctity of family life and to protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution.

Further, under Article XV Section 3 (2) of the Constitution, the State is responsible for defending the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

SECTION 3. *Establishing a Free Childcare Center in Barangay San Agustin, Quezon City.* – There is hereby established a free childcare center (hereinafter “Center”) in Barangay San Agustin, Quezon City, for all qualified parents and/or legal guardians with children below three (3) years old, who are not yet fit for daycare centers. The Center may be established in the barangay hall or a separate facility equipped with basic facilities and shall be manned by trained and equipped personnel from the local government unit.

Provided, That the Center shall be under the control and supervision of the local government, which shall likewise ensure a sustainable program for the children, the administrative personnel, and the Center. The LGU may call upon private volunteers, who are responsible members of the community, and utilize them to assist in the care of children and provide consultative services for medical, educational, and other needs of the children;

Provided further that the LGU personnel and private volunteers undergo or have undergone the selection process and obtain all qualifications which have been set by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SECTION 4. *Free Childcare Services.* – The Free Childcare Services shall ensure that:

- 1) Parents and/or legal guardians who are indigent, solo-parents, or temporarily unemployed shall be afforded safe, adequate, and proper childcare for their children while they are at work or looking for work;
- 2) Children below three years old of qualified working parents and/or legal guardians are entitled to the following:
 - a. Enhancement of the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language development;
 - b. Proper and adequate feeding and sustenance;
 - c. Safe and secure space fit for childcare and development;

SECTION 5. *Functions of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.* – The Department shall formulate the criteria for the selection and qualification of:

- a. the childcare workers employed by the LGU and the private volunteers called upon by the LGU; and
- b. parents who may avail of the services of the childcare facility

Further, the Department shall formulate the minimum standards for childcare services and facilities to be implemented by the LGU;

Finally, to safeguard the proper implementation of the program, the DSWD shall conduct regular monitoring and set up a feedback mechanism for the program.

SECTION 6. *Funding.* – The funds for the establishment of the childcare center shall be appropriated from the national budget and shall be included in the General Appropriations Act as part of the budget of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The maintenance of the Center established shall be the responsibility and shall be charged to the barangay. The LGUs concerned, in consultation with the DSWD, shall set aside from any available local revenue an amount deemed appropriate as an annual counterpart fund to support the maintenance and operation of the Center herein established.

SECTION 7. *Non-Impairment Clause.* – Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or made available to disadvantaged, marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* If any provision or section of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions and sections not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, or issuances or any part thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,