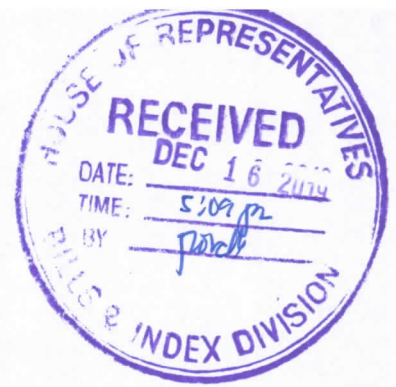


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

5826

House Bill No. _____

**INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS**

**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A REFUGE AND ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR YOUNG
PREGNANT WOMEN IN EVERY PROVINCE, CITY, AND MUNICIPALITY
OF THE PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the Philippines, there are around 290 births per hour, 24 of which are born to teenage mothers. This comprises the 200,000 Filipino teens who get pregnant annually, and this has been considered by the Population Commission as a national emergency that requires immediate action. In fact, according to a study by the United Nations Population Fund, the Philippines is the only country in Southeast Asia whose teenage pregnancy rates have continued to rise over the past decades.

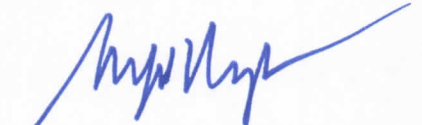
Meanwhile, the Philippine Statistics Authority's Annual Poverty Indicators Survey shows that youth pregnancy is one of the main reasons for school dropouts, which have reached a total of 2.97 million in 2013 and 62 percent of whom are 16 to 24 years old. The same survey indicates that rural communities are particularly affected, with 30 percent more teenage mothers.

Conceiving at a young age poses critical health risks to both the mother and her unborn child. Misinformation and lack of guidance lead to inadequate nutrition, complications, premature birth, and fetal and maternal deaths.

This Bill seeks to establish a Refuge and Assistance Center for Young Pregnant Women in every city, municipality, and province of the country, which will ensure the protection of young mothers' holistic welfare for them to be productive contributors to the country's development.

Under this proposed measure, medical assistance, guidance and counseling, and livelihood generation will be provided to expecting young mothers.

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



ALFRED VARGAS

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

SEC. 1. Short Title. - This act shall be known as the "Young Women's Refuge and Assistance Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to value the dignity of young women and recognize their fundamental role in nation-building. Towards this end, the State shall protect and promote the physical, moral, and social well-being of young women by providing them with the facilities and opportunities that will enhance their welfare and assist them in their endeavors with a goal to help them realize their full potential in the service of the nation.

SEC. 3. Establishment of Refuge and Assistance Centers. - There shall be established a Refuge and Assistance Centers for Young Pregnant Women (hereinafter referred to as the "Centers") in every province, city,, and municipality all over the country.

SEC. 4. Beneficiaries. - The beneficiaries of this law shall include all young women who are twenty-one (21) years of age and below who are pregnant or suffered a miscarriage, and their children.

SEC. 5. Refuge and Assistance Center. - The Center shall be under the management and supervision of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in coordination and assistance with the Department of Health (DOH). The Center shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

The Director of the Center shall hold a Master's or Doctorate degree in Social Work or Community Development or similar courses and shall have a minimum experience of five (5) years in counselling, social and psychological services, and other related field or experience.

Each Center shall have the following personnel: (a) at least doctor or midwife, and (b) such other personnel necessary to provide assistance to the beneficiaries of this act.

SEC.6 Functions of the Centers. - The Centers shall have the following functions.

(a) To provide temporary shelter and refuge to beneficiaries of this act:

(b) To provide free medical assistance, including monthly pre-natal checkup or such other care for young women to prevent potentials risks from child- bearing. And all other medical services for child birth and delivery, and provide them pre-natal vitamins and medication;

(c) To undertake programs geared towards the development of skills for livelihood generation, social communication, and other related skills which will help women and children to become productive members of society; and

(d) To perform other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SEC 7. Rehabilitation and Development Program. - The DSWD in coordination with the DOH shall, within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, formulate a program for the rehabilitation, development, and protection of young women and children.

SEC.8 Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The DSWD in coordination with the DOH shall, issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations within six (6) months from the approval of this Act.

SEC 9. Funding and Appropriations. – The amount necessary for effective implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the DSWD under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued operation and maintenance of the Centers shall be included in the regular appropriations for the DSWD in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10 Repealing clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof contrary to, or inconsistent with this act, are hereby modified or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 11. Separability clause. – If for any reason, any section or part of this act is held unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12 Effectively clause. – This shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,