

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1291



Introduced by HONORABLE LUIS RAYMUND F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has made great leaps in fulfilling its commitment to the United Nations Millennium Goal of reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. Philippine legislation has helped in this aspect with laws like the "Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Law" in 2000¹ establishing the National Coordinating Council for the Welfare of Children, and the "*Barangay* Level Total Protect of Children Act" in 1990² requiring all Local Government Units to establish day-care centers in all *barangays*. The Department of Health has in turn translated its commitment to the mothers and children with programs such as the "Safe Motherhood Program"³, providing maternal and newborn health services, and "Women's Health and Safe Motherhood Project"⁴ intending to improve the delivery health service access of disadvantaged women.

This country is working in caring for our mothers and their newborns, with Congress strengthening this intent even more through meaningful legislation. The country's child mortality rate has dropped since the 1990's⁵ and a bill is being passed aiming to improve maternal healthcare in the country. The worry, however, is that focus on healthcare is stuck on the first 1,000 days of the child. Government support for its young citizens is imperative, especially during their formative years, in order for them to grow up into fully-equipped adult citizens.

The proposed bill, as a counterpart to Senator Poe's in the Senate, aims to provide mandatory PhilHealth coverage for the "Junior Citizens", or children 0 to 12 years old, and would therefore be automatic members until they reach the age of twelve (12). The bill also allows Junior Citizens" to be entitled to benefits such as a twenty

¹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001472/147225e.pdf>

² <http://www.pcw.gov.ph/law/republic-act-6972>

³ <http://www.doh.gov.ph/national-safe-motherhood-program>

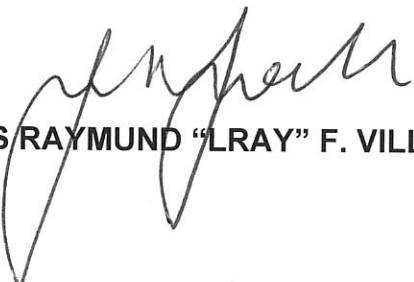
⁴ <http://www.doh.gov.ph/womens-health-and-safe-motherhood-project>

⁵ <http://www.philstar.com/health-and-family/2014/09/18/1370477/report-child-mortality-rate-philippines-dropped-1990>

(20) percent discount and exemption from the value-added tax (VAT) on goods and services, including medical and dental health care services and supplies.

This bill aims to ease the financial burden of the parents as the bill aims to provide these benefits to families whose annual income is below PHP 250,000 is especially important to children from disadvantaged areas, where access to healthcare services is low or limited to private institutions. This benefit given to the Junior Citizens extends to professional fees of physicians in private hospitals and of home health care service providers, as well as funeral and burial services in the unfortunate death of the Junior Citizen. Admission charges to leisure and amusement sites, such as movie houses and concert halls are also taken into consideration in this proposed bill.

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



LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

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Introduced by **HONORABLE LUIS RAYMUND F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.**

AN ACT
GRANTING BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES TO JUNIOR CITIZENS

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 “*Junior Citizens Act of 2017.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policies and Objectives.* – As provided in the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, it is declared the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living and an improved quality of life. In the Declaration of Principles and State Policies in Sections 10 and 11, Article II, it is further declared that the State shall provide social justice in all phases of national development and that the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.

The child is one of the most important assets of the nation. Every effort should be exerted to promote the child's welfare and enhance his/her opportunities for a useful and happy life.

All children shall be entitled to the rights, in addition to all their existing rights, herein set forth without distinction as to legitimacy or illegitimacy, sex, religion, political antecedents, and other factors.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the terms are defined as follows:

- a.) *Junior Citizen* – refers to any citizen of the Philippines aged zero (0) to twelve (12) years;
- b.) *Medical Services* – refers to hospital services, professional services of physicians and other health care professionals and diagnostics and laboratory tests that are necessary for the prevention, diagnosis and/or treatment of an illness or injury;
- c.) *Dental Services* – refer to oral examination, cleaning, permanent and temporary filling, extractions and gum treatment, restoration, replacement or repositioning of teeth, or alteration of the alveolar or periodontium process of the maxilla and the mandible that are necessary for the prevention, diagnosis and/or treatment of an illness or injury;
- d.) *Guardian* – refers to a person who look after and is legally responsible for a junior citizen whose parents have died or are estranged.

SECTION 4. *Privileges for the Junior Citizens.* – For purposes of this Act, only junior citizens whose family's annual income does not exceed Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php250,000.00) shall be entitled to the following:

- a.) The grant of Twenty Percent (20%) discount and exemption from the value – added tax (VAT), if applicable, on the sale of the following goods and services, for the exclusive use and enjoyment or availment of the junior citizen, from all establishments:

- 1.) Purchase of medicines, including the purchase of vaccines, and such other essential medical supplies, accessories and equipment to be determined by the Department of Health (DOH).

The DOH shall establish guidelines among retailers, manufacturers and distributors, taking into consideration their respective margins;

- 2.) Purchase of milk supplements for children aged four (4) to twelve (12) years;
 - 3.) Professional fees of attending physician/s in all private hospitals, medical facilities, outpatient clinics and home health care services;
 - 4.) Professional fees of home health care service providers, as endorsed by private hospitals;
 - 5.) Medical and dental services, diagnostics and laboratory fees in all private hospitals, medical facilities, outpatient clinics, and home health care services, in accordance with the rules and regulations to be issued by the DOH, in coordination with the Philippine Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth);
 - 6.) Admission fees charged by theaters, cinema houses and concert hall, circuses, leisure and amusement; and
 - 7.) Funeral and burial services for the death of junior citizens.
- b.) Free medical and dental services, diagnostics and laboratory fees such as, but not limited to, x-rays, computerized tomography scans and blood tests, in all government facilities, subject to the guidelines to be issued by the DOH in coordination with the PhilHealth;
 - c.) The DOH, through the government hospitals and health centers, shall administer all necessary pediatric vaccinations including but not limited to

anti-influenza virus and pneumococcal disease for junior citizen patients for free;

SECTION 5. *Requirements and Qualifications.* – In order for a junior citizen to be issued the Junior Citizen ID and booklet, the parent/s or guardian/s must present the following documents:

- a.) An original or certified true copy of the child's birth certificate issued by the Philippine Statistics Authority;
- b.) Income Tax Return showing that the family's annual income does not exceed Php 250,000.00.

In order to avail of the aforementioned privileges, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the junior citizen must secure from the barangay or the local government unit a Junior Citizen Identification Card and booklet.

SECTION 6. *Availment of Benefits.* – In the purchase of goods and services which are on promotional discount, the junior citizen can avail of the promotional discount or the discount provided herein, whichever is higher.

SECTION 7. *Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage.* – All junior citizens shall be covered by the national health insurance program of the PhilHealth and shall therefore be automatic PhilHealth members until they reach the age of twelve (12), regardless of the family income.

SECTION 8. *Penalties.* – Any person or establishment who refuses to provide the abovementioned privileges or violates any provision of this Act shall suffer the following penalties:

- a.) For the first violation, a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php50,000.00) but not exceeding One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000.00);

- b.) For any subsequent violation, imprisonment of not less than two (2) years but not more than six (6) years and a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000.00) but not exceeding Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php200,000.00).

If the offender is a corporation, partnership, organization or any similar entity, the officials thereof directly involved such as president, general manager, managing partner, or such other officer charged with the management of the business affairs, shall be liable therefor, if the officer of the said corporation is an alien or a foreigner, he/she shall be deported immediately after service of sentence.

Upon filing of an appropriate complaint, and after due notice and hearing, the proper authorities may also cause the cancellation or revocation of the business permit, permit to operate, franchise and other similar privileges granted to any person, establishment or business entity that fails to abide by the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. *Monitoring and Coordinating.* – A National Coordinating and Monitoring Board shall be established which shall be composed of the following:

- a.) Chairperson – the Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) or an authorized representative;
- b.) Vice Chairperson – The Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) or an authorized representative; and
- c.) Members:
 - 1.) The Secretary of the Department of Justice (DOJ) or an authorized representative;
 - 2.) The Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) or an authorized representative;
 - 3.) The Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) or an authorized representative; and

- 4.) Representatives from the five (5) Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) representing or catering to junior citizens that are duly accredited by the DOH and/or DSWD and have service primarily for junior citizens, such as but not limited to orphanages and the like.

Representatives of NGOs shall serve for a period of three (3) years.

The Board may call on other government agencies and NGOs to serve as resource persons as the need arises. Resource persons have the right to vote in the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall take the lead in formulating the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act, in consultation with the DSWD, DOJ, DILG, DTI, Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Transport DOTr (DOTr), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Education (DepED), the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), and five (5) NGOs for the junior citizens duly accredited by the DSWD.

SECTION 11. *Appropriations.* – The requirements to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in their respective budgets: *Provided*, That the funds to be used for the national health program and for the vaccination of junior citizens in the first year of the DOH and thereafter, as a line item under the DOH budget in the subsequent General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, rules and regulations, or any part thereof, inconsistent herewith are deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional and invalid, such declaration shall not invalidate other parts thereof which shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,