

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session



House Bill No. **4112**

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Introduced by **Honorable CARMELO B. LAZATIN II**

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

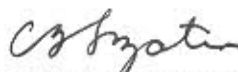
Parenting may be considered as one of the toughest jobs in our society. It affects various aspects of the development of children, including their physical, emotional, psychological, and moral growth. Good parenting may be regarded as the ultimate investment every parent can impart on their children. It is in this light that our Constitution provides under its State Policies that *“the natural and primary right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the support of the Government.”*

Solo parents, who are left alone without any help from their spouse or partner in raising their children, face an even more daunting task. In 2000, Republic Act No. 8972, otherwise known as the “Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000,” was enacted precisely to address the challenges of at least 13.9 million Filipino solo parents at the time. However, the changing times and the increase in the needs of the Filipino family, more so with those that are headed by solo parents who now constitute about 14 to 15 percent of the Filipino population, demand a revisiting of the said law in order to expand the benefits accorded to its ultimate beneficiaries.

This bill provides for additional benefits for solo parents and their children as a way of easing their burden, especially on the financial and economic aspects of supporting a family. These benefits come in various forms, including discounts on vital commodities, educational benefits and scholarships, parental leave with pay, medical benefits including provision of PhilHealth membership for solo parents who are living below the poverty line, and housing benefits. This bill likewise reduces the waiting period for which a person can qualify as a solo

parent from one (1) year to six (6) months, so as to enable them to avail of the benefits due them at the earliest opportunity possible.

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

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. B. Lazatin II', with a stylized, cursive script.

CARMELO B. LAZATIN II

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**AN ACT**  
**GRANTING ADDITIONAL BENEFITS TO SOLO PARENTS, REPEALING FOR THE**  
**PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8972, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “SOLO**  
**PARENTS WELFARE ACT OF 2000”**

SECTION 1. *Title.*—This Act shall be known as the “*Revised Solo Parents Welfare Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*— It is the policy of the State to promote the family as the foundation of the nation, strengthen its solidarity and ensure its total development. Towards this end, it shall develop a comprehensive program of services for solo parents and their children to be carried out by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the National Housing Authority (NHA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and other related government and nongovernment agencies.

SEC.3. *Definition of Terms* – Whenever used in this Act, the following terms shall mean as follows:

(a) “Solo parent” – any individual who falls under any of the following categories:

- (1) A woman who gives birth as a result of rape and other crimes against chastity even without a final conviction of the offender: *Provided*, That the mother keeps the child and bears the sole and lone parenting responsibility;

- (2) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to death of a spouse;
- (3) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood while the spouse is detained or is serving sentence for a criminal conviction for at least six (6) months;
- (4) Parent left solo or alone with the sole responsibility of parenthood due to physical and/or mental incapacity of spouse as certified by a public medical practitioner;
- (5) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to legal separation or *de facto* separation from spouse for at least six (6) months, as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the children;
- (6) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to declaration of nullity or annulment of marriage as decreed by a court or by a church as long as he/she is entrusted with the custody of the child/children;
- (7) Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood due to abandonment of spouse for at least six (6) months;
- (8) Unmarried mother/father who has preferred to keep and rear her/his child/children instead of having others care for them or give them up to a welfare institution;
- (9) Any legal guardian, adoptive or foster parent who solely provides parental care and support to a child or children; and
- (10) Any family member who assumes the responsibility of head of family as a result of the death, abandonment, disappearance or prolonged absence of the parents or solo parent.

A change in the status or circumstance of the parent claiming benefits under this Act, such that he/she is no longer left alone with the responsibility of parenthood, shall terminate his/her eligibility for these benefits.

(b) "Children" – refer to those living with and dependent upon the solo parent for support who are unmarried, unemployed and not more than eighteen (18) years of age, or even over eighteen (18) years but are incapable of self-support because of mental and/or physical defect/disability;

(c) "Parental responsibility" – with respect to their minor children shall refer to the rights and duties of the parents as defined in Article 220 of Executive Order No. 209, as amended, otherwise known as the "Family Code of the Philippines;."

(d) "Parental leave" – shall mean leave benefits granted to a solo parent to enable him/her to perform parental duties and responsibilities where physical presence is required;

(e) "Flexible work schedule" – is the right granted to a solo parent employee to vary his/her arrival and departure time in the office without affecting the core work hours as defined by the employer.

SEC. 4. *Criteria for Support*– Any solo parent whose income in the place of domicile falls below the poverty threshold as set by the National Statistics Coordination Board (NSCB) and subject to the assessment of the DSWD City or Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer in the area where the solo parent resides, shall be eligible for assistance: *Provided, however,* That any solo parent whose income is above the poverty threshold shall enjoy the benefits mentioned in Sections 6, 7 and 8 of this Act.

SEC 5. *Comprehensive Package of Social Development and Welfare Services*– A comprehensive package of social development and welfare services for solo parents and their families shall be developed by the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development in coordination with the DOH, DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, NHA, DILG, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Civil Service Commission (CSC), National Council of Women in the Philippines (NCWP), Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), and local government units and non-government organizations with proven track record in providing services for solo parents.

The DSWD shall coordinate with the appropriate agencies the implementation of the comprehensive package of social development and welfare services for solo parents and their families. The package will initially include:

- (a) Livelihood development services which include trainings on livelihood skills, basic business management, values orientation and the provision of seed capital or job placement;
- (b) Counseling services which include individual, peer group or family counseling. This will focus on the resolution of personal relationship and role conflicts;
- (c) Parent effectiveness services which include the provision and expansion of knowledge and skills of the solo parent on early childhood development, behavior management, health care, rights and duties of parents and children;
- (d) Critical incidence stress debriefing which includes preventive stress management strategy designed to assist solo parents in coping with crisis situations and cases of abuse; and
- (e) Special projects for individuals in need of protection which include temporary shelter, counseling, legal assistance, medical care, self-concept or ego-building, crisis management and spiritual enrichment.

SEC. 6. *Flexible Work Schedule.* – The employer shall provide for a flexible working schedule for solo parents: Provided, That the same shall not affect individual and company productivity: *Provided, further,* That any employer may request exemption from the above requirements from the DOLE on certain meritorious grounds.

SEC. 7. *Work Discrimination.* – No employer shall discriminate against any solo parent employee with respect to terms and conditions of employment on account of his/her status.

SEC. 8. *Parental Leave.*– In addition to leave privileges under existing laws, parental leave with pay of not more than seven (7) working days every year shall be granted to any solo parent employee who has rendered service of at least (6) months.

SEC. 9. *Educational Benefits.*–The DepEd, CHED and TESDA shall provide the following benefits and privileges:

- (a) Scholarship programs for qualified solo parents and their children in institutions of basic, tertiary and technical or vocational skills education; and
- (b) Non-formal education programs appropriate for solo parents and their children.

The DECS, CHED and TESDA shall promulgate rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this program.

SEC. 10. *Housing Benefits.*–Solo parents shall be given allocation in housing projects and shall be provided with liberal terms of payment on said government low-cost housing projects in accordance with housing law provisions prioritizing applicants below the poverty line as declared by the NSCB.

SEC. 11. *Medical Assistance.* – The DOH shall develop a comprehensive health care program for solo parents and their children. The program shall be implemented by the DOH through their retained hospitals and medical centers and the local government units (LGUs) through their provincial/district/city/municipal hospitals and rural health units (RHUs).

SEC.12. *Additional Powers and Functions of the DSWD.* — The DSWD shall perform the following additional powers and functions relative to the welfare of solo parents and their families:

- (a) Conduct research necessary to: (1) develop a new body of knowledge on solo parents; (2) define executive and legislative measures needed to promote and protect the interest of solo parents and their children; and (3) assess the effectiveness of programs designed for disadvantaged solo parents and their children;
- (b) Coordinate the activities of various governmental and nongovernmental organizations engaged in promoting and protecting the interests of solo parents and their children; and



c) Monitor the implementation of the provisions of this Act and suggest mechanisms by which such provisions are effectively implemented.

SEC. 13. *Additional Benefits*– A solo parent shall be entitled to the following additional benefits:

- (a) Ten percent (10%) discount on children's clothing materials for all purchases made within two (2) years from the birth of the child of the solo parent;
- (b) Fifteen percent (15%) discount on baby formula milk, food and food supplements for all purchases made within two (2) years from the birth of the child of the solo parent;
- (c) Fifteen percent (15%) discount on all purchases of the solo parent of medicines and other medical supplements or supplies that shall be used by the child who are five (5) years old and below.

To avail of these benefits, the solo parent shall submit or present the Solo Parent Identification Card, as provided for in the Social Development Committee Resolution No. 2, Series of 2002, approving the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the same Act, as well as the birth certificate of the child or other evidence of entitlement.

The corporation or business establishment that gives a discount to the solo parent in accordance with this section shall be entitled to claim the discount given as a business expense subject to the proper recording and documentation.

SEC 14. *Provision of PhilHealth Membership* – Solo parents who are living below the poverty line are entitled to membership with PhilHealth, in order to avail of the medical benefits of the same. The local government unit who shall provide the said entitlement to the eligible solo parent shall be determined by the domicile of the solo parent and his/her child/children.

SEC. 15. *Inter-Agency Coordinating and Monitoring Committee*– A special Inter-Agency Committee, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, shall be established to coordinate and monitor the implementation of this Act. The Committee, which shall be constituted within ninety (90) days upon the effectivity of this Act, shall be composed of the following:

- (a) Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, as Chairperson;
- (b) Secretary of Health or authorized representative;
- (c) Secretary of Education or authorized representative;
- (d) Secretary of Labor and Employment or authorized representative;
- (e) Secretary of Interior and Local Government or authorized representative;
- (f) Secretary of Trade and Industry or authorized representative;
- (g) Commissioner of Internal Revenue;

- (h) Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education;
- (i) Chairperson of the Commission on Civil Service;
- (j) Chairperson of Philippine Commission on Women;
- (k) Director General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority;
- (l) Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority;
- (m) General Manager of the National Housing Authority;
- (N) Chairperson of National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF);
- (o) Chairperson of National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP); and
- (p) A representative of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP), as members.

The Committee shall submit a regular report to the Congress regarding the implementation of this Act every two (2) years following its effectivity.

**SEC. 16. *Penalties***– Any person, corporation, or entity who refuses or fails to provide the benefits granted to the solo parent in violation of this act shall suffer the following penalties:

- (a) For the first violation – A fine of not less than ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than fifty thousand pesos (P50,000) or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year, or both, at the discretion of the court;
- (b) For subsequent violations – A fine of not less than one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than two (2) years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

If the offender is a corporation, partnership, organization or any similar entity, the employees and officials directly involved such as the President, General Manager, Managing Partner, or other officer charged with the management of its affairs shall be liable therefor.

If the offender is an alien, the offender shall be deported immediately after service of sentence without further deportation proceedings.

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 business entity that fails to abide by the provisions of this act.

Any person who misrepresents status or falsifies any document to avail of benefits provided under this act or any person who abuses the privileges granted herein shall be punished



with a fine of not less than ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) and imprisonment of not less than six (6) months.

Upon finding of the DSWD that a department, agency, or instrumentality of the government, a Government-Owned or Controlled Corporation (GOCC) or a Local Government Unit, had violated any provision of this Act, sanctions under the Administrative Law, Civil Service or other laws may be recommended to the CSC or the DILG against the Head of the Agency or the Local Chief Executive and the person directly responsible for the violation.

**SEC. 17. *Implementing Rules and Regulations***—Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the DSWD shall, in consultation and coordination with the DOH, DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, NHA, and DILG, DTI, BIR, NEDA, CSC, NCMF, NCIP, PCW, and ULAP, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 18. *Appropriations***—The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the concerned government agencies under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the budget of the concerned agencies under the annual General Appropriations Act.

Government agencies may utilize a portion of their respective budget for gender and development programs and activities to implement this Act.

For purposes of this section, gender and development refers to processes undertaken by government agencies to address gender issues and transform structures of society to achieve gender equality and emphasize the fundamental role of women as active agents of development and not just passive recipients of assistance.

**SEC. 19. *Repealing Clause*** – Republic Act No. 8972, otherwise known as the “Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000” is hereby repealed. All other laws, decrees, executive orders or issuances, or any part thereof which are inconsistent with this act are hereby modified accordingly.

**SEC. 20. *Separability Clause*** – If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SEC. 21. *Effectivity Clause*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,