



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5182

Introduced by: Representative Florencio Gabriel G. Noel

EXPLANATORY NOTE:

The right of each and every Filipino to a healthy life is enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, specifically, Section 15, Article 2 which states:

“The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them.”

Based on a survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) from 28 to 31 March 2019 9.5% or an estimated 2.3 million families experienced involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months. The measure of hunger refers to involuntary suffering experienced by Filipinos due to lack of available food to eat. The hunger rate in March 2019 is one percentage (1%) point lower than the 10.5% or estimated 2.4 million families in December 2018.¹ Although there has been a significant decrease in the number of families that experience hunger, the State envisions complete eradication of hunger incidence in the country.

It is time to strengthen the fight against hunger and food insecurity in the country. This bill seeks to establish a nationwide drive to provide families who experience involuntary hunger with food every breakfast, lunch and dinner everyday from

¹ First Quarter 2019 Social Weather Survey: Hunger incidence decreases to 9.5% of families accessed at:
<https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artcldisppage/?artcsyscode=ART-20190424211854>

Monday to Friday of the week. These feeding centers will be established, operated and funded by the respective city or municipality, either on their own or with a non-government organization (NGO).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Noel', with a stylized, cursive script.

Florencio Gabriel G. Noel
An-Waray Party-list Representative



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**AN ACT ESTABLISHING FEEDING CENTERS IN EVERY CITY OR
MUNICIPALITY AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

*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 “Free Meal Act of 2019”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy* – It is the declared policy of the state to:

- a. Protect and promote the right to health of the people and to instill consciousness among them;
- b. End hunger, achieve food security; and improve nutrition;
- c. Institutionalize a concerted and focused approach to address the incidence of involuntary hunger in the country

SECTION 3. *Definition of terms* – As used in this Act:

- a. *Involuntary Hunger* refers to hunger that is not made by choice, but due to either lack of food or lack of resources to obtain food leading to hungriness.
- b. *Food Insecurity* refers to the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

- c. *Indigent Constituents* refers to constituents of a city or municipality that is unable to consistently obtain and provide the necessities of life such as food, clothing and decent shelter.

SECTION 3. *Establishment of Feeding Centers in each City or Municipality* – Each city or municipality, upon the effectivity of this Act, shall establish within their respective localities a feeding center that would provide free meals every breakfast, lunch and dinner from Monday to Friday of every week of the year. These feeding centers shall only serve the indigent constituents.

SECTION 4. *Proof of Indigency* – In order to be able to receive free meals in each feeding center, a person must possess a Certificate of Indigency from the city or municipality where the person is currently domiciled. Such city or municipality shall provide qualified persons with an identification (ID) card stating that the person is in fact an indigent constituent of the said city or municipality. The process of obtaining the said ID card shall be free of charge and must be shouldered by the concerned city or municipality.

SECTION 5. *Role of Cities and Municipalities* – Each city or municipality shall:

- a. Establish, operate and maintain a feeding center in their respective locality, catering only to their indigent constituents who possess the Indigency ID card issued by a city or municipality;
- b. Ensure, prior to the issuance of the ID card, that such person is in fact an indigent constituent;
- c. Ensure that there is enough food to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner in their respective Feeding Centers; and
- d. Ensure that the food being provided in each Feeding Centers are safe to be consumed.

SECTION 6. *Appropriations* – the amount necessary for the initial implementation of this program shall be charged against the existing appropriations each city or municipality. Thereafter, the amount needed for the continuous implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, letter of instruction, rules or regulations contrary to or inconsistent with any provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 8. *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.