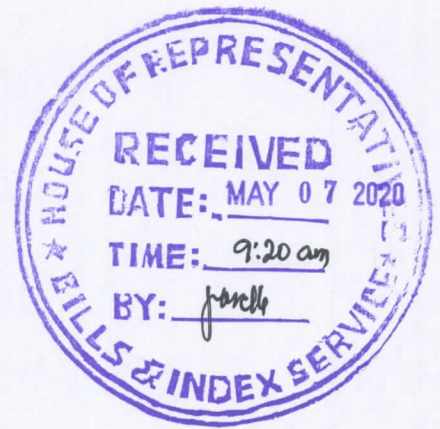


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 6698



Introduced by

BAYAN MUNA Representatives FERDINAND R. GAITE,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women's Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

AN ACT

PROVIDING FOR VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP OF OVERSEAS FILIPINOS
IN THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM, AMENDING FOR THE
PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On April 2, 2020, PhilHealth issued Circular No. 2020-0014, mandating that Overseas Filipinos with income amounting from ₱10,000 to ₱20,000 will be required to pay 3% of their annual salaries. This is a premium rate increase from 2.75 percent in 2019, and will increase every year by 0.5% points until it reaches the target 5% by 2024. This is in consonance with the Universal Health Care Act or RA 11223 which was enacted in 2019.

Further, the Circular mandates that members who fail to pay the premium in time "shall be required to pay all missed contributions with monthly compound interest".

In a Joint Position Statement signed by about 200 Filipino Migrant Groups, Filipino overseas opposed the mandatory collection of PhilHealth premium increase. An online petition against the mandatory premium increase was able to gather more than 400,000 signatures.

Migrant workers particularly oppose the additional burden through the PhilHealth premium. Contributions which form part of the state exactions levied on overseas Filipinos. Overseas Filipinos are also doubly charged because they are being made to shoulder the employers' share.

Most overseas Filipinos are already covered by existing health insurance and healthcare programs in their respective host countries. PhilHealth significantly lacks accredited hospitals abroad for Filipinos to avail of its program and services. These make the mandatory PhilHealth coverage useless and redundant.

The migrant groups also condemn the inclusion of the payment of PhilHealth premium as a requirement for the mandatory Overseas Employment Certificate. This is contrary to the campaign promise of President Rodrigo Duterte that he will remove the OEC requirement.

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2 Due to the uproar from OFWs and other overseas Filipinos worldwide, the Philippine government
3 was forced to announce the suspension of the premium increase. President Duterte ordered that
4 PhilHealth premium shall be "voluntary". But many overseas Filipinos are still indignant as they
5 see that such are only meant to silence their protests. An enabling law is also necessary to make
6 OFW membership in PhilHealth voluntary.

7
8 In the time of COVID-19 pandemic, when people all over the world are getting sick and suffering
9 the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, it is unjust and inhumane to ever consider burdening
10 the overseas Filipinos and other sectors of the society with additional payments and exactions.

11
12 Suspending the PhilHealth premium increase only temporarily relieves the overseas Filipinos of
13 the additional burden. There is a need to truly unburden the overseas Filipinos by allowing
14 voluntary membership, removing the "double" payment, compounded interest for unpaid
15 premium, and unjust premium increases by amending certain provisions of the Universal Health
16 Care Law.

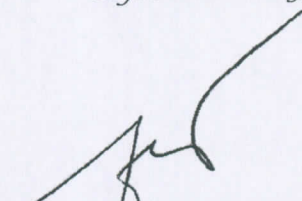
17
18 For the interest and welfare of our overseas Filipinos, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.
19
20
21


22 *Approved,*


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26 **REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE**
27 *Bayan Muna Partylist*
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32 **REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**
33 *Bayan Muna Partylist*
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38 **REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT**
39 *Bayan Muna Partylist*
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45 **REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO**
46 *MCT Teachers Partylist*
47


48
REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party


REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist

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2 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**
3 Quezon City

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17 **AN ACT**

18 **PROVIDING FOR VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP OF OVERSEAS FILIPINOS**
19 **IN THE NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM, AMENDING FOR THE**
20 **PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE**
21 **UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**
22

23
24 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*
25

26
27 **SECTION 1.** Section 4 (f) of Republic Act No. 11223 shall be amended as follows:
28

29 **Sec. 4 Definition of Terms** - As used in this Act:

30
31 xxx

32
33 (f) Direct contributors refer to those who have the capacity to pay
34 premiums, are gainfully employed and are bound by an employer-
35 employee relationship, or are self-earning, professional practitioners,
36 [MIGRANT WORKERS INCLUDING THEIR QUALIFIED
37 DEPENDENTS], and lifetime members.

38
39 PROVIDED THAT, MIGRANT WORKERS AND OVERSEAS
40 FILIPINOS SHALL BE DIRECT CONTRIBUTORS ON
41 VOLUNTARY BASIS UNDER THIS ACT. PROVIDED
42 FURTHER, THAT THE EMPLOYER SHARE ON THEIR
43 PREMIUM SHALL BE COLLECTED WHENEVER
44 APPLICABLE. PROVIDED FINALLY, THAT OVERSEAS
45 FILIPINOS SHALL REFER TO LAND-BASED OFWS;
46 SEAFARERS AND OTHER SEA-BASED WORKERS;
47 FILIPINOS WITH DUAL CITIZENSHIP IN ACCORDANCE TO
48 REPUBLIC ACT 9225 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
49 CITIZENSHIP RETENTION AND REACQUISITION ACT OF
50 2003; FILIPINOS LIVING ABROAD; OVERSEAS FILIPINOS IN

DISTRESS; AND OTHER OVERSEAS FILIPINOS NOT
PREVIOUSLY CLASSIFIED ELSEWHERE.

XXX

SECTION 2. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 11223 shall be amended as follows:

Sec. 9 Entitlement to Benefits - Every member shall be granted immediate eligibility for health benefit package under the Program; Provided, that PhilHealth Identification Card shall not be required in the ailment of any health service; Provided, further, that no co-payment shall be charged for services rendered in basic or ward accommodation; Provided, furthermore, that co-payments and co-insurance for amenities in public hospitals shall be regulated by the DOH and PhilHealth; Provided, finally, that the current PhilHealth package for members shall not be reduced.

PhilHealth shall provide additional Program benefits for direct contributors, where applicable; Provided, that failure to pay premiums shall not prevent the enjoyment of any Program benefits; Provided, further, that employers [AND SELF-EMPLOYED DIRECT CONTRIBUTORS] shall be required to pay all missed contributions with an interest, compounded monthly, of at least three percent (3%) [FOR EMPLOYERS AND NOT EXCEEDING ONE AND ONE-HALF PERCENT (1.5%) FOR SELF-EARNING, PROFESSIONAL PRACTITIONERS, AND MIGRANT WORKERS.]

SECTION 3. Section 10 of Republic Act No. 11223 shall be amended as follows:

Sec. 10. Premium Contributions –

[FOR DIRECT CONTRIBUTORS, PREMIUM RATES SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE, AND MONTHLY INCOME FLOOR AND CEILING:

Year	Premium Rate	Income Floor	Income Ceiling
2019	2.75 %	P 10,000	P50,000
2020	3.00 %	P 10,000	P60,000
2021	3.50 %	P 10,000	P70,000
2022	4.00 %	P 10,000	P80,000
2023	4.50 %	P 10,000	P90,000
2024	5.00 %	P 10,000	P100,000
2025	5.00 %	P 10,000	P100,000

FOR DIRECT CONTRIBUTORS, PREMIUM RATES SHALL BE FIXED AND ADJUSTED FROM TIME TO TIME THROUGH ENACTMENT OF CONGRESS, TAKING INTO

1 CONSIDERATION ACTUARIAL CALCULATIONS, RATE OF
2 BENEFITS, AND THE CAPACITY OF THE MAJORITY OF
3 CONTRIBUTORS TO PAY.
4

5 Provided, that for indirect contributors, premium subsidy shall be
6 gradually adjusted and included annually in the General
7 Appropriations Act (GAA): Provided, further, that the funds shall be
8 released to PhilHealth: Provided, furthermore; that the DOH, in
9 coordination with PhilHealth, may request Congress to appropriate
10 supplemental funding to meet targeted milestones of this Act:
11 Provided, finally, that for every increase in the rate of contribution of
12 direct contributors and premium subsidy of indirect contributors,
13 PhilHealth shall provide for a corresponding increase in benefits.
14

15 **SECTION 4.** Repealing Clause - All laws, decrees, executive orders and other presidential
16 issuances which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified
17 accordingly.
18

19 **SECTION 5.** Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder
20 of any provision hereof not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.
21

22 **SECTION 6.** Effectivity - This Act shall take effect fifteen days (15) after its publication in the
23 Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.
24

25 *Approved,*