

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

5819
House Bill No. _____



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 12 of the 1987 Constitution states that “*The natural and primary right and duty of the parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the support of the Government.*”

As defined, a solo parent is an individual who assumes the sole responsibility of raising a child or children. In the Philippines, they account to at least 14 to 15 percent or about 15 million of the total population, in which 95 percent are women.

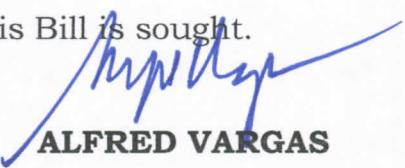
The Government’s effort to assist single parents was solidified under the Solo Parents’ Welfare Act of 2000, wherein comprehensive benefit packages including tax breaks, parental leave, housing benefits, and health and education insurance for them were institutionalized. However, upon consultations of this Representation with the sector, it is deemed necessary to amend the law to make it more responsive to the current situation of solo parents.

This Bill seeks to strengthen the Solo Parents' Welfare Act by decreasing the waiting period from one year to six months before a solo parent can avail of the stated benefits. It also considers their vulnerability and economic limitations, providing them with grants in the form of discounts on children's clothing, infant formula, vitamins, and medicines.

Furthermore, the Bill includes penalties for non-compliance to the amended law and the inclusion of budget appropriation for its implementation.

The quality of parenting does not depend on the presence or absence of a father or a mother. It will be determined on the holistic development of the youth and the Filipino family. Therefore, the State must exert all efforts to lend a helping hand to the solo parents.

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



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alfred Vargas".

ALFRED VARGAS

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

SECTION 1. Sections 2 and 3 of Republic Act No. 8972 are hereby amended to read as follows:

“**SECTION 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 to ensure its total development towards its 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, Culture and Sports] **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 non-government agencies.

SECTION 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 and raises the child~~ of the child **bears sole and lone parenting responsibility**;

XXX;

(3) Parent ~~left solo or alone with~~ **who bears sole and lone parenting** responsibility [of parenthood] while the spouse is detained or is serving sentence for a criminal conviction for at least ~~one (1) year~~ **(6) months**;

XXX;

(5) Parent ~~left solo or alone with the~~ **who bears sole and lone parenting** responsibility [of parenthood]-due to legal separation or *de facto* separation from spouse for at least ~~one (1) year~~ **six (6) months**, as long as ~~he/she~~ **the solo parent** is entrusted with the custody of the children;

XXX;

(7) Parent ~~left solo or alone with the~~ **who bears sole and lone parenting** responsibility [of parenthood] due to abandonment of spouse for at least ~~one (1) year~~ **six (6) months**;

XXX;

(9) Any [other] **legal guardian, adoptive or foster parent** who solely provides parental care and support to a child or children [and]

XXX; and

(11) Parent who bears solo and lone parenting responsibility due to the disability or incapacity of the other spouse to be employed at least six (6) months;

XXX

e) "Flexible work schedule" - is the right granted to a solo parent employee to vary [~~his or her~~] **the** arrival and departure time **in the office or employment** without affecting the core work hours as defined by the employer."

SECTION 2. Sections 4 and 5 of the Act are hereby amended to read as follows:

"**SECTION 4. Criteria for Support** - Any solo parent whose income in the place of domicile falls below the poverty threshold as set by the ~~National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)~~ **National Statistics Coordination Board (NSCB)**, [and] subject to the assessment of the ~~DSSWD worker~~ **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.

SECTION 5. Comprehensive Package of Social Development and Welfare Service - A Comprehensive package of social development and welfare services for solo parents and their families ~~[will]~~ shall be developed by the ~~DSSWD~~ **Secretary of the Social Welfare and Development, in coordination with the DOH, [DECS] DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, NHA, [and] 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), [in co-ordination with] local governments units and a non-governmental organization with proven track record in providing services for solo parents.

XXX”

SECTION 3. Section 8, 9 and 10 of the same Act are hereby amended to read as follows:

“**SECTION 8.** Parental Leave - In addition to leave privileges under existing laws, parental leave 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 [~~one (1) year~~] **six (6) months.**

SECTION 9. Educational Benefits -The [~~DECS~~] **DepEd**, CHED and TESDA shall provide the following benefits and privileges.

- (1) Scholarship programs for qualified solo parents and their children in institutions of basic, tertiary, and technical ~~and~~ **or vocational** skills education; and

XXX

SECTION 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 [~~NEDA~~] **NSCB.**”

SECTION 4. New sections to be denominated as Sections 13, 14, 15 and 16 are hereby added to read as follow:

“SECTION 13 Solo Parent Identification Card (SPIC) – Upon qualification and submission of proper documents, an identification card approved by the local chief executive where the solo parent resides, shall be issued to the qualified solo parent by the city or municipal social welfare and development officer.

SECTION 14. 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’s milk, food and food supplement 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 supplement or supplies that shall be used by the child who is five (5) years old and below;
- d.) Twenty percent (20%) discount from all purchases of school supplies for the child, for all purchases made within twenty-one (21) years from the birth of the child of the solo parent;
- e.) Tax amnesty and/or reduction of real estate or inheritance taxes of solo parents;
- f.) Basic personal exemption from individual income tax in the amount of fifty thousand pesos (Php 50,000.00) in addition to the existing exemption that the solo parent may claim for their dependent child or children; and

g.) Ten percent (10%) tuition fee discount from public and private schools for the child or children of the solo parent from grade school to college.

To avail of these benefits, the solo parent shall submit or present the solo parent identification card and 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 proper recording and documentation.

SECTION 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.) DSWD Secretary as Chair;
- B.) DOH Secretary or any authorized representative;
- C.) DedEd Secretary or any authorized representative;
- D.) DOLE Secretary or any authorized representative;
- E.) DILG Secretary or any authorized representative;
- F.) DTI Secretary or any authorized representative;
- G.) Commissioner of the BIR or any authorized representative;
- H.) Chairperson of the CHED or any authorized representative;
- I.) Chairperson of the CSC or any authorized representative;

- J.) Chairperson of the NCWP or any authorized representative;
- K.) Director General of the NEDA or any authorized representative;
- L.) General Manager of the NHA or any authorized representative;
- M.) A representative of the ULAP.

The Committee shall submit a regular report to congress on the implementation of this Act every three (3) years following its effectivity.

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

- 1.) For the first violation - A fine of not less than ten thousand pesos (Php10,000.00) but not more than fifty thousand pesos (Php50,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year, or both, at the discretion of the court.
- 2.) For subsequent violation - a fine not less than one hundred thousand pesos (Php100,000.00) but not more than two hundred thousand pesos (Php200,000.00) 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, or 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 provision of this act.

Any person who misrepresents status or falsifies any document to avail of the 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 (Php10,000.00) but not more than fifty thousand pesos (Php50,000.00) and imprisonment of not less than six (6) months.

Upon finding by 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 or against the head of the agency or the local chief executive and the person directly responsible for the violation.

SECTION 5. Sections 13 and 14 of the same Act are hereby renumbered as Section 17 and 18 and amended as follows:

"SECTION {4-34 17. Implementation Rules and Regulations – [An inter-agency committee headed by] **Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act**, the DSWD **shall, in coordination** with the DOH, [DECS] **DepEd**, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, NHA [and] DILG, **DTI, BIR, NEDA, CSC, NCMF, NCIP, PCW, and ULAP**, [is hereby established which shall formulate, within ninety (90) days upon the effectivity of this Act, the implementing rules and regulations in consultation with the local government units, nongovernment organizations and people's organizations.]—**issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.**

SECTION [14] 18. Appropriations - The amount necessary to carry out the provision of this Act shall be included in the budget of the concerned government agencies in the **annual** General Appropriations Act (**GAA**) [~~of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter~~].

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 or women as active agents of development and not just passive recipients of assistance."

SECTION 6. Sections 15, 16, and 17 of the same Act, are hereby renumbered as Sections 19, 20 and 21, respectively.

SECTION 7. All laws, executive orders or issuance, or any part of thereof which are inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 8. If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional, the other provision not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulations.

Approved,