

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
*First Regular Session*

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Office of the Secretary  
Senate of the Philippines

SENATE

\*19 JUL -2 A11:54

S. No. 164

RECEIVED

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

AN ACT

AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT 8972 OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ACT PROVIDING FOR BENEFITS AND PRIVILEGES TO SOLO PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Raising a child is daunting, but raising a child alone carries a specific set of challenges and difficulties. In 2015, the Philippine Statistics Authority estimated that there were about three million solo parents — two million of whom were female. The Federation of Solo Parents has a member base of 80,000.

While significant inroads have been made by virtue of Republic Act No. 8972 or the Solo Parents' Welfare Act, there are still many things that need to be done and many reforms that can still be undertaken to alleviate the plight of solo parents, and to mitigate the disadvantages that children in solo parent households have to live with.

This bill introduces many innovations:

- It expands the definition of solo parents, notably to include spouses of low and semiskilled overseas Filipino workers, who are away from the Philippines for an unbroken period of one (1) year;
- It provides discounts to solo parents and their children for medical, educational and other basic needs, including tuition fees, as well as discounts on recreational activities;
- It provides for the creation of a Solo Parents Affairs Office in local government units;
- It mandates the creation of daycare facilities in companies with more than 100 employees.

The passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

*Risa Hontiveros*  
RISA HONTIVEROS

Senator

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

1       Section 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the "EXPANDED Solo  
2 Parents' Welfare Act of 2019."

3       Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is the policy of the State to promote the  
4 family as the foundation of the nation, strengthen its solidarity and ensure its total  
5 development. It is also the obligation of the State to adhere to international  
6 agreements and national laws on families. Towards this end, it shall develop a  
7 comprehensive package of social protection services for solo parents and their  
8 children to be carried out by the Department of Social Welfare and Development  
9 (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Justice (DOJ) the  
10 Department of Education (DEPED), the Department of the Interior and Local  
11 Government (DILG), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical  
12 Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the National Housing Authority  
13 (NHA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Trade  
14 and Industry (DTI), the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), the Civil Service  
15 Commission (CSC), the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), the  
16 Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the Philippine Health Insurance  
17 Corporation (PHILHEALTH), the Union of Local Authorities (ULAP), and other  
18 concerned government agencies and civil society organizations with recognized  
19 credentials in providing services and advocacy for solo parents.

1           Sec. 3. *Definitions of Terms.* – Whenever used in this Act, the following terms  
2 shall mean as follows;

- 3           a) "Solo parent" - any individual who falls under any of the following  
4 categories;
  - 5           a. A female who gives birth as a result of rape and other crimes  
6           against persons even without a final conviction of the offender;  
7           provided, that the mother has the custody of the child or  
8           children and bears the sole parental responsibility;
  - 9           b. Parent left solo or alone with the responsibility of parenthood  
10          due the following circumstances;
    - 11           i. Death of the spouse;
    - 12           ii. Spouse is detained or is serving sentence for a criminal  
13           conviction;
    - 14           iii. Physical and/or mental incapacity of spouse as certified  
15           by a public or private medical practitioner;
    - 16           iv. Legal separation or de facto separation from spouse;
    - 17           v. Declaration of nullity or annulment of marriage as  
18           decreed by [a] the court recognized by law;
    - 19           vi. Abandonment of spouse for at least six (6) months;
  - 20           c. Actual custody, support, care and exercising sole parental  
21           authority over his or her child or children instead of having  
22           others care for them or give them up to a welfare institution;
  - 23           d. Spouse of an overseas Filipino worker, provided that the said  
24           OFW belongs to the low/semi-skilled worker category and is  
25           away from the Philippines for an unbroken period of twelve (12)  
26           months;
  - 27           e. Any other person who bears sole parental responsibility over a  
28           child or children, including a foster parent duly-recognized by  
29           the DSWD, a legal guardian appointed by the court or a legal  
30           single adoptive parent;
  - 31           f. Any family member who bears sole parental responsibility as a  
32           result of the death, abandonment, disappearance or prolonged  
33           absence of the parent/s. In cases of grandparents who are  
34           senior citizens who have the sole parental responsibility over  
35           their minor or physical or mentally incapacitated children or  
36           grandchildren, they shall be entitled to the benefits of this act in

addition to the benefits granted to them by the expanded senior citizens act of 2003;

A change in the status or circumstance of the parent or qualified family member or guardian 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 or dependents" - Refer to those living with and dependent upon the solo parent for support who are unmarried, unemployed and not more than twenty one (21) years of age, or even over twenty one (21) 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. All solo parents working in the government or private sector shall be qualified to a seven-day parental leave with pay.
  - e) "Flexible work schedule" - Is the right granted to a solo parent employee to vary his/her arrival and departure time without affecting the core work hours as defined by the employer.
  - f) Basic necessities - Refer to rice, corn, bread, fresh, dried and canned fish and other marine products, fresh pork, beef and poultry, meat, fresh eggs, fresh and processed milk, fresh vegetables, root crops, coffee, sugar, cooking oil, salt, laundry soap, detergents, sanitary napkins, diapers, and drugs classified as essential by the DOH and other commodities as maybe classified by the DTI and the DA according to Republic Act no. 7581 or The Price Act.

32        Sec. 4. *Criteria for Additional Financial Assistance.* – Any solo parent whose  
33 income in the place of residence falls below the poverty threshold as set by the  
34 Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and subject to the assessment of the Local Social  
35 Welfare and Development.

1 Officer in the area where the solo parent resides shall be eligible for additional  
2 financial assistance reserved for the poor and indigent solo parents as determined by  
3 the proper government agencies. Provided, that any solo parent, regardless of the  
4 income bracket or financial status shall enjoy the benefits under this act.

5       *Sec. 5. Comprehensive Package of Social Protection Services.* – A  
6 comprehensive package of social PROTECTION services for solo parents and their  
7 families SHALL be developed by the DSWD, DOH, DEPED, CHED, TESDA, DOLE, NHA,  
8 DOJ, DTI, BIR, CSC, NEDA, PCW, PHILHEALTH, ULAP, DILG, and other concerned  
9 government agencies and civil society organization with recognized credentials in  
10 providing services to solo parents.

11 The DSWD shall coordinate with concerned agencies the implementation of the  
12 comprehensive package of social protection services for solo parents and their  
13 families. The package will initially include:

- 14       a) Livelihood development services which include trainings on livelihood  
15           skills, basic business management, value orientation and the provision  
16           of seed capital or job placement;
- 17       b) Counseling services which include individual, peer group or family  
18           counseling. This will focus on the resolution of personal relationship and  
19           role conflicts;
- 20       c) Parent effectiveness services which include the provision and expansion  
21           of knowledge and skills of the solo parent on early childhood  
22           development, behavior management, health care, rights and duties of  
23           parents and children;
- 24       d) Critical incidence stress debriefing which includes preventive stress  
25           management strategy designed to assist solo parents in coping with  
26           crisis situations and cases of abuse;
- 27       e) Special projects for individuals in need of protection which include  
28           temporary shelter, counseling, legal assistance, medical care, self-  
29           concept or ego-building, crisis management and spiritual enrichment;  
30           and
- 31       f) Legal advice and assistance.

32       *Sec. 6. Flexible Work Schedule.* – The employer shall provide for a flexible

33 working schedule for solo parents: Provided, That the same shall not affect individual  
34 and company productivity: Provided, further, that any employer may request

1 exemption from the above requirements from the DOLE on certain meritorious  
2 grounds.

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

6 Sec. 8. *Parental Leave*. – In addition to leave privileges under existing laws,  
7 parental leave of not more than seven (7) working days every year shall be granted  
8 to any solo parent employee who has rendered service of at least six (6) months.  
9 This benefit may be availed in both the private or government sector, regardless of  
10 employment status.

11 Sec. 9. *Educational Benefits*. – The DEPED, CHED and TESDA shall provide the  
12 following benefits and privileges:

13 a) Scholarship and/ or grants for qualified solo parents and their children  
14 in institutions of basic, higher and technical/ vocational educational  
15 and training; and

16 b) Nonformal education programs appropriate for solo parents and their  
17 children.

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

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

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

29 Sec. 12. *Additional Powers and Functions of the DSWD*. – The DSWD shall  
30 perform the following additional powers and functions relative to the welfare of solo  
31 parents and their families:

32 a) Conduct research necessary to: (1) develop a new body of knowledge  
33 on solo parents; (2) define executive and legislative measures needed  
34 to promote and protect the interest of solo parents and their children;  
35 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 children; and
  - c) Monitor the implementation of the provisions of this Act and suggest mechanisms by which such provisions are effectively implemented.

*Sec. 13. Solo Parent Identification Card (SPIC).* – The Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO) shall issue the solo parent identification card upon the presentation of the applicant of the following documents:

- a) Barangay certification certifying that the solo parent is a resident of the barangay for the last six (6) months preceding the application;
  - b) Certification from the relevant government agency or court as proof of birth of child/children, death of parents or spouse, decree of annulment, declaration of nullity, or legal separation, or any form of dissolution of marriage, status as overseas Filipino worker, and other documentary support to attest the circumstances that qualifies the applicant as a solo parent;

The SPIC shall be issued within thirty (30) days from application thereof and shall be valid for one (1) year upon issuance subject to renewal.

*Sec. 14. Additional Benefits.* – A solo parent shall be entitled to the following additional benefits:

- a) Twenty (20) percent discount from all purchases of infant formula, food, food supplements and sanitary diapers for purchases made from child's birth until three (3) years of age, provided that the discount on infant formula can only be availed of when the solo parent is not the mother;
  - b) Twenty (20) percent discount from all purchases of medicines, vaccines and other medical supplements, supplies, accessories and equipment for the child, as prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner, for purchases made from the child's birth until eighteen (18) years of age;
  - c) Twenty (20) percent discount from all purchases of the child's basic necessities;
  - d) Twenty (20) percent discount from tuition fees per child from kindergarten to college level in both private and public colleges and

- universities and schools, on top of any scholarship grants if any;
  - e) Twenty (20) percent discount from hospital bill of the solo parent's child if admitted for medical care and attention, both in private and public hospitals;
  - f) Tax amnesty and/ or reduction of real estate or inheritance taxes of solo parents;
  - g) Twenty (20) percent discount on consultation and laboratory diagnostic fees and purchase of medicines for solo parents and their children;
  - h) Basic personal exemption from individual income tax in the amount of fifty thousand pesos (p50,000.00) in addition to the existing exemption that the solo parent may claim for their children;
  - i) Twenty (20) percent discount from all private and public recreational facilities, provided that the discount can only be availed when the solo parent and children are together. Companies and business establishments where the said discounts were availed, shall be entitled to claim said discounts as part of their business expense, provided that they maintain a detailed and separate records of the discounted purchases.

*Sec. 15. Creation of the Solo Parents' Special Inter-Agency Review Committee and Task Force.* – An inter-agency committee shall be created to coordinate and monitor the implementation of this act. The committee shall be comprised of the following agencies:

- a. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as chair;
  - b. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) as co-chair;
  - c. Department of Health (DOH);
  - d. Department of Justice (DOJ);
  - e. Department of Education (DEPED);
  - f. Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
  - g. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
  - h. National Housing Authority (NHA); 8 I) Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
  - i. Bureau of Internal Revenues (BIR);
  - j. Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHILHEALTH);
  - k. At least two (2) non-government or civil society organization with

1 proven credentials in advocating for the rights and welfare, as well as  
2 providing services to solo parents.

3 This committee shall submit an annual report to the congress on the status of  
4 implementation of this act, following its effectivity.

5        Sec. 16. *Solo Parents Affairs Office*. – A solo parent affairs office shall be  
6 established in every local government unit. In line with this requirement, a Solo  
7 Parents help desk shall be placed in every barangay for the immediate assistance of  
8 solo parents and their children.

9        Sec. 17. *National Solo Parents Day And Week*. – To commemorate the role and  
10 significance of every solo parent in the Philippines, solo parents week shall be every  
11 third (3rd) week of April and the National Solo Parents day shall be every third (3rd)  
12 Saturday of April of every year.

13        Sec. 18. *Penalties*. – Any person, corporation, entity or agency which refuses  
14 or fails to provide the benefits granted to Solo Parents in violation of this act, or  
15 discriminates against solo parents in employment hiring, shall suffer the following  
16 penalties:

17            a) For the first violation - A fine of not less than ten thousand pesos (P  
18            10,000.00) but not more than fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) or  
19            imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one  
20            (1) year, or both, at the discretion of the court.

21            b) For any subsequent violation - A fine of not less than one hundred  
22            thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than two hundred  
23            thousand pesos (P200,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than one  
24            (1) year but not more than two (2) years, or both, at the discretion of  
25            the court. any person who misinterprets the status or falsifies any  
26            document to avail of the benefits provided under this act or any person  
27            who abuses the privileges granted herein shall be punished with a fine  
28            not less than ten thousand pesos (P 10,000.00) but not more than fifty  
29            thousand pesos (P50,000.00) and imprisonment of not less than six (6)  
30            months.

31        If the offender is a corporation, partnership or organization or any similar entity, the  
32        employees and officials therefore directly involved shall individually be held liable  
33        therefore. If the violator is an alien or a foreigner, he shall be deported immediately  
34        after service of sentence without further deportation proceedings.

35        Upon filing of an appropriate complaint and after due notice and hearing, the proper  
36        authorities may also cause the cancellation or revocation of the business permit,

1 permit to operate, franchise and other similar privileges granted to any business that  
2 fails to abide by the provision of this act.

3 Upon finding by the solo parents' special review committee that a department,  
4 agency or instrumentality of the government, a Government-Owned or Controlled  
5 Corporation (GOCC) or a Local Government Unit had violated any provision of this  
6 act, sanctions under the administrative law, civil service or other laws may be  
7 recommended to the CSC or the DILG against the head of the agency or the local  
8 chief executive and the person directly responsible for the violation.

9 Any person who claims to be a solo parent for the purpose of availment of the  
10 benefits under this act, with intent to defraud shall be penalized with a fine of not  
11 less than ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than fifty thousand pesos  
12 (P50,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one  
13 (1) year, or both, at the discretion of the court.

14 Sec. 19. *Daycare Facilities.* – Government agencies and private companies  
15 with one hundred (100) or more employees shall provide daycare facilities within the  
16 premises for children aged five and below of its employees, handled by qualified and  
17 competent personnel with proven experience in child care, provided that these  
18 facilities shall also be made available to children aged ten years old and below of solo  
19 parents.

20 Sec. 20. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days upon  
21 the effectivity of this act, the DSWD, in consultation and coordination with the  
22 members of the Solo Parents' special review committee, shall issue the necessary  
23 rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

24 Sec. 21. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions  
25 of this Act shall be included in the budget of the concerned government agencies in  
26 the General Appropriations Act (GAA). Government agencies may also utilize a  
27 portion of their 31 respective gender and development (gad) budget to implement  
28 this act anchored on the guidelines issued by the DBM, NEDA, and PCW.

29 Sec. 22. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, administrative  
30 orders or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby  
31 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

32 Sec. 23. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or  
33 unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full  
34 force and effect.

1           Sec. 24. *Effectivity Clause.* – This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days  
2 following its complete publication in the official gazette or in at least two (2)  
3 newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,