

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3934



Introduced by **BAYAN MUNA** Party-List Rep. **CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**

AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9994 OR THE EXPANDED SENIOR
CITIZENS ACT OF 2010

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Poverty and indigency is increasing in the Philippines as more than ninety percent of our population continues to work hard for a living.

According to the independent think-tank IBON, the growth rates in gross domestic product (GDP) so far this year compare poorly with previous election years. Second quarter growth this year is lower than in 2013 (7.9%), 2010 (8.9%), 2007 (7.6%), and 2004 (7.7%). First semester is also lower than in 2013 (7.7%), 2010 (8.7%), 2007 (6.9%), and 2004 (7.5%). This indicates weaker economic fundamentals that weakened the overall impact of the election spending stimulus.

IBON added that the second quarter growth results virtually confirm the country's economic slowdown and whole year 2016 growth is likely to be slower than the recent peak of 6.9% growth in 2013. The economy has to grow by at least 7% until the end of the year to even just match its performance in 2013. But post-election quarterly growth is usually markedly slower and there have only been two election years in the post-Marcos period, in 1995 and 2001, when growth accelerated rather than slowed, the group noted.

Recent relatively rapid economic growth has not made much of a dent in the country's high joblessness and chronic poverty. The prospects for the majority of Filipinos can only worsen with slowing growth, what is worse though is one sector that is heavily affected by this situation are our senior citizens or the elderly.

There is therefore a felt need to afford our senior citizens additional and better benefits than what are presently provided under our present laws, especially now that with old age their health starts to fail, yet they could no longer or they are hard put to provide for themselves.

The proportion of the older population is rising worldwide. The same is happening in the Philippines where from 3.7 million or 5.4% of the population in 1995, the senior citizen population has increased to 5.8 million or 6.5% of the population as of 2010. Now based on Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) data there are around 3 million indigent senior citizens in the country and

the benefits they are getting are quite dismal.

Based on the study of Coalition of the Services of the Elderly (COSE), only 17% of senior citizens receive social pension at P500, while majority or 54% do not receive any pension at all. Even among those who are receiving pension (SSS, GSIS and others), for SSS pensioners in particular, a third or 34% receive less than P2,000/month while more than half or 52% receive less than P3,000.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, poverty incidence among Filipinos in the first semester of 2015 was estimated at 26.3%. In 2012, also according to PSA, poverty incidence among senior citizens is only 16.2%. But these figures are based on a very low poverty threshold set by the government which in 2015 was PhP 9,140 /month for a family of five, or P1,828/person/month. Even this very low poverty threshold shows how inadequate the present social pension is.

COSE is recommending a universal pension of P1,500 to P2,000 to somehow help improve the plight of our indigent senior citizens.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this proposal is earnestly sought.

Approved,


REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-list

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

Section 1. This law would be known as the '**INCREASED SOCIAL PENSION LAW OF 2016**'

Section 2. Section 2 of Republic Act No. 9994 otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010", is hereby further amended to read as follows:

x.x.x.

"(h) *Indigent senior citizen*, refers to any elderly who is [frail, sickly or with disability, and] WITH MINIMAL (P5,000 OR BELOW) OR without pension or permanent source of income, compensation or MINIMAL (P2000 OR BELOW) financial assistance from his/her relatives to support his/her basic needs, as determined by the Department of Social Welfare and development (DSWD) in consultation with the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board."

Section 3. Section 5 of the same Act, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

x.x.x.

"(h) Additional Government Assistance

"(1) Social Pension

"Indigent senior citizens shall be entitled to a monthly stipend amounting to TWO THOUSAND PESOS (Ph2000.00) to augment the daily subsistence and other medical needs of senior citizens, subject to a review every two (2) years by Congress, in consultation with the DSWD.

Section 4. Separability Clause. - Should any provision herein be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity or the legality of the other provisions not so declared.

Section 5. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, other issuances, and parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed and modified accordingly.

Section 6. Effectivity Clause. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in at least (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,