

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **719**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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REGISTRATION UNIT BILLS AND INDEX SERVICE

Introduced by Congressman Alfredo D. Vargas III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The protection and promotion of the rights and welfare of senior citizens and the Government's duty to care for them are enshrined in the Philippine Constitution. It reads:

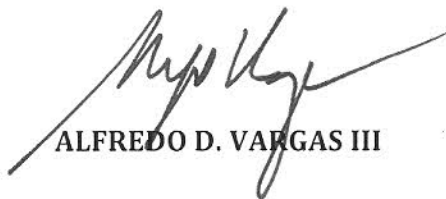
*"The State shall adopt an **integrated and comprehensive approach to health development** which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all the people at affordable costs. There shall be priority for the needs of the **underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women and children.**" (Article XIII, Section 11)*

"The family has the duty to care for its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security." (Article XV, Section 4)

The State recognizes that the elderly are not a burden to the nation but major contributors to its growth and preservers of our culture, values and heritage. Thus, we must exhaust all efforts to ensure that the societal contributions of senior citizens are maximized.

This bill seeks to institutionalize long term care for senior citizens through the establishment of programs that fortify the social protection, development, and health and well-being of our senior citizens. Through this, proper care and attention for our elderly are given, and issues and concerns of the elderly are effectively addressed.

In the light of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ALFREDO D. VARGAS III

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House Bill No. **719**

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AN ACT

**ESTABLISHING AND INSTITUTIONALIZING LONG-TERM CARE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as “*The Long-Term Care for Senior Citizens Act of 2016*”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policies.* – The State recognizes the invaluable contribution of senior citizens to the national development program. Accordingly, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to provide adequate and effective social services to all members of society especially senior citizens so they may live prosperously and enjoy the fruits of their labor. For this purpose, the State undertakes to establish and initiate programs as well as to support endeavors aimed at promoting and advancing the social and economic well-being of senior citizens.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be construed to mean as follows:

- a. A “senior citizen” refers to any person as defined in Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7876, otherwise known as the Senior Citizen Center Act.
- b. Long-term care refers to a sustained provision of comprehensive programs and services to Senior Citizens with the view of enabling them to have dignified, healthy and secured lives.
- c. Dependent senior citizen refers to those persons who are either frail, sickly, suffering from any disability, and has no other means to support his/her basic needs.

SECTION 4. *National Long-Term Care Program Framework.* – A national long-term care program for senior citizens is hereby established which shall embody the following core programs and/or services, among others:

- a. **Social Protection** shall cover programs which seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of senior citizens by promoting and protecting them against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving senior citizen's capacity to manage risks.
- a.1. **Social Welfare.** Curative and preventive interventions that seek to support the special needs of Senior Citizens and to reduce risks associated with old age shall be provided. These shall include activities aimed at protecting senior citizens from abuse, exploitation and discrimination. Moreover, prevention and provision of support services against physical, emotional and financial abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect and abandonment of senior citizens shall be established within the family and at the community level. Towards this end, trainings and awareness campaigns shall be initiated to raise the public's awareness of the problems confronting senior citizens and to equip the public with the necessary know-how to prevent and detect problem areas concerning senior citizens.
 - a.2. **Livelihood/Job Generation Program.** Senior citizens shall be specifically targeted in livelihood programs and other poverty alleviation programs. Further, livelihood programs shall guarantee a minimum income and shall be designed in a manner that increases senior citizens' productivity.
 - a.3. **Social Insurance.** Existing social insurance programs shall be modified and expanded to guarantee that senior citizens shall be adequately protected from loss of income and unemployment as a result of old age. Economic and financial support through other innovative social insurance and pension schemes especially designated for families caring for dependents/disabled senior citizens shall likewise be endeavored.
 - a.4. **Social Safety Nets.** Stop-gap mechanisms or urgent and immediate responses shall be instituted to shield senior citizens from vulnerabilities arising from disasters, emergency and displacement due to development projects, natural and man-made calamities.
- b. **Senior Citizens and Development.** This shall include mainstreaming activities such as lifelong education programs for ageing preparation and non-formal education at the local level for those sixty (60) years old and above and development of programs which will allow senior citizens to remain actively engaged in as many social, economic and community activities as possible.
- c. **Advancing Health and Well-being.** An integrated and innovative elderly-focused health and social services shall be made available at the

local level. Particular emphasis shall be made on disease prevention, health promotion and wellness of mind, body and spirit. Health services shall comprise preventive, curative and rehabilitative health care services in all government and private hospitals, local health facilities and other community-based facilities. The said program shall contemplate the following, among others:

- c.1. Homecare and hospice for the frail and dependent elderly and medical and psychological support for patients requiring continued medical assistance after discharge.
 - c.2. Development and provision of geriatric training at the family and community level.
 - c.3. Mandatory PHILHEALTH coverage for non-contributory senior citizens especially the poor.
- d. **Enabling and Supportive Environment.** Provision of home nursing for the elderly, facilities for respite care, programs on counseling, professional guidance and emotional support and low-cost, community-based activities integrated into existing community health programs as well as strengthening of inter-generational relationships.

Nothing above prevents the agencies tasked to implement the provisions of this Act from introducing other social services and programs designed to promote the National Long-Term Care Program for senior citizens.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Agencies.* – The National Long-Term Care Program for Senior Citizens shall be implemented jointly by the Department of Finance, Department of Health, Department of Interior and Local Government, the various local government units and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The National Inter-Agency Monitoring Board created under Republic Act No. 9257 otherwise known as the Expanded Senior Citizens act shall take the lead in monitoring the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriation.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter the local government units shall undertake the maintenance of the institutions established under this Act.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, after due consultations with the other implementing agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations necessary for the orderly implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,