

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3033

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	
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Introduced by CONGRESSMAN ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Blindness and poor vision have a tremendous impact on one's quality of life, particularly for those living in poverty. Eye diseases usually lead to the loss of productivity, which in turn lead to the loss of income and low standards of living. This then limits the patient's access to quality healthcare services and deprives their families with educational and other opportunities. Therefore, blindness leads to shortened life span and loss of economic productivity of a nation as a whole.¹

It is the overall vision of the Philippines' National Prevention of Blindness Program that all Filipinos shall enjoy the right to sight by year 2020. To achieve this, the State commits to provide access to quality eye care services, strengthen partnerships with stakeholders to eliminate avoidable blindness, empower communities to promote eye health, and to work towards the preservation and restoration of sight of indigent Filipinos as a strategy in poverty alleviation.²

In the efforts of providing the people quality eye care, this bill seeks to create the National Eye Center. The proposed institution will specialize in preventing, treating, and rehabilitating people with eyesight problems and will undertake research and training on the cure and prevention of eye diseases.

This initiative will help the State in achieving its goal to reduce the prevalence of avoidable blindness.

In view of the foregoing, the urgent passage of this bill is sought.


ALFRED VARGAS

¹ Unite for Sight (undated). "Poverty and blindness." Available at: [<http://www.uniteforsight.org/community-eye-health-course/module13>]

² Department of Health's Administrative Order 2013-0010

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AN ACT
CREATING THE NATIONAL EYE CENTER AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. There is hereby created a National Eye Center which is a quasi-government institution attached to the Office of the President.

SECTION 2. The Center shall have its principal office in Metro Manila, and may have such branch offices, hospitals, clinics or subsidiaries in other areas in the Philippines as it may deem proper and necessary.

SECTION 3. The Center shall have the following purposes and objectives:

- a. To specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation and/or relief of eye and allied diseases;
- b. To promote medical and scientific research relative to the prevention and treatment of eye and allied diseases, and to encourage planning, invention and development of artificial means of eye support and transplantation;
- c. To conduct fact finding investigations on eye diseases, and related fields throughout the country or elsewhere, and to report, publish and disseminate information on eye and other related diseases;
- d. To finance, sponsor, hold or participate in congresses, conventions, conferences, seminars, work-shops and training programs on eye diseases and/or related field in the Philippines or abroad; and
- e. To stimulate the formation of other organizations on the national, provincial, city, and/or local levels, and to coordinate the various efforts and activities of each organization for the purpose of achieving a more effective approach to the common problem relative to the purposes and objectives enumerated herein.

SECTION 4. For the attainment and/or furtherance of the above-enumerated purposes and objectives, the Center as a corporate body acting through its Board of Trustees, shall have the following powers and functions.

- a. To adopt and use a corporate seal;
- b. To sue and be sued in its corporate name;
- c. To adopt its by-laws, rules and regulations as it may deem proper and necessary for the implementation of the purposes and objectives of this Act;
- d. To succeed by its corporate name, and to acquire and possess properties, rights and interests of whatever kind and nature, and mortgage, pledge, alienate, encumber or otherwise dispose of the same;
- e. To award, enter into, make, execute, perform and carry out domestic or foreign contracts of whatever kind and nature;
- f. To invest in, and purchase or otherwise acquire, own, hold, use, lease, grant, mortgage, pledge, sell, assign, convey, transfer, exchange or otherwise deal with, real and/or personal properties of every kind and nature, including share of stock, bonds, notes, securities and other evidences of indebtedness or obligations of other corporations, whether domestic or foreign and whether government or private;
- g. To obtain loans, borrow funds and/or arrange financing or credit assistance of whatever kind and nature from all sources, whether domestic or foreign and whatever government or private, and mortgage, pledge or otherwise encumber any of its properties and assets for the purpose of securing or guaranteeing the performance of any obligation it may undertake for itself or for other entities in which it may be interested;
- h. To levy, assess and collect such fees, charges and assessments as may be necessary or proper to support, finance and maintain its operations; and
- i. To exercise such other powers and functions as may be incidental or necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives of this Act.

SECTION 5. The Center shall be governed, and its activities and properties shall be directed, controlled and managed by a Board of Trustees, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall be composed of a Chairman and ten (10) members, all of whom shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines. The Chief Executive Officer of the Center, who shall be appointed from among the members of the Board in accordance hereof, shall be the ex-officio Vice Chairman of the Board.

The members of the Board shall serve for a term of three (3) years, with a right to hold-over until their respective successors shall have been duly appointed and qualified. The President of the Philippines may, however, remove any member of the Board for cause. Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the Board, the person appointed to fill the vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired term of the member replaced.

SECTION 6. The Board shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. To formulate policies, guidelines and programs to effectively implement and carry out the purposes and objectives of this Act;
- b. To prescribe, review and revise the amount of the fees, charges, and assessments levied and collected for the support and maintenance of the operations of the Center;
- c. To control the management, operation and administration of the Center;
- d. To promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary or proper for the effective exercise of power and functions as well as the discharge of the duties, responsibilities of the Center, its officers and employees;

- e. To authorize such expenditures of the Center as may be necessary or proper for the effective management, operation and administration of the Center;
- f. To determine and organize the Center's organizational and administrative structure or pattern, and to establish and fix, review, revise and adjust the appropriate compensation scheme of the officers and employees of the Center, with reasonable allowances, bonuses and other incentives;
- g. To adopt the annual and supplemental budget of receipts and expenditures of the Center;
- h. To appoint, remove suspend or otherwise discipline officers of the Center occupying executive and senior management positions;
 - i. To exercise all the general powers necessary or incidental to the attainment of the purposes and objectives of this Act, and
- j. To do any and all acts as may be necessary or proper for the attainment of the powers and functions of the Center.

SECTION 7. The Center may call upon any Department, Bureau, Office, Agency or instrumentality of the Government, including government-owned or controlled corporations, for such assistance as it may need in the pursuit of the purposes and objectives of this Act.

SECTION 8. The Center is hereby authorized to solicit and receive donations, grants, contribution, gifts or endowments from all sources whether foreign or domestic, and whether government or private, without the need of securing a permit, approval or registration from any government agency.

SECTION 9. The books and accounts of the Center shall be under the charge of a Resident Auditor, subject to periodic auditing by the Chairman of the Commission on Audit, or his duly authorized representative.

SECTION 10. The Center and its officers and employees shall be covered by the Civil Service Law, rules and regulations.

SECTION 11. The Center shall render to the President of the Philippines an annual report on its operations and accomplishments.

SECTION 12. The provisions of the general corporation law, insofar as they are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act or with the purposes and objectives for which the Center is formed, shall apply to the Center.

SECTION 13. If for any reason, the Center is dissolved, properties and assets shall revert to the National Government for disposition in accordance with law.

SECTION 14. The amount of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the necessary initial operating expenses and maintenance of the National Eye Center. Thereafter, such sum as maybe necessary for the continued operation of the Center shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 15. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,