

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4870



Introduced by **CONGRESSMAN ALFRED VARGAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to the United Nations, the Philippines is the only country in the world whose rate of teenage pregnancies has risen over the last two decades.¹ One in ten young Filipino women between 15 to 19 years old is either already a mother or pregnant with her first child.²

Pregnancy at a young age poses critical health risks to both the mother and the unborn child. These include inadequate nutrition, complications, premature birth, fetal death and maternal death.

Thus, the State must exert all efforts not only to curb the alarming rate of teenage pregnancy in the country but also to ensure that the young mothers' holistic welfare is protected so they can be productive contributors to the nation's development.

This bill seeks to establish Refuge and Assistance Centers for Young Pregnant Women in all provinces, cities, and municipalities, which will provide medical assistance, guidance, and livelihood generation for young mothers in the country.

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


ALFRED VARGAS

¹ Rahman, S. "Philippine teen pregnancy rates defy trend." Al Jazeera.
[<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/02/philippine-teen-pregnancy-rates-defy-trend-160228181232852.html>] Retrieved 16 January 2017.

² Philippine Statistics Authority. 2013 National Demographic and Health Survey.
[<https://psa.gov.ph/content/one-ten-young-filipino-women-age-15-19-already-mother-or-pregnant-first-child-final-results>] Retrieved 16 January 2017.

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A REFUGE AND ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR YOUNG PREGNANT
WOMEN IN EVERY PROVINCE, CITY AND MUNICIPALITY OF THE PHILIPPINES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Young Women's Refuge and Assistance Act."

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to value the dignity of young women and recognize their fundamental role in nation-building. Towards this end, the State shall protect and promote the physical, moral, and social well-being of young women by providing them with the facilities and opportunities that will enhance their welfare and assist them in their endeavours with a goal to help them realize their full potential in the service of the nation.

Sec. 3. Establishment of Refuge and Assistance Centers. - In order to carry out the above-declared policy, there shall be established Refuge and Assistance Centers for Young Pregnant Women (hereinafter referred to as the "Centers") in every province, city and municipality all over the country.

Sec. 4. Beneficiaries. - The beneficiaries of this law shall include all young women who are twenty-one (21) years of age and below who are pregnant, or who suffered a miscarriage or abortion, and their children.

Sec. 5. Refuge and Assistance Center. - The Center shall be under the management and supervision of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) with the coordination of assistance of the Department of Health (DOH). The Center shall be headed by a Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines. The Director of the Center shall hold a masters or doctorate degree in Social Work or Community Development or similar courses and shall have a minimum experience of five (5) years in counselling, social and psychological services and other related field or experience.

Each Center shall have the following personnel (a) at least doctor or midwife, and (b) such other personnel necessary to provide assistance to the beneficiaries of this Act.

Sec. 6. Functions of the Centers. – The Centers shall have the following functions.

- (a) To provide temporary shelter and refuge to beneficiaries of this Act;
- (b) To provide free medical assistance, including monthly pre-natal check-up, or such other care for young women to prevent potential risks from child-bearing, and all other medical services for childbirth and delivery, and provide them pre-natal vitamin and other medication;
- (c) To undertake programs geared towards the development of maternal and child health care, self-enhancement and the development of skills for livelihood generation, social communication, and other related skills which will help women and children to become productive members of society; and
- (d) to perform other functions as may be necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

Sec. 7. Rehabilitation and Development Program. – The DSWD in coordination with DOH shall, within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, formulate a program for the rehabilitation, development and protection of young women and children.

Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The DSWD in coordination with DOH shall issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations within six (6) months from the approval of this Act.

Sec. 9. Funding and Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations for the DSWD under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for the continued operation and maintenance of the Centers shall be included in the regular appropriations for the DSWD in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 10. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to, or inconsistent with this Act, are hereby modified or repealed accordingly.

Sec. 11. Separability Clause. – If for any reason, any section or part of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 12. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,