

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6544**



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is one of the 37 countries that fully implement the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes through its Executive Order No. 51 or the Milk Code. Enacted in 1986, the Milk Code ensures the protection of the breastfeeding culture in the country. However, after more than three decades of the implementation of the Milk Code, studies still show that Filipino mothers have yet to fully understand the benefits of feeding their babies exclusively with breast milk.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, only 34% of Filipino infants under six months old are exclusively breastfed. Most Filipino mothers opt to use milk formulas due to the alleged inability to produce breast milk and time constraints.

To further strengthen the Philippines' existing policies on breastfeeding, this bill seeks to establishing breastfeeding centers in barangays. These breastfeeding centers shall serve as a haven of information on breastfeeding and shall nourish a sense of community and support among breastfeeding mothers and their families.

As breastfeeding offer a number of benefits not only to the infants but also to their mothers, we must ensure that they are reaping them all. Thus, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


ALFRED VARGAS

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A BREASTFEEDING CENTER IN EVERY BARANGAY
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

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 "*Barangay Breastfeeding Centers Act*".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is the policy of the State to promote the general welfare of the people. Pursuant to this policy, it shall promote breastfeeding as a means to provide protection against major illnesses in children such as respiratory infections, diarrhea and malnutrition. The State shall likewise promote breastfeeding as a means to ensure material health by protecting against hemorrhage, anemia, certain cancers as well as facilitating the recovery of mothers from rigors of pregnancy and birth and helping prevent closely spaced pregnancies.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the term:

- (A) "Breastfeeding" mean feeding of the child directly from the breast or the expression on milk from the breast of a lactating woman;
- (B) "Barangay breastfeeding centers" means breastfeeding centers situated in every barangay which provide breastfeeding services such as information on proper breastfeeding method and proper use of breast feeding materials;
- (C) "Barangay breastfeeding personnel" authorized health workers assigned by the municipal health office to supervise the healthcare facilities in each barangay; and
- (D) "Breastfeeding materials" means materials used to aid lactating mothers in breastfeeding which include medicines, vitamins, breast pumps and other useful paraphernalia; materials shall also include

breastfeeding milk supplements to be supplied by the barangay breastfeeding centers.

SECTION 4. Establishing of Barangay Breastfeeding Centers. – If the barangay health center in a particular barangay already has sufficient space and equipment to facilitate the barangay breastfeeding program, the barangay breastfeeding center shall be integrated within the barangay health center. If the barangay health center is not sufficiently equipped to facilitate the breastfeeding centers, a separate breastfeeding center shall be built.

SECTION 5. Campaign for Breastfeeding and its Importance to the Health of Infants and Mothers. – The barangay breastfeeding personnel shall also conduct periodical campaigns involving information dissemination on the importance of breast feeding for the health of mothers and infants.

SECTION 6. Breastfeeding Equipment and Supplements. – Constituents of every barangay shall avail of the services and facilities of barangay breastfeeding centers for free. No payment in any form shall be accepted by the personnel of the breastfeeding centers. They shall however, be allowed to receive donations in the form of breastfeeding materials and supplements.

SECTION 7. Beneficiaries of the Services and Facilities of Breastfeeding Centers. – All residents of the respective barangays shall be entitled to avail of the services of the barangay breastfeeding centers.

SECTION 8. Funding for Barangay Breastfeeding Centers. – The funds to be used for the barangay breastfeeding centers shall be allocated from the budget of the respective local government units. The respective barangay councils shall also allocate budget for the breastfeeding centers from the budget of their respective barangays.

SECTION 9. Monitoring and Inspection of Barangay Breastfeeding Centers – The municipal or city health office having jurisdiction over the respective barangay shall monitor and inspect the services and facilities of every barangay breastfeeding center at least once every two months. The municipal/city health office shall ensure that every breastfeeding center has sufficient equipment and are able to efficiently service the needs of constituents.

SECTION 10. Trainings and Seminars. – The barangay breastfeeding personnel should undergo trainings and seminars to improve and update their skills in providing breastfeeding services. The municipal or city health offices, in coordination with the barangay officials of every barangay, shall schedule breastfeeding trainings and seminars at least once every six months.

SECTION 11. Implementing Agencies. – The Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the local government units shall be responsible for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Secretaries of Health and Social Welfare and Development shall formulate the necessary implementing rules and regulations for this Act within sixty (60) days upon its effectivity.

SECTION 13. Appropriations. – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of this program shall be included in the annual appropriation for DOH and DSWD.

SECTION 14. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

SECTION 15. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 16. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,