



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



Eighteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8316**

Introduced by Representative Lord Allan Jay Q. Velasco

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to grant the President of the Philippines the power to suspend the scheduled increases in PhilHealth premium rates in times of national emergencies, amending for the purpose Republic Act No. 11223, otherwise known as the "*Universal Health Care Act*."

The Universal Health Care Act was enacted in 2018 to "*ensure that all Filipinos are guaranteed equitable access to quality and affordable health care goods and services, and protected against financial risk.*" The intent of the law is clear and cannot be overemphasized – Filipinos need and deserve a comprehensive set of health services that are cost-effective, of high quality, and responsive.

While we recognize that the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) only aims to implement the provisions of RA 11223, imposing a higher premium rate to our *kababayans* under our current conditions will definitely enforce a new round of financial burden to its members. Suspending the imposition of the new PhilHealth premium rates will provide a much-needed relief from the negative effects of the pandemic and will assure Filipinos that the government is sensitive to their sentiments.

Our *kababayans* have barely recovered from the losses and difficulties brought by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Even today, while some restrictions may have been lifted, most livelihood, businesses, and other sources of income remain shuttered and closed, while many Filipinos remain unemployed. As of October 2020, the unemployment rate in the country still stands at 8.7% amounting to 3.8 million Filipinos in the labor force.

The social justice provisions in the 1987 Philippine Constitution were precisely drafted and written to avoid double economic jeopardy to Filipinos during times of crises. President

Rodrigo Roa Duterte has himself supported the calls to defer the increase in PhilHealth premium contributions.

These are extraordinary times and Congress must respond accordingly. In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO
Representative



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AN ACT

GRANTING THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES THE POWER TO SUSPEND THE SCHEDULED INCREASES IN PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION (PHILHEALTH) PREMIUM RATES, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11223, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE ACT"

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

SECTION 1. Section 10 of Republic Act No. 11223 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 10. Premium Contributions. - For direct contributors, premium rates shall be in accordance with the following schedule, and monthly income floor and ceiling:

"x x x

THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES MAY, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF FINANCE AND THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AS CHAIRPERSON OF PHILHEALTH, SUSPEND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF

THE SCHEDULED INCREASES IN PREMIUM RATES IN TIMES OF NATIONAL EMERGENCIES WHEN PUBLIC INTEREST SO REQUIRES.”

SEC. 2. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,