

**HON. RISA HONTIVEROS**  
Chairperson  
Committee on Women, Children  
Family Relations and Gender Equality  
Senate of the Philippines  
Pasay City

Attn: **Ms. Gemma Genoveva Tanpiengco**  
Committee Secretary

Dear **SENATOR HONTIVEROS**,


In reference to your letter dated 10 May 2023 about **Senate Bill Numbered (SBN) 148** or the **“Maternity Benefit for Women in the Informal Economy Act,”** may we respectfully inform you that the DSWD supports SBN 148 because the Department believes that providing income security to mothers reduces maternal and child health risks as mothers do not have to return to their economic activities prematurely. As such, they would have more time to take care of their newborn, thus strengthening the practice of breastfeeding, where the basic physical, emotional, and psychological needs of mothers and infants are fulfilled and protected.

We take this opportunity to recommend that the Department of Health (DOH) or the Philippine Health Insurance Company (PHIC) take the lead in providing maternity benefits for female workers who are non-members of the Social Security System since Republic Act No. 11223 or the “Universal Health Care Act” mandates the DOH and PHIC to define specific health service packages for population-based and individual-based health services. Further, the information on pregnancy and childbirth is readily available to them.

For the Chairperson’s consideration.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
**REX GATCHALIAN**  
Secretary  
Date: MAY 17 2023