

HONORABLE IMEE R. MARCOS

Chairperson

Committee on Social Justice, Welfare and Rural Development

Senate of the Philippines

Pasay City

Dear **Senator MARCOS**:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) lauds the authors of **Senate Bill Nos. 501 and 592** or the “**Disability Support Fund Act**”, introduced by Senator Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., and **Senate Bill No. 592** or the “**Disability Support for Persons with Disabilities Act**”, introduced by Senator Risa Hontiveros.

The DSWD noted that these bills need further review and study. We are concerned with the long term goal of these bills as it appears that the provision of a monthly subsidy to Persons with Disability would be interpreted merely as another dole-out from the government. Thus, we encourage the author of the bills to also consider the long-term impact of these grants and focus more on capacitating our indigent Persons with Disability to be self-sufficient and independent in the long run through improved programs and innovative strategies.

The Department also noted similarities between the two (2) bills with **Senate Bill No. 31** or the “**Social Pension of Indigent Persons with Disability**”, authored by Sen. Manuel M. Lapid. In this connection, may we suggest consolidating SBNs 31, 501 and 592 into one. The DSWD’s previous position paper will serve as a supplemental position paper.

Further, the Department respectfully submits the following comments and recommendations, to contribute to the bills’ enhancement:

1. Under **SBN 592, Section 3 - Definition of Terms**, on item (f)

Consider identifying the proper authority who will be conducting the disability assessment i.e. National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), Department of Health (DOH) accredited health service providers and/or licensed health professionals;

2. Under **Coverage**:

2.1 Under **SBN 592, on Sec. 4**

Specify the coverage of the stipend to certified and assessed indigent persons with disabilities only. It is understood that the program is of a progressive phase and is termed “universal”, however, other programs, services or benefits can

be availed by persons with disabilities except for the basic stipend which is only targeted for indigent beneficiaries.

2.2 Under **SBN 501**, on **Sec. 5**

Include parameters for the purpose of setting realistic expectations as regards the services and/or support that will be provided.

3. Under **SBN 501, Sec. 4 - Disability Support Fund**

3.1 Elaborate on the process of accessing the Disability Support Fund from the NCDA to local government units (LGUs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs);

3.2 NGOs/ CSOs who will be part of this program should have accreditation and have undergone assessment through the NCDA or authorized hospitals or health facilities; and

3.3 Revise the last sentence to read as:

THIS WILL PROVIDE MORE CHOICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN AVAILING OF SERVICES NECESSARY FOR THEM TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

Particularly extracting the words "*like any ordinary individual*", so as to avoid any negative insinuation.

4. Under **SBN 592, Sec. 5 - Disability Support Allowance Program**

We are concerned with the long term goal of this bill, specifically Phase 3 which intends to cover everyone with disabilities over an indefinite period of time. Consider that amendments to RA 7277 have already given a substantial amount of privileges and discounts to persons with disabilities.

Also we believe that since the bill concerns financial assistance to qualified persons with disabilities, it will be prudent for our legislators to likewise consider making special arrangements in the distribution of the monthly subsidy to beneficiaries, since a number of persons with disabilities may have difficulties in their mobility and even in traveling.

5. Under **SBN 592, Sec. 6 - Eligibility**, on the **first paragraph**

Rephrase this provision to add limits specifically on the stipend to be given only to certified and assessed indigent persons with disabilities.

6. Under **SBN 501, Sec. 7 – Monitoring**

Include in the Inter-Agency Committee the Department of Health and DSWD in the monitoring of the said bills.

7. General Comments


The consolidated version should include:

- 7.1 A separate provision concerning the criteria in order to be an eligible beneficiary under this Act; and
- 7.2 Identification criteria (i.e. poor, middle class and/or indigent) for the eligible beneficiaries who will receive the subsidy.

This is being submitted for the Chairperson's consideration.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


ERWIN T. TULFO
Secretary
Date: 16 SEP 2022