

HONORABLE MARGARITA IGNACIA B. NOGRALES

Party List - PBA
House of Representatives
Quezon City

Dear **Representative NOGRALES**:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) **supports House Bill No. 1364** entitled, “An Act Providing for the Benefits and Privileges to Single Persons and Their Dependents Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes” or the “**Single Persons’ Welfare Act,**” introduced by the Honorable Representative.

To contribute to the bill’s enhancement, the DSWD respectfully recommends the following:

1. General Comments

1.1 If the intention of the House Bill is to amend Republic Act No. 11861, we suggest changing the title of the House Bill to reflect such intention. For example, the title can be changed to “An Act Amending Republic Act No. 11861, Providing for the Benefits and Privileges to Single Persons and Their Dependents, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes”.

1.2 To review the definition and criteria for the identification of single and solo parents.

1.3 To further assess as it is a duplication of the recently passed Republic Act No. 11861 or the “Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act.”

2. Section 1 – Title

It is recommended to use in the title “Singles and their Dependents’ Welfare Act”.

3. Section 2 – Declaration of Policy

It should be clarified what are the types of comprehensive program and services appropriate for Singles’ Welfare as a result of thorough assessment of their identified needs performed by involved government and non-government agencies.

4. Section 3 – Definition of Terms

- 4.1 To suggest that the same provision be classified as an amendment since it effectively changes and incorporates new terminologies, which are “Single Persons” and “Dependents”, that will inevitably affect the interpretation of the Act in its entirety.
- 4.2 To clarify the definition of “single persons” and ensure it will not have any conflict with the definition of “solo parent” per RA 8972.

Alternatively, to enhance the definition of a single person by enumerating the circumstances that qualify him or her as such. In the definition of a single person, consider including one who has not been legally married and does not have a biological child, and:

1. Who financially supports his or her parent(s)
2. Who financially supports his or her sibling(s) whether or not minors
3. Who financially supports any of his or her relatives whether or not minors

Moreover, while it is defined by Section 3 (b), cite/integrate the term “dependent” in the definition of a “single person”, considering further that the term “single person”, is cited/integrated in the definition of a “dependent”

- 4.3 For the same provision be classified as an amendment since it effectively changes and incorporates new terminologies, which are “Single Persons” and “Dependents”, that will inevitably affect the interpretation of the Act in its entirety.
- 4.4 To further provide criteria as to coverage since not all single persons are in need of assistance.
- 4.5 To possibly consider inclusion of a qualifier as to the consistency of financial support or aid provided to the identified dependent/s.
- 4.6 To consider inclusion of the extent of relationship to the “minor nephews or nieces”.
- 4.7 To include in the definition of terms the following:
 1. Single – other terminologies used in some sections do not respond to the title
 2. Welfare
 3. Comprehensive programs
 4. Programs

5. Services
6. Government Agencies
7. Non-Government Agencies
8. Status of Circumstances
9. Benefits
10. Privileges
11. Custody
12. Aids
13. Family
14. Ascendants
15. Fourth Degree of Consanguinity etc.
16. LGBT- it should be spelled out not acronym, provide definition
17. Flexible Work from Home schedules
18. Pension
19. Subsidy-tested monthly cash subsidy

5. Section 5 – Amending Section 9 of Republic Act No. 11861

We would kindly point out that it is actually Section 8, not Section 9 of the aforementioned Republic Act that introduced the amendments on Educational Benefits, to wit:

SEC. 8. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 8972 is hereby repealed and a new provision is inserted to read as follows: “SEC. 9 Education al benefits – The DepEd, CHED, and TESDA shall provide scholarship programs for solo parents.....”

SEC. 9. Section 10 of the Republic Act No. 8972 is hereby repealed and a new provision is inserted to read as follows: “SEC. 10 Child Minding Centers – The DOLE and the CSC shall promote and encourage the establishment of appropriate child minding centers within the workplace, or in accessible locations to the workplace or residence of the solo parent.”

6. Section 6 – Additional Benefits, to consider the benefits stated in RA 11861.

7. Section 7 – Section 12 of Republic Act No. 11861

- 7.1 To provide clarity as to whether Section 7 would amend Section 12 (a) of RA 11861, which in effect will be contrary to Section 6 of this Bill; or if Section 7 merely intends to add to Section 12. In which case, with the latter being more likely, please frame Section 7 as a new provision to be incorporated to Section 12, instead of an amendment.

- 7.2 The “further” clause appears to be about a solo parent (not about a single person). The proponents can instead include another section adopting the benefits stated in RA 1186 or recommended coverage for single persons to expand the scope of the Solo Parents Act.
- 7.3 Identify the lead agency in the implementation and monitoring of the Single Persons Welfare Act.
- 7.4 To consider Inclusion of a qualifier as to who among the single persons only can avail of this provision.

8. Section 7 – Implementing Rules and Regulations

- 8.1 To be renumbered as Section 8.
- 8.2 To include Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), DSWD, Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Human Rights (HR), NGOs who work with women, whose agency whether government or non-government is catering to the needs of Lesbians, Gay, Bisexuals and Transgenders (LGBT). All these government and non-government agencies can help in the social protection program for the “Unmarried Singles and their Dependents Act”.
- 8.3 To include a list of requirements in order for an individual to be identified as a “Single Person” and be able to access the benefits and privileges such as scholarships, monthly cash subsidy of PHP 1,500 for those earning minimum wages, and flexible working schedule and at least once a week work from home schedule.

9. Other Comments

- 10.1 Republic Act 8972 and Republic Act 11861 cover a portion of “single persons” as defined in the proposed bill (i.e. Any family member who assumes the responsibility of the head of the family as a result of death, abandonment, disappearance, or prolonged absence of the parents or solo parent). Thus, the bill can either be repackaged as social protection for single person household technically categorized in the international community as one-person household (OPH) or serve as an amendment to RA 11861 to expand its coverage to single persons and their dependents (i.e. single persons rearing unemployed parents and children not their own).


In addition, should this bill still progress or serve as an amendment to the Solo Parents Act, the following additional provisions are recommended:

1. Consider including tax exemption or tax reduction privileges for single persons with dependents;
2. To consider incorporating the process of enrolling as a Single Person, its validity, and punishment to individuals if this Act is violated; and
3. The creation of the database for "All Solo Parents" with the inclusion of those "Single Persons".

This is being submitted for the Honorable Representative's consideration.

Thank you.

Very Truly Yours,


ERWIN T. TULFO
Secretary
Date: 30 SEP 2022