

HONORABLE RODOLFO “OMPONG” M. ORDANES

Chairperson

Special Committee on Senior Citizens

House of Representatives

Quezon City

Dear **Representative ORDANES**,

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) **fully supports** the **House Bill No. 2278** or “**The Universal Social Pension for Senior Citizens Act**”, introduced by Representative Gerville Reyes-Luistro and **House Bill No. 2485** entitled: “**An Act Granting Universal Social Pension to Senior Citizens, Further Amending Republic Act No. 7432, as Amended by RA 9994, Otherwise Known as the “Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010”**”, introduced by Rep. Raul Angelo D. Bongabon, which seek to grant social pension to all senior citizens whether or not they are indigent.

However, the DSWD respectfully suggests to the Committee to revisit the newly enacted Republic Act No. 11916 entitled, “*An Act Increasing the Social Pension of Indigent Senior Citizens and Appropriating Funds Therefor*” and the possible harmonization and/or inclusion of certain provisions of the Draft Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 11916 in view of these Bills. Also, to coordinate with the DBM if the proposed subsidy covering all senior citizens has the possibility to be funded in sustaining the implementation of the program.

Likewise, should this Bill be enacted into law, we suggest the Universal Social Pension Program be implemented by the LGUs through local funding to cover those who are not yet covered by the DSWD’s social pension program. Further, that the LGUs set criteria, such as a) criteria as stipulated in RA 9994 or the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010; b) criteria based on income or economic status of the senior citizen; and c) criteria depending on the assessment of the social workers. Finally, for the LGUs to further enhance the programs/services for senior citizens.

For the enhancement of the Bill, the DSWD recommends the following:

General Comments

1. To harmonize and consolidate the two (2) Bills into one particularly the amount of subsidies for the senior citizens;
2. To change DSWD to NSCS as the implementing agency pursuant to Section 11 of RA 11350 entitled, “*An Act Creating the National Commission of Senior*”

Citizens, Providing for its functions, Abolishing the National Council and Monitoring Board, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 7432, as Amended, and Appropriating Funds Therefor” which states “All functions, programs projects and activities which are being undertaken by the DSWD for the formulation, implementation, and coordination of social welfare and development policies and programs for the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged senior citizens shall be transferred to the NCSC”.

Specific Comments

1. HBN 2278

- 1.1. On **Section 4. Qualifications**, to clarify and include the proper authority who will assess and validate the qualification of a senior citizen aside from the barangay officer/s who will certify the good moral character of the senior citizen;
- 1.2. On **Section 5. Universal Social Pension**, we support that all senior citizens shall be entitled to a monthly stipend amounting to PhP1,000.00 provided that senior citizen does not receive a pension of more than P3,500.00 from the GSIS, SSS and other public or private social protection system;
- 1.3. On **Section 6. Implementation and Management Plan**, to exclude the DSWD pursuant to the enactment of RA 11350 that mandates the DSWD to transfer the functions to the NCSC under Section (5) 11. Under the said law, the NCSC is the lead agency for senior citizens' concern. The Commission is mandated to ensure the full implementation of laws, policies and programs for senior citizens; and
- 1.4. On **Section 7. Waiver of Pension**, to suspend the application of the waiver in case the senior citizens reported to be in crisis situation which affects his/her financial capacity to meet his/her medical and other needs.

2. HBN 2485

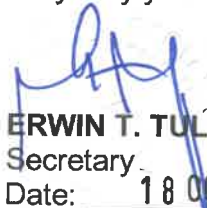
- 2.1. On Section 1, Amending Section 5. Government Assistance last paragraph of RA 7432, as further amended by RA 9994:
 - 2.1.1. To revisit or re-examine the amount of the stipend to be provided;
 - 2.1.2. To conduct a cost benefit analysis in order to find the most effective and responsive service for older persons;

- 2.1.3. To remove the last clause mentioning limitation of granting stipend to senior citizens who are receiving a separate pension from the GSIS or SSS; and
- 2.1.4. To include the basis for this provision, e.g. based on the results of the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) suggests that senior citizens in the bottom to 50% of per capita income distribution spend, on average, about PhP5,000.00 monthly for food (over PhP3,000.00 for the first decile, around PhP4,500.00 for the second decile and around PhP6,000.00 for the third to the fifth decile.

This is being submitted for the Chairperson's consideration.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


ERWIN T. TULFO
Secretary
Date: 18 OCT 2022