

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
2nd Regular Session

House Bill No. 9331



Introduced by Representative PAOLO Z. DUTERTE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Farmers serve as the backbone of the country as they play the critical role of ensuring the country's food security. Despite their invaluable contribution, most of them still fall below the poverty line as the Philippine Statistics Authority accounts for the sector's poverty incidence rate at 30.6% in 2021. Worse, the nation continues to witness the local farmers' excess agricultural produce go to waste and remain unutilized.

In pursuit of promoting the agricultural sector and sustaining the livelihood of local farmers, it is imperative for the government to establish a system that will support the purchase and consumption of the local farmers' produce in the event that these are not sold or consumed in the local markets. Hence, apart from institutionalizing the mandatory breakfast feeding program to all public day care centers, preschools, and elementary schools, this Bill seeks to mandate the national and local governments to purchase the produce of local farmers or producers for the proposed school feeding programs.

The mentioned program will not only benefit local farmers but also the schools and students who are guaranteed with nutritious food that are prepared with fresh and in-season ingredients. It is only fitting to put our farmers first when attending to our countrymen's need for subsistence, thereby placing our farmers at the frontlines for food requirements. Note however, that this bill does not aim to derail fair competition in terms of foreign trade and importation but to give priority to the country's own produce.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Paolo Z. Duterte", written over a vertical line.

HON. PAOLO Z. DUTERTE

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FREE FOOD FOR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND DAY CARE CENTERS FROM PRODUCTS OF FARMERS PURCHASED BY THE GOVERNMENT OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "SCHOOL FEEDING PURCHASED FROM LOCAL FARMERS PROGRAM"

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*School Feeding Purchased from Local Farmers Program Act of 2023.*"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to feed our children and secure their education. It is also the policy of the State to free our people from poverty by providing a guaranteed market for the products of our farmers, thereby promoting full employment in the agricultural sector, presently the sector with the highest poverty incidence.

SEC. 3. *Breakfast Feeding Program.* - A breakfast feeding program shall be mandatory in all public day care centers, preschools, and elementary schools. This breakfast feeding program shall be administered by the Secretary of the Department of Education. School breakfasts shall be made available free of charge to school children in all public day care centers, preschools, and elementary schools. Feeding shall be done in the morning, preferably before the start of classes. School breakfasts must meet the applicable recommendations of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI). The decisions about what specific food to serve and how they are prepared shall be made by the school authorities, based on guidelines to be issued by the Secretary of the Department of Education.

SEC. 4. *Guaranteed Market for Farmers Fund.* - A Guaranteed Market for Farmers Fund shall be established which shall be administered by the Department of Education. Five Billion Pesos (P5,000,000,000.00) shall be appropriated from the National Treasury for this purpose upon the effectivity of this Act. For every succeeding year thereafter, such amount shall be increased by increments of at least

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SEC. 5. *Guaranteed Market for Farmers.* - Farmers, identified by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Social Welfare and Development under the National Household Targeting Survey to be living in poverty, shall be given a guarantee that their produce shall be purchased by the government. The maximum amount to be allocated for each farmer shall be determined so as to ensure that their net income shall not fall below the poverty threshold for their respective localities/regions.

SEC. 6. *Technical Training and Assistance.* - The Secretary of the Department of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Health, the Director of the FNRI, and the Director-General/Secretary of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), shall develop a program to provide the food service personnel of public day care centers, preschools, and elementary schools with technical training and assistance to prepare healthy meals. The same personnel shall be responsible for security the produce of the identified farmers from the respective localities.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Secretary of the Department of Health, the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Director of the FNRI, the Director-General/Secretary of the TESDA, and other appropriate government agencies, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act. Such rules and regulations shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision, or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,