

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9089



Introduced by
REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party);
REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE, REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE, and REP. EUFEMIA C.
CULLAMAT (Bayan Muna Partylist); REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers' Partylist);
and REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Kabataan Partylist)

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A TEN THOUSAND PESOS (P10,000) EMERGENCY CASH AID FOR FAMILIES
AFFECTED BY THE SEVERE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN AND SERIES OF CALAMITIES
AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the midst of the militarist restrictions amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine economy has crashed into its lowest point since 1946, suffering its first recession in 29 years. Millions of Filipinos were thrown into joblessness and more than a trillion pesos were slashed from the incomes of Filipino families as a result of the lockdown and other restrictions. Philippine Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020 plunged by 9.5 percent – the biggest economic decline since World War II, and unemployment rate reached its highest since 2005 at an average of 10.5 percent for the same period. It is estimated that the pandemic has pushed around 2.7 million Filipinos to poverty despite the rollout of social amelioration programs (SAPs) towards the middle of the year. Cash subsidies granted to poor families and displaced workers proved to be largely insufficient, aside from the fact that interventions were scandalously delayed and marred with irregularities.

The economic fallout caused by the pandemic and restrictions has disproportionately affected Filipino women – with majority of female workers concentrated in low-paying, low-quality, and non-regular jobs. Official data indicate that women's labor force participation rate has dropped a lot more than their male counterparts. With the closure of businesses and disruptions in the informal economy, millions of Filipino women lost their jobs and their sources of income while bearing increased domestic pressures due to the stay-at-home policy.

According to a jobs report by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), a total of 26,060 micro, small, medium and large businesses closed permanently or retrenched some of their workers, while more than 4.5 million workers in 161,251 establishments were trapped in a "no work, no pay" situation due to the prolonged temporary business closure or reduced workhours. A comprehensive July 2020 survey conducted by the World Bank, the Department of Finance and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) also confirmed that around 65 percent of Philippine-based companies either permanently shut down or temporarily closed, pointing to mass layoffs and loss of incomes.

The severe economic shocks inflicted by the haphazard restrictions and wrong priorities in the COVID-19 response were compounded by the devastation wrought by typhoons during the last quarter of the year on millions of poor and vulnerable families across the country. The back-to-back typhoons "Rolly" and "Ulysses" displaced over 1 million Filipinos and affected more than one-third of the country's population. The torrential rains, strong winds and massive flooding inflicted heavy damage to agriculture, and thus pushed the prices of agricultural commodities up.

Rising food prices and transport costs have resulted in higher inflation rates even as poor families continue to reel from the massive destruction of livelihood and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Inflation spiked to a two-year-high of 4.7 percent in February 2021, as prices of pork and other food commodities surged. For the bottom 30 percent of Filipino households, inflation shot up to 5.5 percent during the same period.

The country is in a strikingly bleak and unparalleled economic downturn, with figures on unemployment and inflation expected to worsen in the coming months. Despite these, the Duterte administration has repeatedly rejected calls for fresh cash assistance programs. Such stance carries the imminent risk of further plunging millions of Filipinos into poverty and economic misery – even as the Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases has imposed stricter restrictions for Metro Manila and four nearby provinces. It must be acknowledged that the 2021 General Appropriations Act is utterly devoid of any massive social protection or social amelioration program that would revitalize consumption and stave off more job losses. Without a sufficient cash subsidy program to poor families to cushion the impacts of the worst economic recession, the quality of life of more ordinary Filipinos are bound for eventual collapse.

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



ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party



CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist



FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist



EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist



FRANCE L. CASTRO
Act Teachers Partylist



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COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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

SECTION 1. Short title. This Act shall be known as the "P10K Emergency Cash Aid or EC Aid" Act of 2021.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. The State must ensure that Filipino families will not further fall into the poverty trap and that dwindling family incomes will be augmented amid the severe economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Towards this end, the State shall provide an immediate, quick-release cash assistance to poor families as the effects of the pandemic are seen to persist until 2023.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.

- a) Family – a group of persons usually living together and composed of the head and other persons related to the head by blood, marriage or adoption. It includes both the nuclear and extended family.
- b) Informal sector worker – a worker whose employment is not subject to standard labor legislation, taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits including, but not limited to independent contractors, street vendors, public utility vehicle drivers, operators, freelancers, agricultural and fisheries workers, and self-employed workers in the gig economy; the job is casual or of a limited short duration; the hours of work or wage are below a certain threshold; the worker is not covered either by SSS or GSIS; or the employer is an unregistered enterprise

c) Poor- to low-income earner – individuals who are receiving monthly compensation as follows:

Income Classification	Monthly Income
Low Income	Between Php 23,660.00 to Php 60,000.00
Poor	Less than Php 23,660.00

SECTION 4. Emergency Cash Aid Program – An Emergency Cash Aid Program shall be implemented to cover 18 million poor and low-income families affected by economic disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and those who are affected by the series of calamities during the last quarter of 2020. Provided, that a fixed monthly cash assistance of Ten Thousand Pesos (PhP10,000.00) shall be provided to each of the beneficiary-family for a period of two (2) consecutive months. Provided further, that cash transfers from Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) and Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS), and other social amelioration programs shall be deducted from the monthly emergency cash aid. Provided furthermore, that the availment of the Emergency Cash Aid Program should not affect the eligibility of a family to other social protection and livelihood support programs. Provided finally, that a definite and actual list of 18 million beneficiaries of the emergency cash subsidy program shall be finalized and submitted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), in coordination with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and local government units, to Congress two (2) weeks after the effectivity of this Act

SECTION 5. Eligibility. To be eligible under this Act, a family must be classified as poor and low-income, and must include as member any of the following:

- a) Beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)
- b) Beneficiaries of the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) program
- c) Farmers and fisherfolk who are not beneficiaries of 4Ps or UCT but earned less due to the pandemic
- d) Workers who are permanently displaced from his or her job or source of income
- e) Workers who are placed under floating status or who is under a no-work, no-pay scheme
- f) Solo parents who lost their sources of income during the COVID-19 pandemic
- g) Workers who are placed under a recomputed remuneration arrangement or lower monthly incomes due to the pandemic
- h) Informal sector workers whose livelihood is affected by the pandemic restrictions, such as but not limited to public utility vehicle (drivers), freelancers and workers in the creative industry
- i) Victims of natural calamities, such as typhoons, during the last quarter of 2020 as identified by local government units and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC)
- j) Senior citizens and persons with disability

The level of quarantine classification or restrictions imposed in a locality shall have no bearing in the eligibility of families.

SECTION 6. Form and manner of payment. The emergency cash aid shall be released in two tranches of Ten Thousand Pesos per tranche to target beneficiaries either in cash or via electronic payment, whichever is more practical and acceptable to the beneficiary, in the most expeditious manner within the two months covered by the program.

SECTION 7. Waiver of fees. Any transaction or service fee arising from the electronic payment of emergency cash aid to target beneficiaries is hereby automatically waived. For this purpose, the Department of Social Welfare and Development shall enter into a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with financial service providers

SECTION 8. Sources of funding. The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be sourced from unobligated and unreleased funds from the FY 2020 and FY 2021 budget of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and from the Contingent Fund of the 2021 General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. If, for any reason, any portion or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, department order, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 11. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,