

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4644



INTRODUCED BY REP. PM VARGAS

AN ACT
DECLARING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER OF EVERY YEAR AS THE
“NATIONAL DWARFISM AWARENESS MONTH” AND OCTOBER 25
AS THE “NATIONAL DWARFISM AWARENESS DAY”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines’ commitment to inclusivity and human dignity is enshrined in Article II, Section 11: “The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.” This commitment is embedded on how our laws would uphold and protect the rights and welfare of Filipinos who are marginalized.

Among those who continue to face stigma and discrimination are persons of short stature or little persons. A little person is one of the approximately 400 diagnosed types of dwarfism¹. Dwarfism is a medical or genetic condition that usually results in an adult height of 4’10” or shorter, although in some cases, the average height of an adult with dwarfism is 4’0, but typical heights range from 2’8” to 4’8”².

Since dwarfism can be caused by so many different genetic or medical conditions, it is difficult to get an accurate number of individuals affected. The most recognizable and most common form of dwarfism in little people is achondroplasia, which accounts for 70% of dwarfism cases, and occurs in approximately 1 in 26,000 to 1 in 40,000 births³. In 2017 alone, 1.7 million

¹ Little People of America. N.d. <https://www.lpaonline.org/faq->

² Respect Ability. n.d. “Little People / Dwarfism”. <https://www.respectability.org/inclusion-toolkits/little-people-dwarfism/>

³ Little People of America. N.d. “Achondroplasia”
https://lpamrs.memberclicks.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18

live births were recorded in the country.⁴ Following the world estimate for achondroplasia, approximately 42 to 65 of the live births in the country in 2017 may have dwarfism.

The Greenberg Center for Skeletal Dysplasia estimates that 1 in 5,000 people have a short stature skeletal dysplasia based in various studies.⁵ This means that out of 108.1 million people in the Philippines in 2019, an estimated 21,000 people belong to the little people community.

Despite the validity of their existence and their contributions to society, little people continue to face challenges in accessing equal opportunities for all, are stigmatized and are discriminated due to being different.

This bill seeks to declare the month of October of every year as the “National Dwarfism Awareness Month”, for the purposes of instilling public awareness of the human rights situation of the Filipino Little People. Likewise, October twenty-fifth of every year shall be declared the “National Dwarfism Awareness Day” for the purposes of promoting recognition and acceptance to persons with dwarfism, in line with the annual celebration of the Dwarfism Awareness Month and Dwarfism Awareness Day by the Little People of America, one of the early organizations that provides support, resources, and information to individuals with dwarfism and their families.

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



REP. PM VARGAS

Fifth District, Quezon City

⁴ Philippine Statistics Authority. 2018. Birth Statistics

⁵ Orioli IM, Castilla EE, Barbosa-Neto JG . The birth prevalence rates for the skeletal dysplasias. J Med Genet 1986; 23: 328–332.

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "*National Dwarfism Awareness Month Act*".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights. The State shall also take all appropriate measures to ensure that the Filipino Little People can exercise their right to equal opportunities and protection from harassment, discrimination, and violence.

The State likewise recognizes the importance of promoting awareness of dwarfism and Little People to eliminate barriers to inclusivity and to lay the foundations for the integration of Filipinos living with dwarfism to mainstream society.

SECTION 3. National Dwarfism Awareness Month. – Every month of October of each year is hereby declared as the National Dwarfism Awareness Month for the purposes of instilling public awareness on the plight of the Little People.

SECTION 4. National Dwarfism Awareness Day. – October Twenty-Five of each year is hereby declared as the National Dwarfism Awareness Day for the purposes of promoting recognition and acceptance of the Filipino Little People community as a symbol of their inclusion and as a reminder of the individual's and the State's duty to accord due respect to people with dwarfism.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Commission on Human Rights, all education agencies and its attached agencies, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the National Council on Disability Affairs, and the Presidential Communications Operations Office, together with the Philippine Society for Orphan Disorders, shall issue rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 7. *Non-Impairment Clause.* – Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or made available to disadvantaged, marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,