

10 January 2020

SENATOR RISA N. HONTIVEROS

Chairperson

Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations & Gender Equality

Senate of the Philippines

GSIS Bldg., Diokno Blvd.

Pasay City

Dear **Senator Hontiveros**:

We are pleased to submit the Department's position on the following Senate Bills on the Expanded Solo Parents' Welfare Act, entitled:

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Senate Bill No. 86 | An Act Amending RA 8972, Also Known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, Enhancing the Program for Solo Parents and Their Children, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes |
| Senate Bill Nos. 164 and 238 | An Act Amending Republic Act 8972, Otherwise Known as the Act Providing for Benefits and Privileges to Solo Parents and Their Children, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes |
| Senate Bill No. 206 | An Act Amending Republic Act 8972 Otherwise Known as the Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000, Providing Additional Benefits, and for Other Purposes |
| Senate Bill No. 307 | An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8972, Otherwise Known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, by Providing for Additional Benefits and Penal Provisions for Violations of the Act |
| Senate Bill No. 951 | An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8972, Otherwise Known as the "Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000", Providing Additional Benefits For Solo Parents and for Other Purposes |
| Senate Bill No. 1014 | An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8972, Otherwise Known as the "Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000", and for Other Purposes |

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
(N113277)

This is without prejudice to the Department's submission of additional inputs.

With my best regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'RML', written over a faint horizontal line.

RAMON M. LOPEZ
Secretary

A small, handwritten flourish or mark in blue ink, consisting of a few connected strokes.

10 January 2020

UNDERSECRETARY ANTONIO A. GALLARDO

Presidential Legislative Liaison Office
2nd Floor Annex New Executive Building
Malacanang Palace, Manila

Dear **Undersecretary Gallardo**:

We are pleased to submit the Department's position on the following Senate Bills on the Expanded Solo Parents' Welfare Act, entitled:

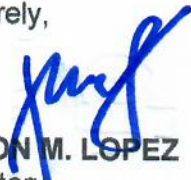
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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Senate Bill No. 86 | An Act Amending RA 8972, Also Known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, Enhancing the Program for Solo Parents and Their Children, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes |
| Senate Bill Nos. 164 and 238 | An Act Amending Republic Act 8972, Otherwise Known as the Act Providing for Benefits and Privileges to Solo Parents and Their Children, Appropriating Funds Therefor, and for Other Purposes |
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| Senate Bill No. 307 | An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8972, Otherwise Known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, by Providing for Additional Benefits and Penal Provisions for Violations of the Act |
| Senate Bill No. 951 | An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8972, Otherwise Known as the "Solo Parents Welfare Act of 2000", Providing Additional Benefits For Solo Parents and for Other Purposes |
| Senate Bill No. 1014 | An Act Amending Republic Act No. 8972, Otherwise Known as the "Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000", and for Other Purposes |

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
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This is without prejudice to the Department's submission of additional inputs.

With my best regards.

Sincerely,



RAMON M. LOPEZ
Secretary



DTI Position on

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Senate Bill No. 86 | An Act Amending RA 8972, Also Known as the Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000, Enhancing the Program for Solo Parents and Their Children, Appropriating Funds Therefor and for Other Purposes |
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DTI recognizes the intent of the proposed measures to alleviate the difficult conditions being experienced by solo parents¹ through the grant of additional benefits that may provide relief from their predicament.

Republic Act (RA) No. 8972, or the *Solo Parents' Welfare Act of 2000* and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) provide for a comprehensive package of social development and welfare services and privileges for solo parents and their children that, among others, include the following: livelihood development services or job placement; additional paid leaves of up to seven days; and flexible work schedule to be carried out by the specified government agencies.²

¹ About more than 17 million in the Philippines based on data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) as of December 2018. See Marje Pelayo, "Benefits of single parents under the Solo Parent Act," 12 December 2018 as accessed @ <https://untvweb.com/news/benefits-of-single-parents-under-the-solo-parent-act/>

² Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the National Housing Authority (NHA), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and other relevant government and non-government agencies

The government acknowledges solo parents as among the vulnerable sectors of our society. The Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) poverty database showed that in households categorized as poor out of the 15M households it has assessed in 2015,³ more than half a million (558,014) or 31%, have a solo parent member.⁴ The poverty rate of a child from a single parent home is three times the rate it is for children in two parent homes, another study cited.⁵ Hence, the additional benefits espoused by the bills, along with other special programs, can address the constraints faced by solo parents.

In view of the foregoing, the Department submits the following comments and recommendations for consideration in granting solo parents additional benefits because of their huge responsibility in society⁶:

Proposed Provisions	DTI Comments and Recommendations
<p>On providing 10% (SBN 86) /15% (SBNs 206, 307) /20% (SBNs 164, 238, 951, 1014) discount to a qualified solo parent for all purchases of baby/infant's milk, food and food supplement from the child's birth until 2-3 years of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We suggest considering instead the 5% discount granted to Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) for the purchase of goods listed as basic necessities and prime commodities as provided for in the IRR of both laws relating to the sectors concerned, to wit: <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><i>Sec. 9 of IRR of RA10754⁷ and Sec. 7 of IRR of RA 9994⁸ - Special Discounts in Special Programs: To the extent possible, the government may grant special discounts in special programs for persons with disability on the purchase of basic necessities and prime commodities subject to the guidelines to be issued for the purpose by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Agriculture.</i></p> • In addition, notwithstanding the proposed provision in the bills, giving

³ 2nd Impact Assessment of the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR), also known as *Listahanan*, DSWD's updated database of the poor in the country showing who and where the poor are through rigorous identification and validation method. See the Press Release "Philippines: Department of Social Welfare and Development Launches 2015 Database of the Poor" dated 5 April 2016 @ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/04/05/department-of-social-welfare-and-development-launches-2015-database-of-the-poor>

⁴ See *DSWD appeals for more benefits, support for the country's solo parents*, 25 August 2016 @ <http://news.pia.gov.ph/article/view/1141471932112/dswd-appeals-for-more-benefits-support-for-the-country-s-solo-parents>

⁵ See Chelsea P. Blackstone- Strother, *Single Parent Families* as retrieved @ <http://www.studymode.com/essays/Single-Parent-Families-65533978.html>

⁶ Ellalyn De Vera, *DSWD supports extra benefits for solo parents*, 30 April 2015 @ <http://www.mb.com.ph/dswd-supports-extra-benefits-for-solo-parents/>

⁷ An Act Expanding the Benefits and Privileges of Persons with Disability, signed 1 December 2016

⁸ Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010

	<p>corporations/business establishments entitlements to claim such discount as business expense, subject to proper recording and documentation, the Department takes into account the business sector's minimal profit margin from groceries and supermarket goods which does not justify a discount on prime commodities and basic necessities higher than the 5% afforded to senior citizens and PWDs.</p>
<p>With regard to granting 10% (SBNs 86, 206 and 307) /20% (SBNs 238, 951, and 1014) discount on children's clothing materials and 10% (SBN 86) /15% (SBNs 206, 307, and 1014) /20% (SBNs 164, 238, 951) discount on purchase of medicines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We opine that instead of discount privileges, legislators and policymakers should consider providing alternative or supplemental income sources or livelihood opportunities to augment or enhance the income-generating capacities of solo parents, and thus, their purchasing capacity. • Hence, the relevance of current programs and services providing educational, employment, and livelihood skills training opportunities, in both the formal and informal sectors, must be carefully harnessed and strengthened to cater to the needs of solo parents and their children. • As such, present programs and services being offered by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Civil Service Commission (CSC), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Philippine Technical Training Center (PTTC)-- both under the DTI-- as well as the Department of Agriculture (DA) must be revisited if they are indeed responsive to the issues of solo parents and if need be, carefully amended to address solo parents' concerns. Besides possible discounts on skills training fees, these can also be given for free if the enrollee or applicant is a solo parent or a child of a solo parent.
<p>On the use of the term "crime against persons" in the definition of a "solo parent" (SBNs 206, 238, 307, 1014)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support to use the phrase "crimes against chastity." While we recognize that RA No. 8353 or the Anti-Rape Law of 1997 has reclassified rape as a crime against persons, we are of the

	view that there are other crimes against chastity relative to child-bearing (e.g., Simple Seduction, Qualified Seduction).
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To reiterate, the Department supports the intention of the proposed bills to alleviate solo parents' difficult conditions and provide them relief from their predicament as a vulnerable sector with a huge responsibility in society. Nonetheless, in view of the considerations specified in the foregoing, the Department recommends the adoption of similar provisions granted to PWDs and Senior Citizens under the IRRs of RAs 10754 and 994, respectively, which provide discounts on the purchase of basic necessities and prime commodities.

In addition, in order to streamline the common objectives and provisions of the proposed bills, the Department recommends consolidating them into a unified bill. We also defer to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as the agency mandated with additional powers and functions relative to the welfare of solo parents and their families as provided for in RA 8972, for substantive inputs on the merits of the proposed measures.



Bureau of Trade and Industrial Policy Research
10 January 2020

Ref: BTIPR-012020-20

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