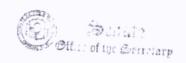
## SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE ) REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES ) SECOND REGULAR SESSION )



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## SENATE P.S.R NO. <u>6</u>81

INTRODUCED BY SEN. ANA THERESIA "RISA" HONTIVEROS BARAQUEL

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY AND THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ALLEGED ACTS COMMITTED BY BREASTMILK SUBSTITUTE COMPANIES WHICH ARE IN VIOLATION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 51 OR THE MILK CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES

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WHEREAS, Executive Order 51 (E.O. 51), also known as the Milk Code of the Philippines was enacted in 1986 to primarily ensure the adequate promotion of breastfeeding as the primary source of infant nutrition as it provides them with enormous health benefits in every stage of their development;

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WHEREAS, the law mandates an extensive information and education campaign on breastfeeding, and that appropriate regulations on the marketing and distribution of breastmilk substitutes be enacted to further operationalize the objectives of the law;

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WHEREAS, the law expressly prohibits manufacturers and distributors from directly or indirectly distributing samples or promotional materials, such as discount coupons, that may encourage the sale of breast milk substitutes at the retail level;

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WHEREAS, the law also specifically prohibits the distribution of gift items or giveaways that promote breast milk substitutes to the general public, health institutions, and health professionals, and particularly to mothers and pregnant women;

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WHEREAS, the law clearly states that the content of information materials that may be distributed to health professionals shall be limited to scientific and factual knowledge, and shall not advocate for breast milk substitutes as a better option to breastfeeding;

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WHEREAS, investigations conducted by *The Guardian*<sup>1</sup> and *Save the Children*<sup>2</sup> revealed that some companies that manufacture breast milk substitutes widely distributed pamphlets

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ellis-Petersen, H. (2018, February 27). *The Guardian*. Retrieved March 9, 2018, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/feb/27/formula-milk-companies-target-poor-mothers-breastfeeding

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid

that promote particular brands of breastmilk substitutes as better alternatives to breast milk. The pamphlets allegedly also came with promotional coupons;

WHEREAS, the same reports alleged that these companies have likewise taken advantage of social media to widen their reach in promoting breastmilk substitutes by using targeted advertisement on Facebook, and partnering with social media influencers, such as "mommy bloggers";

WHEREAS, despite regulations against it, these companies allegedly continue to sponsor the costly trips of healthcare professionals to conferences and trainings, and pay for other lavish outings in exchange for recommending breast milk substitutes to mothers;

WHEREAS, the prices of breast milk substitutes, which reportedly can take up to three quarters of a poor family's income, is a huge burden on the underprivileged;

WHEREAS, if this continues unchecked, these unethical practices by breast milk substitute companies will undermine government efforts to promote breastfeeding and further reduce the number of mothers who exclusively breastfeed their children in their first six (6) months;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved to direct the Senate Committee on Health and Demography and the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations, and Gender Equality to conduct a review and assessment of EO 51 of 1986 in order to determine whether breast milk substitute companies violated the law, and to ascertain whether there is a need to amend, and thus, further strengthen the law.

Adopted,

ANA THERESIA "RISA" HONTIVEROS