

# DSWD, NACC lead IRR signing of Foundling Recognition and Protection Act



*Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Erwin T. Tulfo (4<sup>th</sup> from left), National Authority for Child Care (NACC) Executive Director, Undersecretary Janella Estrada (center), and representatives from various national government agencies sign the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) No. 11767 or the “Foundling Recognition and Protection Act.”*

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Erwin T. Tulfo and National Authority for Child Care (NACC) Executive Director, Undersecretary Janella Estrada, led the signing of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) No. 11767 or the “Foundling Recognition and Protection Act” on Friday, September 9.

Signed into law by former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte on May 6, 2022, the law advocates for the protection and rights of children with unknown facts of birth and parentage.

The NACC, an attached agency of the DSWD, spearheaded the crafting of the IRR and is tasked to oversee the efficient implementation of the law.

The IRR highlights the assumption of a foundling’s natural-born Filipino citizenship and ensures that a child’s inherent rights are accorded including the right to government programs and services.

A foundling is “an abandoned or deserted child or infant with unknown facts of birth and parentage,” Section. 3 of R.A.

11767 provides.

The IRR institutionalizes the mechanisms and process the moment a foundling is discovered. Diligent and exhaustive efforts are required to reveal the foundling's birth facts and parentage through an inter-agency cooperation and the use of quad-media.

In his message, Secretary Tulfo emphasized the commitment of the DSWD in the implementation of the law. He said, "The Department is ready to provide social protection services through its managed residential care facilities and regular programs to ensure that foundlings will receive the necessary alternative child care that puts premium to their best interest."

Secretary Tulfo also enjoined everyone to work together towards the successful implementation of the IRR. "Let us ensure the best interest of Filipino children at all times by providing them with a safe and enabling environment wherein they can realize their full potential and abilities," he ended.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary Estrada in her opening remarks said, "Let us remember the children who need our love, guidance and support. The foundlings who have been neglected, abandoned and are stateless. *Para po ito sa kanila*. By this, we accord them lifelong protection of their rights and liberties by institutionalizing our policy that they be not deprived or discriminated by reason of being a foundling."

Undersecretary Estrada also noted that R.A. 11767 is "a gesture of our nationalism by extending the very same rights we enjoy to a foundling discovered within Philippine territory. This law and its IRR are an affirmation of our shared values that every child has inherent rights that no individual, institution or state can refute."

The NACC chief also called on her fellow public servants to be

proactive, rigorous, caring and loving in providing efficient and effective programs and services. *"Balikan po natin ang dahilan kung bakit natin ito inumpisahan. In the best interest of the child, 'yan po ang lagi nating sambit...*Let us not squander the opportunity entrusted to us – to change the life of a child and direct it towards a life full of hope and a life full of meaning.

Among the major sponsors of the law who expressed support during the ceremonial signing were TINGOG Partylist Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez who was represented by TINGOG Partylist Rep. Jude Acidre, Barangay Health Wellness (BHW) Partylist Rep. Angelica Natasha Co, Sen. Pia S. Cayetano, Sen. Risa Hontiveros, Sen. Grace Poe, and Sen. Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid.

Aside from the DSWD and NACC, other implementing agencies include the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Department of Justice, Council for the Welfare of Children, Philippine Statistics Authority, Office of the Solicitor General, and the Association of Child Caring Agencies of the Philippines.

The DSWD and the NACC commit to ensure the seamless execution of RA 11767 and guarantee the continuous protection of the rights and welfare of children. ###