

# Reproductive Health Bill 5043 is premised on Misconceptions and Half-truths.

MISCONCEPTIONS	CLARIFICATIONS ( <u>underlined</u> texts come from the Reproductive Bill currently [August 2008] filed in Congress; emphasis in <b>bold letters</b> added)
<p><b>The world is overpopulated. Global population will soar to 11.9 billion by 2050.</b></p>	<p>"Yet this is not the full story. To the contrary, in fact. Across the globe, people are having fewer and fewer children. Fertility rates have dropped by half since 1972, from six children per woman to 2.9. And demographers say they're still falling, faster than ever. The world's population will continue to grow—from today's 6.4 billion to around 9 billion in 2050. <b>But after that, it will go sharply into decline. Indeed, a phenomenon that we're destined to learn much more about—depopulation—has already begun in a number of countries. Welcome to the New Demography. It will change everything about our world, from the absolute size and power of nations to global economic growth to the quality of our lives.</b>" [Michael Meyer, "Birth Dearth," in <i>Newsweek</i>, September 27, 2004, p. 58. Since the 1970's, several demographers, economists, and other experts have been informing the public of these trends.]</p>
<p><b>Overpopulation is a scientific fact.</b></p>	<p><b>Not overpopulation, but population ageing and underpopulation</b>, as seen in these sample article titles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* <i>European Pension Systems Set to Collapse. Low Fertility Blamed</i>, in <i>Friday Fax</i>, May 4, 2000.</li> <li>* <i>Underpopulation, Not Overpopulation, the Real Global Problem</i>, in <i>Washington Post</i>, March 18, 2001.</li> <li>* <i>Developed Nations Warned on Aging Crisis Time Bomb</i>, in <i>Manila Bulletin</i>, Aug 30, 2001.</li> <li>* <i>Have Three Babies to Sustain the Population</i>, in <i>Daily Telegraph</i>, Dec. 12, 2003.</li> <li>* <i>Asian Economies Desperate for Babies</i>, in <i>Daily News Express</i>, Feb. 2, 2004.</li> <li>* <i>Have More Babies, Say the Tories</i>, in <i>Daily Mail</i>, September 22, 2003: "Women should have more babies to stave off the looming crisis of an ageing population, the Tories will say today. The call to 'go forth and multiply' comes from work and pensions spokesman David Willetts, who wants couples to send birth rates soaring."</li> <li>* <i>In address to Estonians, President Calls on Citizens to Make More Babies</i>, in <i>New York Times</i>, January 2, 2003: "Worried about a declining</li> </ul>

	<p>population, Estonia's president has urged the country's 1.4 million residents to make more babies. 'Let us remember that in just a couple of decades the number of Estonians seeing the New Year will be one-fifth less than today,' President Arnold Ruutel said in a speech broadcast live on national television Wednesday."</p>
<p><b>Our population growth rate of 2.04% is extremely high.</b></p>	<p>The 2007 census by the National Statistics Office (NSO) measured 2.04% as the average PGR for 2000-2007. The previous PGR for 1995-2000 was 2.36%; showing a rapid drop; and <b>for the year 2007, the PGR is only 1.88%</b>_ Significantly, the NSO lists in its website, 1.96% as the PGR for the period 2005-2010. Clearly, we are no longer "exploding".</p> <p>The CIA gives a much lower estimate of 1.728% (World Factbook Country Listing of 2008, available on the internet).</p>
<p><b>We should aim for a Zero Population Growth Rate.</b></p>	<p>The more important statistics, is actually, not PGR, but TFR, total fertility rate, which measures the average number of child per woman. 2.1 is replacement fertility (wherein a woman merely replaces herself, and her spouse, the extra 0.1 is an allowance for infant mortality and those who never marry), resulting in Zero Population Growth. Census statistics are now showing that we will be at replacement fertility in about 10 years' time.</p> <p>Zero Population Growth Rate will make the Filipino race at first extremely old, and then rare, and finally extinct.</p>
<p><b>Filipino families have too many children.</b></p>	<p>"The UN Population Division figures indicate that <i>it is not an exaggeration to say that as early as now the Philippine Total Fertility Rate [children per woman] is already dangerously low</i>. Whereas in the early 1970's the average Filipina had six children, today she has around three, and in another 20 years, only two. <b>Shortly after 2020, or just fifteen years from now, the Philippine TFR will sink below its replacement level of around 2.29.</b>" [Rev. Fr. Gregory D. Gaston, STD, <i>World Population Collapse: Lessons for the Philippines</i>, in <i>Familia et Vita</i>, vol. XII (2007) no. 2, pp. 84-113, paragraph no. 22. Henceforth referred to as WPC and paragraph number.]</p> <p>This downward trend is already happening without legislation.</p>
<p><b>Having two children should be the ideal family size.</b></p>	<p><u>SEC. 16. Ideal Family Size.</u> – The State shall assist couples, parents and individuals to achieve their desired family size within the context of responsible parenthood for sustainable development and encourage them to have two children as the ideal family size.</p>

	<p>As of now the Philippines' total fertility rate, or children per woman, is projected to go below replacement (2.29 children per woman) by 2025. After that we will experience the population ageing and collapse taking place today in rich countries, and like them, we will also wish to pay parents to have more children--but unlike them, we will have no money to do so.</p> <p>Pushing for only two children per family will make all this occur even earlier.</p> <p>(Note that two children per family would give a total fertility rate of much lower than two, since women without children would have to be included in the computation of "children per woman," or total fertility rate.)</p>
<p><b>Intensified population control programs will slow down population growth, improve the economy soon, and thus solve poverty.</b></p>	<p>"The effect desired by population controllers, the slowing of population growth, will not immediately take place, due to population momentum, decreased mortality and longer lifespan. By the time population growth will have slowed down, the Total Fertility Rate will be way below the replacement level, and the average population age will be extremely high. <b>In other words, the solution proposed to solve poverty, that is, population control programs, will just create more economic difficulties in the long run.</b> Nor may one say that we should limit population growth now, hope for rapid economic development, and finally try to solve whatever problem might come up in the future. It will simply be too late by then. <b>Countries that were already rich 30 to 40 years ago when their TFR's started to decline, and are now ageing, encounter extreme difficulty in solving their economic problems today.</b> Their efforts to encourage their citizens to produce more children have not yielded acceptable results after a decade. They depend on immigration to maintain their population growth. The Philippines is not a rich country today, and may or may not be rich within 50 years. How will it support its ageing population? Will it also invite workers from other countries to replace its dwindling workforce? How will it attract immigrants if it has no jobs to offer to its people in the first place? Even if it becomes rich by then, it will have to face the same problems rich countries face now, and will have to tell the people to raise more children. We simply cannot afford to fall into the trap rich countries have fallen into 30-40 years ago, and from which they desperately try to escape today. <i>Graphically speaking, we cannot afford to have in the future a population pyramid like theirs now, and then, like them today, wish to regain the population pyramid we have now.</i>" [WPC 26]</p> <p>"Since 1965 to 1994 the population of the world has nearly doubled, but food production has kept well ahead... United Nations figures show there has been a rise of over 30% in the period 1951-92 in food production per capita, that is to say the amount of food which would be available to each person in the world if it were divided equally. <b>This has occurred in spite of the fact that Western farmers are paid millions of dollars a year to keep land out of production. If these European and American farmers were to produce to their capacity, food prices would collapse as a result of the glut</b> The</p>

	<p><b>problem then is not food production but proper distribution. Hence the solution should not be to reduce the number of consumers, but social justice.</b></p> <p><b>"Each time poverty is blamed on the 'population problem,' its real and root causes are conveniently tolerated or covered up: <i>graft and corruption</i> in the public and private sectors, <i>burden of foreign debt servicing</i>, and <i>bad governance</i>, resulting in failed development programs" (<i>A Manifesto of Filipino Families</i> on July 25, 2008).</b></p>
<p><b>Contraceptives should be listed as essential drugs.</b></p>	<p>They should not be listed as essential drugs, <b>but as dangerous drugs and devices</b>. Pills have been shown to cause abortion of a 5-day old baby, cancer, premature hypertension, heart disease, etc. IUD's are abortifacient and may cause intrauterine trauma, pelvic infections and ectopic pregnancy. Condoms have high failure rate even against pregnancy and thus do not guarantee protection against AIDS and other STD's. Tubal ligation and vasectomy (especially targeting the poor) leave couples without the chance to have more children (for example, in case of improved economic situation, or death of their present children) and little or no support in their old age.</p> <p>Hence, <b>it is the right of the citizens to be forewarned</b> of these, even in the form of government warnings, as in the case of cigarette smoking ("is dangerous for your health"), alcohol ("drink moderately"), and infant milk formulae ("mother's milk is best for babies under two years old")—<b>not out of religious concerns, but as part of consumers' rights</b>.</p> <p>Possible warnings could state: <b>"CONDOMS DO NOT GUARANTEE PROTECTION FROM AIDS AND OTHER STD'S", "PILLS HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO CAUSE CANCER AND ABORTION OF 5-DAY OLD BABIES,"</b> and, <b>"IUD'S MAY CAUSE TRAUMA OF THE UTERUS AND ABORTION OF 5-DAY OLD BABIES,"</b> etc.</p> <p>(For the medical data on these dangerous drugs and devices, see also John Wilks, <i>A Consumer's Guide to the Pill and Other Drugs</i>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., National Bookstore, Inc., Manila 2000.)</p>
<p><b>Condoms have no holes. They provide truly safe sex, as advertised.</b></p>	<p>"Condom manufacturers in the United States electronically test all condoms for <b>holes and weak spots</b>. In addition, FDA requires manufacturers to use a water test to examine samples from each batch of condoms for leakage. If the test detects a <b>defect rate of more than 4 per 1,000</b>, the entire lot is discarded. The agency also encourages manufacturers to test samples of their products for breakage by using an air burst test in accordance with specifications of the International Standards Organization.' [Mike Kubic, <i>New Ways to Prevent and Treat AIDS</i>, in <i>FDA Consumer</i>, Jan-Feb 1997 (revised May 1997 and Jan 1998; available at <a href="http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1997/197_aids.html">http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1997/197_aids.html</a>).]</p>

	<p><b>"If four leaking condoms are allowed in every batch of 1,000, there could be hundreds of thousands or even millions of leaking condoms circulating all over the world, either sold or distributed for free, and most probably contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS and STD's. Does the public know this?</b> Does the public know that the risks increase the more often and the more promiscuously one is exposed, considering the cumulative risk factor, as explained earlier?"</p> <p>[from <i>Family Values Versus Safe Sex</i>. A Reflection by His Eminence, Alfonso Cardinal López Trujillo (then President of the Pontifical Council for the Family), December 1, 2003. Note that the first paragraph above came <b>from the US Food and Drug Administration website.</b>]</p>
<p><b>Condoms are effective in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in a country.</b></p>	<p>"In Thailand and in the Philippines, the first HIV/AIDS cases were reported in 1984; by 1987, Thailand had 112 cases, while the Philippines had more, with 135 cases. Today, <b>in the year 2003, there are around 750,000 cases in Thailand, where the 100% Condom Use Program had relatively great success. On the other hand, there are only 1,935 cases in the Philippines - and this, considering that the Philippines' population is around 30% greater than Thailand's! Relatively low rates of condom use by the people in general, and staunch opposition from the Church and a good number of government leaders against the condom program and sexual promiscuity, are well-known facts in the Philippines.</b>"</p> <p>[from Cardinal Alfonso López Trujillo (then President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Vatican), <i>Family Values Versus Safe Sex</i>, December 1, 2003. The quoted text cites the following references: Rene Josef Bullecer (Director of AIDS-Free Philippines), <i>Telling the Truth: AIDS Rates for Thailand and the Philippines</i>; Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Pastoral Letter on AIDS: <i>In the Compassion of Jesus</i>, January 23, 1993; and Jaime L. Cardinal Sin, Pastoral Letter on <i>Subtle Attacks against Family and Life</i>, July 9, 2001.]</p>
<p><b>Natural methods are not effective.</b></p>	<p>The modern natural methods (e.g., Billings, Sympto-Thermal, Basal Body Temperature) can be more effective than contraceptives, if they are learned and practiced as a way of life and not as "natural contraceptives." Hence, communication, love, respect, self-discipline, and formation in the values are necessary for the natural methods to work—values that are not exclusively religious, but very human and natural as well, and values that are not necessary in the use of contraceptives.</p> <p>The obsolete calendar and the rhythm methods, and their modern repackagings, should not be taught (including by the DOH) because of their high failure rates. Withdrawal is not a natural method, and has extremely high failure rates.</p>

	<p>It is sad that many doctors (including Ob-Gyn's) are not even familiar with many of the facts regarding benefits of the natural methods and the medical ills of contraceptives.</p>
<p><b>The Reproductive Health bill does not promote or pave the way to abortion, since it even states that abortion remains illegal in the Philippines.</b></p>	<p>The bill <b>does not legalize surgical abortion</b>, but it does <b>PROMOTE all types of abortion</b>, and <b>DOES LEGALIZE abortion of 5-day old babies</b>.</p> <p>Abortion is the termination (killing) of life, not simply of pregnancy. Life begins at conception when the sperm and the egg meet. Killing the new life at any moment after this, and before it is born, is considered abortion. The new life develops as it goes down the fallopian tube, and implants onto the mother's womb when the tiny baby is around five days old.</p> <p>Condoms do not directly cause abortion because they prevent conception—if there is no conception, there is nothing to kill in the first place. But they can lead to abortion if, because of high condom failure a woman gets pregnant, she decides to kill the baby in her womb.</p> <p>Pills and IUD's make the womb's lining uninhabitable for the new baby. ; hence, in case they fail in their contraceptive actions, the five-day old baby will be unable to attach to his or her mother's womb. <b>This has to be called "abortion," for the five-day old baby dies in the process, and such action of pills and IUD's is called "abortifacient."</b></p>
<p><b>The Reproductive Health bill does not promote sexual promiscuity.</b></p>	<p><b>SEC. 4. Definition of Terms</b>  <u>c. Reproductive Health – the state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. <b>This implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life</b>, that they have the capability to reproduce and the <b>freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so</b>, provided that these are not against the law.</u></p> <p>The law will guarantee <b>children and teenagers</b> (since they are "people") the right to have a <b>satisfying and safe sex life with anyone</b>, and to <b>decide if, when and how often to reproduce</b>. Hence children have the right to have information and <b>access to contraceptives</b>, and to learn all possible options in case they get pregnant--including abortion, which "unfortunately" (as they will be made to feel), is still illegal.</p> <p>Parents who object to this "right" act against the law, a law which of course goes against the parents' inherent right to educate their children.</p>
<p><b>The</b></p>	<p><b>SEC. 3. Guiding Principles.</b></p>

<p><b>Reproductive Health bill will strengthen parental rights in forming and educating their children.</b></p>	<p><u>L. Respect for, protection and fulfillment of reproductive health rights seek to promote not only the rights and welfare of adult individuals and couples <b>but those of adolescents' and children's as well...</b></u></p> <p><b>SEC. 4. Definition of Terms</b></p> <p><u>d. Reproductive Health Rights – the rights of individuals and couples to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children; <b>to make other decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence</b>; to have the information and means to carry out their decisions; and to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health.</u></p> <p>In the Bill, children and adolescents have the right to have a "<u>satisfying and safe sex life,</u>" and "<u>to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children.</u>" In such a case parents (and teachers, public authorities, priests, etc.) who do not want children to have sex with classmates will be going against the children's rights, and hence they can be considered as "coercing" the children to stay away from sex. <b>Earlier bills have even proposed fines and/or imprisonment for similar acts; this is indicative of their real intentions.</b></p> <p>Reproductive health rights will therefore weaken parental authority and rights over the upbringing of their children. Children are brainwashed into this promiscuous, anti- parent, and anti-authority mentality through Value-free sex education modules.</p>
<p><b>The Reproductive Health bill promotes health.</b></p>	<p>The 'complete information' advocates of the bill completely forget to inform women about the health risks of hormonal contraceptives (again, THT at work). The WHO itself has classified these as definitely bringing about the risks of cancer, notably breast cancer, in their WHO / IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer) 2005 Report / Press Release, wherein it was reported that Hormonal Contraceptives do cause cancer (copy of this report is available upon request).</p>

*This paper was inspired by a primer was written by Rev. Fr. Gregory D. Gaston, STD for Avenues, the Journal of San Carlos Seminary Graduate School of Theology. Copyright © 2008 by the author, a priest of the Archdiocese of Manila, assigned since January 2008 at the Holy Apostles Senior Seminary, Makati City, Philippines, and was previously an Official of the Pontifical Council for the Family, Vatican, for five years. For consults and resources on related topics, please visit [www.safe.ph](http://www.safe.ph))*