

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Thirteenth Congress

First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 3707

Introduced by Honorable **MONICO O. PUENTEVELLA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Not everyone can be a Korina Sanchez, Noli de Castro, Ted Failon, Mel Tiangco, Dong Puno, Mon Tulfo or Max Soliven to mention a few of the prominent members of the media industry who have put life, limb and reputation on the line in order to achieve the level of success they have reached today.

There are countless others who plod the streets night and day in order to find that elusive story, cover that newsworthy event or catch that photo opportunity that will be their ticket to popularity and success in the cut-throat world of the media industry.

There are those in search of truth and justice, upholding the ideals of democracy and who ultimately fall in the wayside by way of the capricious whims of a natural disaster or the planned actuations of people in power angered or insulted by media reports.

Lastly, there will be those who use their media credentials to further their ulterior motives, pad their wallets or meet whatever unscrupulous goals they have.

But by far and large, the media industry and its members are involved in an occupation that requires courage, integrity and honesty. It's too bad that recently, members of the media are being killed left and right, with the culprits still unidentified. This continuing injustice is giving the Philippines a black-eye in the international media community, as evidenced by the recent international opinion that our country is one of the most dangerous places for journalists.

Measures should be taken in order to uphold the welfare of the media, this being one of them. Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly requested.


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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE INDEPENDENCE OF MEDIA IN THE PHILIPPINES
BY ESTABLISHING THE JOURNALISTS WELFARE FUND AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

Section 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the "Journalists Welfare Act of 2005"

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is declared the policy of the State to protect the media industry and take all measures necessary to preserve its independence. The State recognizes the vital role of media in protecting the right of the people to information and serving as a tool in expressing the people's sentiments and opinion on matters affecting public interest, thereby securing the very essence of democracy.

Sec. 3. Definition of Terms. As used in this Act, the term

- a) "Journalists" shall refer to those directly engaged or assisting in news gathering, news reporting, news editing, news dissemination/publication, including news commentaries, duly accredited for at least six months, either as owners, publishers or employees by the news publication, radio station/network, tv station or network or such other mass media outfit principally engaged in the news business they are connected or working with, said business being registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission or with the Department of Trade and Industry.
- b) "Fund" shall refer to the Journalists Welfare Fund

Sec. 4. Journalists Welfare Fund. In pursuit of the abovementioned policy, a Journalists Welfare Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Fund, is hereby established to protect and ensure the welfare of journalists by providing them monetary benefits for work-connected injury, disability or death.

Sec. 5. Journalists Cooperative. The Fund shall be administered by the Journalists Cooperative numbering to ten (10) members including the Chairman and composed four (4) accredited news practitioners, two (2) Cooperative Development Authority representatives and four (4) representatives from employer groups. The Fund's use shall be subject to the rules and regulations as may be adopted by the Cooperative Board.

Sec. 6. Remittance. Media outfits principally engaged in the news business, whether print, radio or television, shall set aside one percent (1%) of their income derived from every

Fund. Provided, that such amount be claimed as tax credit by the media outfits, subject to the rules and regulations of the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

A system of remittance for the one percent (1%) ad/commercial income to the Cooperative shall be established within one (1) year by the Cooperative, provided that said tax credits may only be availed after the remittance system has been established.

Sec. 7. Appropriations. The amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P 50,000,000.00) shall be appropriated by the national government as start-up capital for the Cooperative and shall be included in the General Appropriations Act allocation of the CDA upon the year of approval of this Act.

Sec. 8. Separability. If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder thereof or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 9. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, orders and rules and regulations or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 10. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.