

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

Seventeenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6329**



Introduced by Representative Sharon S. Garin

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is still a primarily agricultural country, with around 39.8% of the entire country's labor force employed in any of the four (4) agricultural sub-sectors, namely farming, fisheries, livestock and forestry, and the sector contributing around 20% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

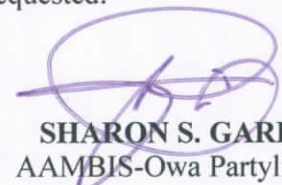
With the great contribution of agriculture to our nation's development, it is only proper that the government give prime importance to projects and programs that support this sector. And support it it has, as evidenced by the countless programs coursed through the Department of Agriculture and other related agencies. Some of these support go directly to the farmers, in the form of social and financial aid, and others are for the development of the industry, to create a more efficient and profitable agriculture sector.

But whatever assistance the government provides, it shall be for naught if these services are not properly delivered to the intended beneficiaries. At the forefront of these services are the local city/municipal/provincial agricultural development workers that provide a bridge between farmers and the government. Recent trends however, show that most of these local positions are left vacant by LGUs in an effort to save money which result in a less efficient delivery of agricultural support.

This bill seeks to strengthen the rights of agricultural development workers, giving them additional benefits in terms of compensation, proper working hours, and other various incentives and rewards. These positions include the following: Agricultural Technicians, Agriculturists, Aquaculturists, Nutritionists, Agricultural Engineers, Agricultural Technologists, Fisheries Officers in the city, municipal and provincial levels.

A better and more efficient delivery of government assistance would lead to a more vibrant agricultural sector.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly requested.


SHARON S. GARIN
AAMBIS-Owa Partylist

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**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
WORKERS**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines
in Congress assembled:*

**ARTICLE I
TITLE OF THE ACT AND DEFINITION OF TERMS**

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "**Magna Carta of Agricultural
Development Workers.**"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to
accelerate the development and modernization of Philippine agriculture and improve the
economic and social well-being of agricultural development workers as well as their working
conditions and employment status. The State shall likewise develop their skills, knowledge,
orientation and capabilities so that they will become more responsive and effective in
providing the necessary Services for countryside development.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*

- a) *Agricultural Development Workers* – shall mean all persons who are engaged in
agricultural development activities and all persons employed in the Department of
Agriculture including its bureaus and attached agencies. Local Government Units
(LGUs) and concerned government and private institutions, and shall include
aquaculturists, veterinarians, agricultural engineers, nutritionists, agricultural

1 extension workers, agricultural technicians and operators, allied agricultural
2 professionals, administrative and support personnel employed regardless of their
3 employment status.

4 b) *Agriculturist* – shall refer to a person who is a graduate of a four year course in
5 agriculture or any related course performing any of the specialized activities such as
6 agronomy, horticulture, animal husbandry, entomology, plant pathology, plant
7 breeding, agricultural economics, agricultural extension and marketing.

8 c) *Veterinarian* – shall refer to a person registered with the Professional Regulation
9 Commission performing professional activities on veterinary services such as disease
10 prevention control, animal health care, etc.

11 d) *Agricultural Engineer* – shall refer to a person registered with the Professional
12 Regulation Commission performing engineering activities in agriculture, particularly
13 on areas of farm power and machinery, irrigation and drainage, Soil and water
14 conservation, agricultural buildings and infrastructure, agricultural processing and
15 post-harvest facilities.

16 e) *Aquaculturist* – shall refer to a person who is a graduate of a four year course in
17 fisheries and performing activities on fisheries and aquaculture and fishery production
18 and processing.

19 f) *Nutritionist* – shall refer to a person registered with the Professional Regulation
20 Commission performing activities related to dietary and proper nutrition.

21 g) *Agricultural Technician* – shall refer to a trained or skilled agricultural worker but not
22 necessarily a college graduate, performing activities Such as plant/nursery propagator,
23 plant breeder, farm mechanic, etc.

24 h) *Agricultural Extension Worker* – shall refer to an agriculturist, veterinarian,
25 agricultural engineer, aquaculturist, nutritionist or home extensionist who helps

farmers and fishermen in the promotion of agricultural and fisheries development plans, programs and projects through the use of extension methodologies, concepts and principles.

- i) *CSC* – refers to the Civil Service Commission.
- j) *DOLE* – refers to the Department of Labor and Employment.
- k) *NLRC* – refers to the National Labor Relations Commission.
- l) *DA* – refers to the Department of Agriculture.
- m) *LGU* – refers to the Local Government Unit.

ARTICLE II

AGRICULTURAL SERVICE CAREER DEVELOPMENT

SEC 4. *Magna Carta for Agricultural Development Workers Committee.* –

The Magna Carta for Agricultural Development Workers Committee, hereafter referred to as the Committee, shall be constituted under the Office of the President and composed of the following:

- a) Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA);
- b) Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- c) Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
- d) Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission (CSC);
- e) Representative of the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC);
- f) Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM);
- g) Representative from recognized national association of Agricultural Development Workers.

SEC. 5. *Professionalization of Agricultural Services.* – The State shall support the development and professionalization of agricultural services by providing the necessary compensation and benefits to various agricultural development workers based on their duties, responsibilities and qualifications. For this purpose, the Committee, particularly the Civil

1 Service Commission in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management,
 2 Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior and Local Government and the recognized
 3 national associations of agricultural development workers shall review the existing functions,
 4 responsibilities, position titles and qualifications of the agricultural development workers
 5 employed at the Department of Agriculture, Local Government Units and concerned
 6 government agencies, and match them with appropriate position titles and compensation:
 7 *Provided*, that the following benchmark position titles of agricultural development workers
 8 with corresponding salary grades shall be used.

9	<u>Position</u>	<u>Salary Grade</u>
10	Agricultural Technician I	11
11	Agriculturist	12
12	Aquaculturist I	12
13	Nutritionist I	12
14	Veterinarian I	13
15	Agricultural Engineer I	13
16	Agricultural Technologist	15
17	City Agricultural Engineer	24
18	City Veterinarian	24
19	City Agriculturist	24
20	City Fishery Officer	24
21	Municipal Agriculturist	24
22	Municipal Veterinarian	24
23	Municipal Agricultural Engineer	24
24	Municipal Fisheries Officer	24
25	Provincial Agricultural Engineer	26

1	Provincial Agriculturist	26
2	Provincial Veterinarian	26
3	Provincial Fisheries Officer	26

4 **SEC. 6. *Mandatory Positions of Agricultural Development Workers in the Local***
5 ***Government Units.*** – The creation of the following positions is hereby made mandatory in
6 addition to the prescribed position under the Local Government Code of 1991:

- 7 a) Provincial Agricultural Engineer;
- 8 b) Provincial Fisheries and Aquacultural Officer;
- 9 c) City Agriculturist;
- 10 d) City Agricultural Engineer;
- 11 e) City Veterinarian;
- 12 f) City Fisheries and Aquacultural Officer;
- 13 g) Municipal Agriculturist;
- 14 h) Municipal Agricultural Engineer;
- 15 i) Municipal Veterinarian;
- 16 j) Municipal Fisheries and Aquacultural Officer.

17 *Provided*, that in the case of fourth (4th) class LGUs, financial subsidy shall be
18 provided by the national government for the personnel services needed in the hiring of the
19 above mentioned mandatory position: *Provided further*, That the funding requirement shall be
20 incorporated in the annual appropriations of the Department of Agriculture.

21 **SEC. 7. *Recruitment and Qualifications.*** - The selection and appointment of
22 agricultural development workers shall be in accordance with the merit and fitness principle:
23 *Provided*, that he/she has the appropriate civil service eligibilities and/or professional license,
24 educational qualification, skills and experiences.

1 **SEC. 8. *Performance Evaluation and Merit Promotion.*** - The Committee,
2 particularly the Secretary of Agriculture upon consultation with the Civil Service
3 Commission and the recognized national associations of Agricultural Development Workers
4 shall prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan applicable to all Agricultural
5 Development Workers. Such career and personnel development plan shall include provisions
6 on merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service training grants, job rotation and
7 incentives awards system.

8 **SEC. 9. *Transfer of Geographical Reassignment of Agricultural Officers and***
9 ***Employees.*** – No transfer or geographical reassignment shall be made or effected without a
10 written notice to the agricultural development worker concerned stating therein the reason for
11 such: *Provided*, that said written notice shall be made thirty (30) days prior to the date of
12 transfer or reassignment: *Provided further*, that if the employee concerned disagrees with the
13 order of transfer or reassignment, he/she may appeal said order with the Civil Service
14 Commission or the Department of Labor and Employment, as the case may be: *Provided*
15 *further*, that pending appeal, such transfer or reassignment shall be held in abeyance:
16 *Provided furthermore*, that no transfer or reassignment whatsoever shall be made three (3)
17 months prior to any local or national elections: *Provided finally*, that the necessary expenses
18 of the transfer and/or reassignment of the agricultural worker or employee and his/her
19 immediate family shall be paid by the Government.

20 **SEC. 10. *Security of Tenure.*** – An agricultural worker holding a permanent position
21 shall not be terminated except for cause: *Provided*, that in the event the agricultural
22 development worker is found to be unjustly dismissed by the Civil Service Commission,
23 he/she shall be entitled to reinstatement without loss of seniority rights and back wages with
24 twenty per centum (20%) interest to be computed from the time compensation is withheld up
25 to the reinstatement.

1 However, if the agricultural worker does not desire to be reinstated, he/she shall be
2 entitled to back wages and separation pay with twenty per centum interest.

3 **SEC. 11. *Discrimination Prohibited*** – An agricultural worker shall not be
4 discriminated by reason of creed, sex, political belief civil status, and ethnic grouping in the
5 exercise of his/her profession.

6 **SEC. 12. *No Understaffing and/or Overloading of Agricultural Workers.*** – There
7 shall be no understaffing and/or overloading of agricultural workers. The ratio of staff to
8 clientele shall be such as to reasonably effect a sustained quality of agricultural service at all
9 times without overworking the agricultural development workers and over-extending their
10 services.

11 Only qualified professional and eligible agricultural workers shall occupy the
12 agriculturist and other agriculture-related positions in all government agricultural agencies
13 and institutions and/or government-owned and controlled corporations: *Provided*, that the
14 government shall allocate the necessary funds for the hiring of additional agricultural
15 development workers in cases of over-loading of personnel in specific areas of assignment.

16 **SEC. 13. *Safeguards in Administrative Proceedings.*** – In every administrative
17 proceeding, an Agricultural Worker shall have:

- 18 a) the right to be informed of the charges;
- 19 b) the right to full access to evidence against him/her;
- 20 c) the right to defend himself/herself through counsel of his/her choice;
- 21 d) the right to be given adequate time to prepare his/her case, which shall in no case
22 exceed twenty (20) days;
- 23 e) the right to appeal to designated authorities;
- 24 f) the right to cross-examine witnesses and to processes for the production of witnesses;
- 25 g) the right to reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in his/her defense in

1 case of exoneration or dismissal of the charges; and

2 h) such other rights provided by other national agencies and local government units to
3 their respective officers and employees to ensure fairness and impartially in
4 prosecution.

5 **SEC. 14. *Code of Conduct.*** – All agricultural workers must be guided by a code of
6 ethics not contrary to law, morals, Safety, health, public policy and public order. The code of
7 conduct of agricultural development workers shall be prepared by the Secretary of
8 Agriculture in consultation with the recognized national associations of agricultural
9 development workers.

10 **SEC. 15. *Normal Hours of Work.*** - The normal hours of work of an agricultural
11 development worker shall not exceed eight (8) hours a day or forty (40) hours a week. Hours
12 of work shall include:

13 a) the time the agricultural workers is required to be on active duty or to be at a
14 prescribed workplace;

15 b) the time which an agricultural worker is permitted to work; and

16 c) the time which an agricultural worker is required to work in a place other than the
17 prescribed workplace.

18 **SEC. 16. *Overtime Work.*** - Where the exigencies of the service so require, any
19 agricultural development worker, whether in government or non-government service, may be
20 required to render Service beyond the normal eight (8) hours a day, inclusive of Saturday and
21 Sunday and non-working holidays. In such cases, the agricultural development worker shall
22 be given additional compensation in accordance with existing laws on the matter.

23 **SEC. 17. *Training and Scholarship Program.*** - The Committee, particularly the
24 Department of Agriculture through its scholarship committee and the Agricultural Training

1 Institute shall undertake trainings and scholarship programs for the agricultural development
2 workers, which shall be given adequate budgetary support by the Government.

3 **SEC. 18. *Married Agricultural Workers.*** – Whenever possible, the proper authorities
4 shall take steps to enable married couples both of whom are public agricultural development
5 workers, to be employed or assigned in the same municipality.

6 **ARTICLE III**
7 **INCENTIVES AND REWARDS SYSTEM**

8 **SEC. 19. *Criteria for Incentives and Rewards System.*** - The reward and incentive
9 system for agricultural development workers provided under this Act, which will encourage
10 them to stay in the service, promote their productivity and reward them for extraordinary
11 performance shall be governed by the following criteria:

- 12 a) *Honorarium* - form of remuneration for services rendered beyond the established
13 workload of agricultural development workers whose broad and superior knowledge
14 and expertise contribute to agricultural productivity and innovativeness;
- 15 b) *Incentive pay* – form of remuneration given to individuals whose services in
16 management, administration, policy making and support contribute to the efficient and
17 effective implementation of the agricultural and fisheries programs of the government;
- 18 c) *Performance Bonus* - form of remuneration given to agricultural development workers
19 for performance that exceeds established targets; and
- 20 d) Other incentives that the Department of Agricultural and Local Government may
21 establish.

22 **SEC. 20. *Other Compensation and Benefits.*** – All agricultural development
23 workers shall be entitled to the following additional compensation and benefits:

- 24 a) *Representation Allowance and Traveling Allowance* – All Provincial/City/Municipal
25 Agriculturist, Veterinarians, Agricultural Engineers, and Fisheries Officers shall be

1 entitled to Representation Allowance and Travelling Allowance (RATA) equivalent to
2 the Department Head of the LGUs.

3 b) *Hazard Allowance* – All agricultural development workers assigned in difficult areas,
4 strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated stations, animal/plant/fisheries
5 breeding station, plant nurseries, plantations and demonstration farms, laboratories
6 especially those handling X-rays, radioisotopes, chemicals, etc., sea-borne patrols,
7 construction and installation of agricultural infrastructure projects, and other areas
8 declared under a state of calamity or emergency which exposes them to great danger,
9 occupational risks or perils of life shall be compensated with hazard allowance
10 equivalent to at least twenty per centum (20%) of the monthly basic salary.

11 c) *Subsistence Allowance* – All agricultural development workers who are required to
12 render Services in the communities, institutions, animal and plant breeding nurseries,
13 plantations and demonstration farms and other barrier programs and projects of the
14 Department of Agriculture in order to make their services available at all times, shall
15 be entitled to full daily subsistence allowance of three (3) meals, which shall be
16 computed in accordance with the prevailing circumstances.

17 d) *Longevity Pay* – A longevity pay equivalent to five per centum (5%) of the monthly
18 basic pay shall be paid to an agricultural worker for every (3) years of continuous,
19 efficient and meritorious services rendered.

20 e) *Clothing Allowance* – All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to a
21 clothing allowance in accordance with approved laws and regulations or as mandated
22 by law.

23 f) *Housing* – All agricultural workers who are in tour of duty and those who, because of
24 unavoidable circumstances, are forced to stay in the institution or community with
25 living quarters shall be entitled to such quarters for free: Provided. That if such living

1 quarters are not available, the workers shall receive housing allowances: Provided
2 further, That said allowance shall be reviewed periodically and adjusted for inflation.

g) *Compensation for injuries* – Agricultural development workers shall be protected against work-related injuries in accordance with the Labor Code or the Civil Code as the case may be.

6 h) *On-Call Pay* – In cases of "On-Call" status, the agricultural development worker shall
7 be entitled to an "On-Call" pay equivalent to fifty per centum (50%) of his/her regular
8 wage. On-Call status refers to a condition when an agricultural officer or employee is
9 called upon to respond to an urgent or immediate need or relief work during
10 emergencies such that the agricultural Worker cannot utilize his/her time for personal
11 needs: Provided, That no agricultural worker shall be placed in an "On-Call" status
12 beyond seven (7) days.

13 i) *Motor and Vehicle Loan* – All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to
14 avail of the motor and vehicle loan of the Department of Agriculture. The government
15 shall provide adequate budgetary support for this purpose.

16 ARTICLE IV
17 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

18 **SEC. 21. *Right to Join Organizations.*** – Agricultural Development Workers shall
19 have the right to freely join organizations or unions for purposes not contrary to law, in order
20 to protect their mutual interest and to seek redress of grievances through peaceful concerted
21 activities.

SEC. 22. *Freedom from Interference or Coercion.* – It shall be unlawful for any person to commit any of the following acts of interference or coercion.

24 a) to require as a condition of employment that the agricultural development worker
25 shall not join an organization or union;

- 1 b) to discriminate in order to encourage or discourage membership in any agricultural
- 2 development workers organization or union;
- 3 c) to prevent an agricultural development worker from carrying out his duties and
- 4 functions in his/her organization or union or to penalize him/her for any lawful action
- 5 performed in that capacity;
- 6 d) to harass or intimidate an agricultural development worker or prevent him/her from
- 7 performing duties and functions; and
- 8 e) to perform acts that will diminish the independence and freedom of the union or
- 9 organization to direct its own affairs.

10 **SEC. 23. Consultation.** – The Committee shall consult professional and Agricultural
11 Workers Organizations or unions in formulating policies to govern the welfare and security of
12 the Agricultural Development Workers.

13 **SEC. 24. Human Resource Development.** – The Committee, including Government
14 and non-government agencies shall conduct human resource development and management
15 studies in the following areas:

- 16 a) Types and amount of facilities and resources to render quality agricultural Service to
- 17 the clientele;
- 18 b) Venue and opportunities for the agricultural development workers to grow and
- 19 develop their potentials and develop a sense of self-worth and dignity in their work;
- 20 c) Mechanisms for democratic consultation;
- 21 d) Ways and means of giving rank-and-file agricultural development workers viable
- 22 opportunities for education, personal growth and development; and
- 23 e) Staffing patterns and standards of welfare for Agricultural Development Workers
- 24 welfare to ensure that they receive quality care.

1 **SEC. 24. Rules and Regulations.** – The Committee shall formulate and prepare
2 necessary rules and regulations in implementing the provisions of this Magna Carta.

3 **SEC. 25. Monitoring of Implementation.** – The Committee shall monitor the
4 implementation of the provisions of this Act. Provided that, the Committee shall submit semi-
5 annual reports on the status of the implementation of this Act to the Committee on
6 Agriculture and Food of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

7 **SEC. 26. Penal Provisions.** – Any person who shall willfully interfere with, restrain
8 or coerce any agricultural development worker in the exercise of his/her rights or shall violate
9 any of the provisions of this Act shall upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not less than
10 Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) but not more than Forty Thousand Pesos (P40,000.00)
11 or imprisonment of not more than one (1) year, or both, at the discretion of the court.

12 If the offender is a public official, the court, in addition to the penalties provided in
13 the preceding paragraph, shall impose the additional penalty of disqualification from office of
14 such offending public official.

15 **SEC. 27. Funding.** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act
16 shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into
17 law and every year thereafter.

18 **SEC. 28. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is declared
19 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions thereof affected thereby shall continue to be
20 in full force and effect

21 **SEC. 29. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules
22 and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed
23 or modified accordingly.