

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6025



Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representatives
Eduardo "Bro. Eddie" C. Villanueva and Domingo C. Rivera

**AN ACT STRENGTHENING THE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS OF
MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE FORCE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF
THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Citizen soldiers or reservists play an integral role in defending the Philippines in times of war, armed conflicts and similar occurrences, and in providing assistance during natural disasters, among others.

For example, during the siege carried out by the Maute Group in Marawi City in 2017, two battalions from the military's Reserve Force were mobilized to help thwart terrorism in the area. Aside from these, citizen soldiers also serve in the front lines during times of natural disasters and calamities. According to Brigadier General Marcelo Javier Jr., the Ready Reserves component of the Armed Forces of the Philippines are often mobilized first in times of disaster.¹

Unfortunately, reservists often risk losing their civilian careers when they render military service. According to a study published in the Harvard Business Review, military reservists in the United States are 11% less likely to be called for a job interview. Accordingly, American employers find it challenging to hire or invest in

¹ 2015, March 30. On the front line: Volunteer troops in times of crisis. Yuson, Zak. Rappler. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/issues/disasters/88416-reserve-force-disasters-zero-casualty> (date last accessed: August 1, 2019).

military reservists due to the possibility that they might be called regularly, and will, thus, take long leaves from work to render military service.²

In the Philippines, there is very little protection for reservists in terms of employment rights, such as payment of compensation and wages while in military service, prohibition against discrimination, rights of reservists upon returning to work,³ as well as payment of social security-related contributions while on military service.

Currently, Article 301 [286] of the Labor Code provides that the fulfillment by the employee of a military or civic duty shall not terminate employment, provided that he indicates his desire to resume work not later than one month from relief from military or civic duty. Meanwhile, item (f) of Presidential Decree No. 183 (Providing for the Annual Registration of Reservists of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; Granting Security of Tenure to Reservists Employed in Private Firms while Undergoing Refresher Training, Mobilization or Assembly Tests or Annual Active Duty Training in Fulfillment of their Military Obligations; and for Other Purposes) provides that an employee of a commercial, industrial or agricultural firm with an annual gross volume of not less than Php250,000 and with a personnel force of at least 20 employees, who is called to refresher training, active duty or mobilization or assembly test, shall not lose his position or suffer any loss of pay due to his absence in the fulfillment of his military obligation. This rule is substantially reiterated in Section 32 of Republic Act No. 7077, otherwise known as Citizen Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act, which provides that employees who are called to active military training shall not be separated from his/her employment, and shall not be considered as having forfeited his seniority right. However, Republic Act No. 7077 provided for a higher monthly operating volume of not less than Php300,000.00.

This bill seeks to strengthen the employment protection rights of reservists to ensure that they will not be adversely affected by their affiliation with and service to the military as members of the Reserve Force of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

First, it strictly prohibits discrimination in terms of employment, admission to any organization and referral to employment opportunities on account of one's membership, application for membership, performance of military service, application for military service or obligation with the Reserve Force of the AFP. Second, this bill also clarifies that military service shall not be considered a break in the service of an employee-reservist, and he/she shall be entitled to reintegration, without loss of seniority rights and diminution of pay upon his/her discharge from service or training. Third, this bill provides that reservists rendering military service are entitled to compensation commensurate to their rank and consistent with the compensation being received by their counterparts in the regular force, including the payment of premium contributions to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and Philippine Home Development Corporation (PAGIBIG). They also have the option to voluntarily pay their contributions to the Social Security System during this time.

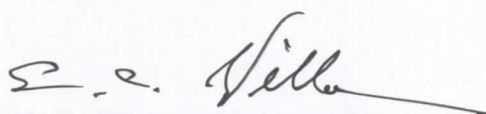
² 2017, October 13. Research: Companies Are Less Likely to Hire Current Military Reservists. Figinski, Theodore F. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2017/10/research-companies-are-less-likely-to-hire-current-military-reservists>. (date last accessed: August 1, 2019).

³ Transcripts of the Senate Hearing on the rights of reservists under the Committee on Labor and Human Development on December 18, 2017. At p. 32.

An employer, regardless of size or number of employees, who violates the provisions of this Act is liable for a fine ranging from Php50,000.00 to Php500,000.00, or imprisonment ranging from three months to two years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

Indeed, the Filipino people owe these brave men and women for the tremendous sacrifices they are willing to make for the country. Protecting their rights to just compensation and job security is the least we can do.

The immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



HON. EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA



HON. DOMINGO C. RIVERA

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

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the "*Reservist Employment
Rights Act.*"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to:

- a) Strengthen the Citizen Armed Forces or the Reserve Force of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and recognize its role in the mission areas of the AFP and in national security;
- b) Protect the rights of reservists, and prevent and prohibit discrimination on the basis of rendering military service to the State;
- c) Encourage service in the AFP Reserve Force by eliminating or minimizing the disadvantages to civilian careers and employment which can result from rendering military service to the State; and

d) Ensure the observance of all employers of the rights of reservists called to perform military service to the State.

The prime duty of the State is to serve and protect the people. For this reason, the State may call upon the people to defend the State, and in fulfillment thereof, may require its citizens to render military or civil service under conditions provided by law.

SECTION 3. Coverage. – The provisions of this Act shall apply to all employers, whether private or public, including all government agencies and political subdivisions as well as government-owned or -controlled corporations, non-government organizations, and other entities.

SECTION 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act, the following terms shall mean:

a) **Active Duty Training** refers to the compulsory or voluntary trainings for reserve units and/or individual reservists provided by the AFP to update their working knowledge in current military organization, doctrines, and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) in order to maintain a desirable state of readiness, enable them to satisfy the active service-in-grade required for promotion to higher grades, and maintain a level of proficiency and competency for those reservists designated as instructors in ROTC and other reservists training programs;

b) **Auxiliary Service** refers to the voluntary performance of a service by a reservist for the purpose of helping maintain local peace and order, meeting local insurgency and terror threats for intelligence requirements, assisting in rescue and relief operations during disasters and calamities, health welfare activities and participating in local socioeconomic development projects;

c) **Citizen Soldier or Reservist** refers to members of the Reserve Force of the AFP, composed of the following:

- 1) Graduates of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) basic and advance courses and who were issued orders as enlisted reservists or reserve officers of the AFP;
- 2) Graduates of authorized basic military training instructions who, as a result thereof, were issued orders as enlisted reservists or reserve officers;
- 3) Ex-servicemen and retired officers of the AFP who have been incorporated into the Reserve Force of the AFP; and
- 4) Reservist officers and enlisted reservists including those procured under existing laws and included in the present AFP roster.

There shall be three (3) categories of citizen soldiers or AFP reservists based on age: The First Category Reserve, the Second Category Reserve, and the Third Category Reserve, as defined under Republic Act No. 7077, otherwise known as the "Citizen Armed Force or Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act."

Based on the categorization above, the Reserve Force units shall further be classified into the Ready Reserve, the Standby Reserve, and the Retired

1 Reserve based on their operational readiness for immediate
2 deployment/utilization, and as defined under Republic Act No. 7077.

- 3
- 4 d) **Employment** refers to the act of hiring and continued engagement and the
5 reinstatement or reintegration of an employee called to military service to his/her
6 former position, or if not practicable, to a substantially equivalent position, without
7 loss of seniority rights and diminution of pay;
8
- 9 e) **Military Service** refers to any service rendered by a citizen soldier or reservist
10 to the State upon orders of the AFP or call to active duty (CAD) to meet active
11 duty training (ADT) requirements, or for any purpose that the AFP leadership
12 may deem necessary in order to augment and support the Regular Force
13 operations in times of war, national emergency or such other times as the
14 national security requires;
15
- 16 f) **Mobilization** refers to the utilization of the Reserve Force of the AFP in times of
17 emergency to meet threats to national security;
18
- 19 g) **Reintegration** refers to the actual resumption of work of an employee after
20 his/her military service to his/her former position, or if not practicable, to a
21 substantially equivalent position, without loss of seniority rights and diminution of
22 pay;
23
- 24 h) **Reserve Force** refers to those composing of members of the reserve
25 components of the AFP.
26

27

28 CHAPTER 2

29 NON-DISCRIMINATION OF RESERVISTS

30

31 SECTION 5. Anti-Reservists Discrimination. –

32

- 33 a) It shall be unlawful for an employer, or those acting in the interest of the employer
34 to:
35
- 36 1) Discriminate against an individual in terms of hiring, promotion, opportunity
37 for training, or compensation, terms and conditions, or privileges of
38 employment on account of such individual's membership, application for
39 membership, performance of military service or application for military
40 service or obligation with the Reserve Force of the AFP;
41
- 42 2) Print or publish, or cause to be printed or published, in any form of media,
43 including the internet, any notice of advertisement relating to employment
44 suggesting preferences, limitations, specifications, and discrimination
45 based on membership, application for membership, performance of military
46 service, application for military service or obligation with the Reserve Force
47 of the AFP;
48
- 49 3) Require the declaration of application for membership, or status of
50 membership in the Reserve Force of the AFP; or

1
2 4) Lay-off or impose early retirement on the basis of such employee's or
3 worker's membership, application for membership, performance of military
4 service, application for military service or obligation with the Reserve Force
5 of the AFP.
6

7 b) It shall be unlawful for a private recruitment agency to refuse to refer for
8 employment or otherwise discriminate against any individual because of such
9 person's membership, application for membership, performance of military
10 service, application for military service or obligation with the Reserve Force of
11 the AFP.
12

13 c) It shall be unlawful for any organization to cause or attempt to cause an employer
14 to discriminate against an individual in violation of this Act, and to deny or exclude
15 from its membership to any individual because of such person's membership,
16 application for membership, performance of military service, application for
17 military service or obligation with the Reserve Force of the AFP;
18

19 d) It shall be unlawful for a publisher to print or publish any notice of advertisement
20 relating to employment suggesting preferences, limitations, specifications, and
21 discrimination based on a person's membership, application for membership,
22 performance of military service, application for military service or obligation with
23 the Reserve Force of the AFP.
24

25 CHAPTER 3 26 EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS 27

28 **SECTION 6. Employment Rights of Citizen Soldiers/Reservists.** – Reservists who
29 are called to perform military service shall have the following rights:
30

31 a) Reservists are entitled to their original position, or if not practicable, to a
32 substantially equivalent position, without loss of seniority rights and diminution of
33 pay and benefits;

34 b) Military service shall not be considered a break in the employment for retirement
35 purposes or for granting benefits provided for under the Labor Code and other
36 special laws;
37

38 c) Reservists shall not be required to use or apply any earned or future leave credits
39 in connection with the performance of military service in the Reserve Force; and
40

41 d) Reservists who suffer any temporary or permanent disability due to military
42 service shall not be denied reinstatement, if such reservist-employee is willing
43 and able to perform the essential functions of his/her original employment,
44 whether with or without reasonable accommodations.
45

46 **SECTION 7. Hiring of Substitute Employee.** – Subject to the provisions of the Labor
47 Code of the Philippines, as amended, an employer may hire a temporary employee
48 during the period of the military service of the reservist employee called to render
49 military service.
50

1 **SECTION 8. Duty of an Employer to Reintegrate a Reservist and Conditions for**
2 **Reintegration.** – It shall be the duty of the employer to immediately reintegrate a
3 reservist returning from military service to his/her former position, or if not practicable,
4 to a substantially equivalent position, without loss of seniority rights and diminution of
5 benefits, immediately after he/she is officially discharged from military service;
6 *Provided*, That the following conditions shall be complied with:
7

- 8 a) The reservist has rendered or performed military service as a member of the
9 Reserve Force of the AFP;
10
11 b) The employer has been given a written notice by the AFP or the reservist at least
12 fifteen (15) days prior to departing for military service unless precluded by military
13 necessity, or under all of the relevant circumstances, the timely provision of
14 notice is otherwise impossible or unreasonable. The written notice shall, as far
15 as practicable, indicate the duration of military service and other relevant
16 information; and
17
18 c) The reservist has notified the employer of his/her intent to return to work in
19 accordance with Section 9 hereof.
20

21 For this purpose, the AFP shall issue and provide the pertinent notices and documents
22 to reservists and their employers in a timely manner to facilitate the reintegration of
23 the reservists to their employment.
24

25 **SECTION 9. Period to Notify of Intent to Return.** – Reservists shall notify their
26 employers of their intent to return to work, subject to the following circumstances and
27 conditions:
28

- 29 a) In the case of reservists called to military service for a definite period and such
30 period is clearly indicated in the call for active duty training or such other notice
31 issued by the AFP, the employer shall be deemed notified of the intent to return
32 when furnished a copy of the pertinent notice from the AFP prior to the absence
33 of the reservist for military service;
34
35 b) In the case of reservists called to military service for an indefinite period, and there
36 is no clear indication of the period of service in the notice or call issued by the
37 AFP, the employer shall be deemed notified of the intent to return when furnished
38 a copy of the pertinent notice from the AFP indicating the impending discharge of
39 reservists at least fifteen (15) days prior to the end of the military service; *Provided*,
40 That the reservists shall not be deemed ineligible when circumstances do not
41 permit the timely prior notification of absence due to military service and/or intent
42 to return of a reservist in compliance with this provision; *Provided further*, That
43 reservists who suffer from illness or injury incurred in, or aggravated during, the
44 performance of military service shall be allowed to indicate their desire to return to
45 their former position within a reasonable time as prescribed by a military doctor;
46 *Provided finally*, That the AFP shall ensure that its policies and administrative
47 processes, whenever practicable, allow for at least fifteen (15) days prior
48 notification to employers regarding the absence of reservists for military service
49 and their capacity and intent to return to their employment.
50

SECTION 10. Compensation for Non-Reintegration of Reservists. – In the event that the reintegration of the reservist is impossible due to authorized causes, the reservist shall be entitled to separation pay in accordance with law.

SECTION 11. Compensation of Reservists for Military Service. – For the duration of their military service, reservists shall be entitled to the base pay commensurate to their rank and consistent with their counterpart in the regular force, including the payment of premium contributions to the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) and Philippine Home Development Corporation (PAGIBIG).

As far as practicable and except as provided herein, all pertinent social security contributions of the reservists shall not reflect any gap in contributions.

Reservists shall have the option to pay their Social Security System (SSS) contributions as a voluntary paying SSS member to avoid any gap in their contribution records and afford their full entitlement to SSS benefits in accordance with existing guidelines. For this purpose, the AFP shall establish the necessary administrative processes to assist reservists in the timely remittance of pertinent social security contributions.

SECTION 12. Multi-stakeholder Engagements and Advocacies. – The AFP, in coordination with the Department of National Defense (DND), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and other relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall undertake an information and awareness campaign on the employment rights of reservists.

SECTION 13. Administrative Fines and Penalties. – An employer who violates the provisions of this Act shall be liable for a fine ranging from Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php50,000.00) to Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php500,000.00), or imprisonment ranging from three (3) months to two (2) years, or both, at the discretion of the court. If the offense is committed by a corporation, trust, firm, partnership or association or other entity, the penalty of imprisonment shall be imposed upon the responsible officer or officers of such corporation, trust, firm, partnership or association or entity.

SECTION 14. Military Duty Leave. – A reservist shall be entitled to an annual military duty leave of seven (7) days with pay for the exclusive purpose of undergoing military training or joining military activities. For this purpose, the SSS and the GSIS shall promulgate the necessary rules for the availment of this benefit.

CHAPTER 4 FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 15. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the immediate and effective implementation of this Act shall be charged against the funds of the DND and the AFP. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

1 **SECTION 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within sixty (60) days from
2 the effectivity of this Act, the AFP, DND, DOLE, CSC, and other appropriate
3 government agencies, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the
4 rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.
5

6 **SECTION 17. Separability Clause.** – Should any provision herein be declared
7 unconstitutional or invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions
8 of this Act.
9

10 **SECTION 18. Repealing Clause.** – Section 32 of Republic Act No.7077 and Items (f)
11 and (g) of Presidential Decree No.183 Series of 1973 (or "Providing For The Annual
12 Registration Of Reservists Of The Armed Forces Of The Philippines; Granting Security
13 Of Tenure To Reservists Employed In Private Firms While Undergoing Refresher
14 Training, Mobilization Or Assembly Tests Or Annual Active Duty Training In Fulfillment
15 Of Their Military Obligations; And For Other Purposes") are hereby repealed.
16

17 All other laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or other issuances or parts
18 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
19 accordingly.
20

21 **SECTION 19. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
22 publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
23
24

25 **Approved,**