

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10120



Introduced by **REP. JOSE FRANCISCO “KIKO” B. BENITEZ, Ph.D.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The International Federation of Social Workers defines social work as a profession and academic discipline that “promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”

As such, social workers play a crucial role in nation-building and human development. Our Constitution mandates the State to “promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.” (Art. II, Sec. 9) Social workers are in the frontlines of delivering this promise – distributing aid to poor families, comforting children and listening to them speak about trauma of neglect, abuse or armed conflict, training women to build and manage social enterprises, collecting and narrating stories of struggle and success. But social workers are not just implementing programs of the Department of Social Welfare and Development or its local equivalent – social workers are also teaching children in day care, promoting GAD in local governance, forming plans to build disaster resilience, inspiring out-of-school youth to dream, addressing grievances of overseas Filipino workers, and assisting veterans claim benefits for their service to the nation.

Congress and the Executive had recognized the important contribution of social workers in poverty alleviation, social protection, child development, women empowerment and community building. In 2007, Republic Act No. 9433, or the Magna Carta for Public Social Workers, was enacted to “promote the social and economic well-being of public social workers, their living and working conditions, and terms of employment.”

Under RA No. 9433, the power to determine the compensation of social workers employed in the government service is granted to the Department of Budget and Management. Most of entry-level or junior officer positions, e.g. Social Welfare Officer I (SOCWO1), Community Development Officer I, GAD Specialist I, Overseas Worker Welfare Officer I, for social workers are entitled to Salary Grade 11. However, a Volunteer Service Officer I and Youth Development Officer I, of the same position class and occupation group as a SOCWO1, are only entitled to Salary Grade 10.

It is therefore necessary to make the salary grade of all entry-level officer positions for social workers uniform. And at a time of great risk to public social workers, who perform their duties

on the ground amidst the pandemic, distributing aid to families affected by lockdowns, volcanic unrest and typhoons, it is imperative that the Government increase their salaries – as recognition of their dedication and diligence to serve the public.

According to the latest edition of the Annual Survey of Philippines Business and Industry¹, private social workers receive on average Php 354,200 as annual compensation, or around Php 29,516 monthly. In comparison, entry-level public social workers expect Php 22,316 monthly.² We have to close the wage gap between private and public social workers; more so now when our public social workers need additional income to address the health needs of their families and support the distance learning of their children which comes with new costs.

Public social workers perform vital and valuable, varying roles in building inclusive, transformative, resilient and healthy communities – it is high time that the Government addresses the needs of our public social workers so they too, not just the communities they serve, rise from poverty.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


JOSE FRANCISCO “KIKO” B. BENITEZ

¹ 2016 ASPBI, released by the Philippine Statistics Authority in June 2018

² Equivalent of Salary Grade 11, Step 1, on the first tranche of the new salary schedule for civilian government personnel, as provided for in Republic Act No. 11466

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AN ACT
INCREASING COMPENSATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN GOVERNMENT
SERVICE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9433,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “MAGNA CARTA FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL
WORKERS”

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

SECTION 1. Section 3(c) of Republic Act No. 9433, otherwise known as the “Magna Carta for Public Social Workers”, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act, the following shall mean as follows:

“(a) x x x

“(b) x x x

“(c) ‘Public Social Worker’ – refers to civilian government personnel whose position requires at least a bachelor’s degree in social work, and registration or license as a social worker, whether or not the position title carries the words ‘social welfare’, such as positions concerning community affairs and development, disaster risk and management, gender and development, labor and employment, peace, early childhood and development, volunteer service, youth development and assistance to veterans;

“x x x”

SEC. 2. Section 4 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 4. Coverage. – This Act shall cover all registered social workers in government service, including those whose services are engaged through job orders or contracts of service.

SEC. 3. Section 12 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 12. Compensation. – Applicable laws, rules and regulations on salary scales of government employees shall apply in determining the salaries of public social workers; *Provided*, That the salary grade of entry-level junior officer public social

workers shall be at least Salary Grade 13; *Provided, however,* That nothing in this Act shall be construed to eliminate or in any way diminish benefits being enjoyed by public social workers at the time of the effectivity of this Act; *Provided, further,* That in case of violations of this provision, the public social worker concerned shall file the necessary complaint to the CSC or NLRC through the Social Work Management and Consultative Council; *Provided, finally,* That for local government units which do not have adequate or sufficient funds shall only partially implement the established rate as may be approved by the Social Work Management and Consultative Council.”

SEC. 4. The Department of Budget and Management, in consultation with the Social Work Management and Consultative Council, shall, within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, modify the Index of Occupational Services, Occupational Groups, Classes and Salary Grades to adjust the salary grades of public social workers.

SEC. 5. All other laws, acts, decrees, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect upon its publication in the Official Gazette or in one newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,