

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City**

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 219



**Introduced by Representatives
MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING and HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.**

**AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT FACILITATION SERVICE
NETWORK FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY (PWD) THROUGH THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERSONS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT
FACILITATION OFFICE IN EVERY PROVINCE, KEY CITY AND OTHER
STRATEGIC AREAS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

No less than our Constitution recognizes labor as the primary social economic force. Given this vital role, the State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment opportunities for all. Further, the Constitution also mandates the protection of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and the promotion of their welfare and development.

To carry out this duty, Congress enacted Batas Pambansa Blg. 344, otherwise known as the "Accessibility Law". In 1991, Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons was promulgated, providing for the rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance of disabled persons and their integration into the community. The benefits and privileges granted by the said law were subsequently expanded through the enactment of its amendatory laws, Republic Act Nos. 9442 and 10754. Furthermore, to strengthen its commitment to the promotion of the welfare of PWDs, the Philippine government is a signatory to the ILO Convention No. 159, otherwise known as the "Convention on Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability". Globally, the United Nations has also called upon government agencies all over the world to develop and provide the needed programs to promote the welfare of PWDs pursuant to the proclamation of the "Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons from 1993 to 2002" and its extension to another decade from 2003-2012.

Despite these institutionalized protective measures, the International Disability Rights Monitor (IDRM) reported that only 57.1 percent of the PWDs in the Philippines are employed,

30.9 percent of them are engaged in agriculture such as farmers, forestry workers or fishermen while 10.8 percent are laborers or unskilled workers.¹

To address this gap, this measure seeks to promote equal employment opportunities for PWDs and strengthen existing employment facilitation service machinery of the government, particularly at the local levels. As such, this bill aims to establish a “Person with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO) in all capital towns of provinces, key cities, and other strategic areas, which shall be community-based and maintained largely by local government units (LGUs), and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs). Said office shall ensure the prompt, appropriate, and timely employment facilitation service for persons with disability and the provision of relevant information, education, and communication (IEC) materials for the benefit of the PWDs seeking productive employment opportunities.

The PWDEFO will also provide a venue where PWDs could find and explore various employment options and seek training assistance for possible employment venture and serve as referral and information center for the various services and programs being provided by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and other government agencies with respect to the welfare and employment of PWDs.

Social equity does not only demand that all persons shall be treated equally before the eyes of law, it also takes into account the systemic inequities that the most vulnerable sector of the society has to endure due to their pre-existing conditions. Through this measure, we will help not only boost the PWDs’ self-esteem and self-worth, but will also uplift their lives as they become self-reliant and productive members of the community.

Given the importance of promoting the rights of PWDs to decent work, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


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¹ Labor Market Intelligence Report. Issue No. 1 s. 2020. Retrieved June 29, 2022 from:
<https://www.tesda.gov.ph/Uploads/File/LMIR%202020/LMIR%20Issue%20No.%201,%20s.%202020%20-%20Enabling%20the%20Disabled.pdf>

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AN ACT

INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT FACILITATION SERVICE NETWORK FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY (PWD) THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERSONS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT FACILITATION OFFICE IN EVERY PROVINCE, KEY CITY AND OTHER STRATEGIC AREAS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Persons with Disability
2 Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO) Act.”

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is a declared policy of the State to promote employment
4 opportunities for persons with disability and strengthen existing employment facilitation
5 service machinery of the government for persons with disability, particularly at the local levels.

6 **SEC. 3. *Establishment of the Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation Office***
7 ***(PWDEFO).*** – There is hereby established on all capital towns of provinces, key cities and
8 other strategic areas, a Person with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO),
9 hereinafter referred to as “PWDEFO”, which shall be community-based and maintained largely
10 by local government units (LGUs) and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
11 or community-based organizations (CBOs).

12 The PWDEFO shall be linked to the regional offices of the Department of Labor and
13 Employment (DOLE) for coordination and technical supervision, and to the DOLE Central
14 Office, to constitute the national employment service network.

15 **SEC. 4. *Objectives of the PWDEFO.*** – The Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation
16 Office shall ensure the prompt, appropriate, and timely employment facilitation service for
17 persons with disability and the provision of relevant information, education and
18 communication (IEC) materials for the benefit of the PWDs seeking productive employment
19 opportunities.

20 Specifically, the PWDEFO shall:

- 1 (A) Provide a venue where PWDs could find and explore various employment options and
2 seek training assistance for possible employment venture;
- 3 (B) Serve as referral and information center for the various services and programs being
4 provided by the DOLE and other government agencies with respect to the welfare and
5 employment of PWDs;
- 6 (C) Provide PWDs with sufficient information on employment opportunities and labor
7 market situation in the area; and
- 8 (D) Network with other PWDEFOs within the province and/or region on employment
9 opportunities for PWDs.

10 **SEC. 5. *Functions of the PWDEFO.*** – The PWDEFO shall have the following functions:

- 11 (A) Encourage employers to submit to the PWDEFO on a regular basis a list of job
12 vacancies available for persons with disability in their respective establishments in
13 order to facilitate the exchange of labor market information between the PWDs who
14 seek employment and employers by providing employment information services to
15 PWDs jobseekers and recruitment assistance to employers;
- 16 (B) Develop training modules for PWDs in order to improve their skills and comply with
17 the skills requirement of the employer;
- 18 (C) Provide PWDs with access to the various livelihood and self-employment programs
19 offered by both government and non-government organizations (NGOs) at the
20 provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels by undertaking referrals for such
21 programs;
- 22 (D) Undertake employability enhancement trainings/seminars for PWDs, as well as those
23 PWDs who would like to enhance their employability;
- 24 (E) Provide occupational counseling, career guidance, mass motivation and values
25 development activities to PWDs;
- 26 (F) Conduct pre-employment counseling and orientation to PWDs;
- 27 (G) Provide reintegration assistance services to PWDs who are retrenched or terminated;
28 and
- 29 (H) Perform such functions and willfully carry out the objectives of this Act.

30 **SEC. 6. *Other Services of the PWDEFO.*** – In addition to the functions enumerated in the
31 preceding Section, every PWDEFO shall also undertake the following programs and activities:

- 32 (A) Jobs Fairs – These shall be conducted periodically all over the country to bring together
33 in one venue PWD job seekers and employers for immediate matching;
- 34 (B) Livelihood and Self-Employment Bazaars – These will give the PWDs information on
35 the wide array of livelihood programs they may choose to avail of, particularly in the
36 rural areas;

1 (C) Work Appreciation Program (WAP) – This program aims to develop the values of
2 work appreciation and ethics by exposing the PWDs to actual work situations; and

3 (D) Other programs/activities developed by DOLE to enhance provision of employment
4 assistance to PWDs, particularly for special groups of disadvantaged workers.

5 **SEC. 7. *Role of DOLE, LGUs and NGOs.*** – Upon the request of the LGUs and NGOs which
6 do not have existing PWDEFOs, the establishment, operation and maintenance of PWDEFOs
7 shall be undertaken by the DOLE. The DOLE shall enter into memoranda of agreements
8 (MOAs) with the concerned LGUs and NGOs for the establishment, operation, and
9 maintenance of PWDEFO in their respective areas of jurisdiction, and the institutionalization
10 of existing PWDEFOs.

11 It shall be the responsibility of the DOLE to:

12 (A) Establish and maintain a computerized PWDs manpower registry of skills and
13 employment and business opportunities to facilitate the provision and packaging of
14 employment assistance to PWD clients and the setting-up of regional job clearance
15 systems as part of the overall employment network;

16 (B) Provide office space, equipment and/or supplies, as well as the necessary personnel
17 complement to manage, operate and maintain the PWDEFO;

18 (C) Designate, in consultation with the LGU or NGO concerned, a qualified project
19 manager and/or key personnel who shall be responsible for the operation and
20 management of the PWDEFO;

21 (D) Provide technical assistance and allied support services to the PWDEFO;

22 (E) Train PWDEFO personnel in the various aspects of employment facilitation functions;

23 (F) Extend/facilitate such other package of employment services through the provision of
24 employment assistance to PWD clients of the LGU or NGO concerned, including the
25 conduct of jobs fairs and other activities; and

26 (G) Undertake, monitor, assess and evaluate the PWDEFO program implementation.

27 **SEC. 8. *Administration of the PWDEFO Program.*** – The DOLE shall be primarily
28 responsible for the administration of the PWDEFO Program through the Bureau of Local
29 Employment, as well as its regional offices throughout the country. The Secretary of Labor and
30 Employment, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government
31 (DILG), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and in consultation with the
32 presidents of the various local government leagues, namely the League of Provinces, the
33 League of Cities, the League of Municipalities, and the League of Barangays, shall accordingly
34 promulgate, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the necessary rules and
35 regulations for the effective implementation of the Program.

36 **SEC. 9. *Conduct of an Annual Nationwide Disability Prevalence Survey.*** – Realizing the
37 need to develop a system of reliable information on disability, the Department of Health

(DOH), in coordination with DOLE and the National Council on the Welfare of Disabled Persons, is hereby mandated to conduct an Annual Nationwide Disability Prevalence Survey.

The objectives of the Annual Nationwide Disability Prevalence Survey shall include the following:

(A) To determine the prevalence of disability in the country in general and in the various regions of the country in particular;

(B) To determine the distribution of disability in the country and in various regions with respect to age, sex, and type of disability; and

(C) To determine the status of rehabilitation and the rehabilitation needs of PWDs in the country.

SEC. 10. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the existing appropriations of the DOLE and its other operating agencies. Thereafter, the amounts needed for the full implementation of this Act shall be included in the budget of the DOLE in the succeeding annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. Separability Clause. – If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,