

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



House Bill No. **9325**

Introduced by **Representative Eduardo Roa Rama, Jr.**
2nd District, Cebu City

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Social work has made a profound impact on the lives of Filipinos since time immemorial due to the Filipino spirit of community. The essence of social work can be found even in our language or expression, such as *awa*, *damay*, *malasakit*, *kawanggawa*, *palusong*, *batares*, and *tulong*.¹ Evidently, for many years, social workers have had to partake not only in doing casework for victims of abuse but also in providing social services and programs directly to those who are in need including assistance, therapy, intervention, and counseling. Given their multifaceted role, social workers are pillars of nation-building.

With the advent of Republic Act No. 9433, also known as the “Magna Carta for Public Social Workers”, the State recognizes the importance of promoting and improving the social and economic well-being of social workers. Despite the passage of the aforementioned law, the country has been experiencing a shortage of social workers. In 2022, Secretary Erwin Tulfo, the former Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (“DSWD”), informed the Senate that there are vacancies in the position of social workers, however, no one is applying due to low compensation.² Currently, there are only 6,800 registered social workers across the country.³

In view of the foregoing circumstances, this legislative measure seeks to increase the compensation of public social workers to a salary grade of 13. Social workers have been the

¹ Veneracion, C. (2000). A Hundred Years of Social Work in the Philippines: Roots and Heritage. *CSWCD Development Journal*, 2000. 1-27.
https://cswcd.upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/CDJ-2000_01_Veneracion.pdf.

² Fernandez, D. (12 October 2022). *DSWD chief's lack of awareness on social worker shortage shocks Sen. Pia*. INQUIRER.net.
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1679150/dswd-chiefs-lack-of-awareness-on-social-worker-shortage-shocks-sen-pia>

³ Philippine Association of Social Workers, Inc. (PASWI)
<https://www.ifsw.org/member-organisation/philippines/>

forerunners in delivering services to Filipinos during a crisis, most especially during the pandemic, and in protecting vulnerable children, women, the elderly, and people with disabilities. With the onset of inflation, it is just and appropriate to amend the Magna Carta and increase the compensation of public social workers.

As public social workers have been vested with a myriad of responsibilities and play a critical role in the delivery of services which uplift our fellow countrymen, it is only right that this measure be passed into law in order to provide them with what is due to them.

In this light, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

REP. EDUARDO ROA RAMA, JR.
2nd District, Cebu City

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**AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9433, OR THE MAGNA CARTA FOR
PUBLIC SOCIAL WORKERS TO INCREASE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS.**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.*— This Act shall be known as the “Amended Magna Carta for Public Social Workers Act of 2023.”

SECTION 2. Section 3 (a) 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 terms shall mean as follows:

- (a) Social Work shall refer to a practice-based profession and academic discipline that is primarily concerned with promoting social change and development, and the empowerment of the people by helping individuals, families, and communities develop, maintain, cope, and address the demands of their environment through the use of social work methods and interventions;
- (b) x x x
- (c) Public Social Worker (“PSWs”) shall refer to a registered social worker employed in the government service whether they are designated with the title of social welfare officer or not, whose position involves 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;

development, volunteer service, youth development, and assistance to veterans;

- (d) Public Social Welfare and Development Worker shall refer to a worker employed in a government social welfare and development agency other than the public social worker as defined herein;

x x x

SECTION 3. Section 4 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 4. Coverage — This Act shall cover all registered social workers who are currently employed, whether on a full-time or part-time basis and regardless of position and titles, and holding permanent, casual, or contractual positions, in the National Government, including national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations, state universities and colleges, and in local government units (“LGUs”). It shall exclude those who are on a contract of service or job order, who are employed in private social welfare agencies, who are not bound by an employer-employee relationship with the government, and who are engaged in the private practice of profession.

SECTION 4. Section 12 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 12. Compensation — The starting salary of every public social worker shall be at least *Salary Grade 13* with an equivalent monthly salary as prescribed by existing and applicable salary schedule for civilian employees, *provided that* nothing in this Act shall be construed to eliminate or diminish the benefit enjoyed by public social workers at the time of the effectivity of this Act, *provided finally* that for social workers in local government units, adjustments of their salaries shall be following applicable laws. In case of violations of this provision, the public social worker shall file a complaint to the CSC or through the Social Work Management and Consultative Council.

SECTION 5. Section 15 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

SEC. 15. Other Benefits — Aside from the benefits received required by existing laws and executive orders, the public social workers shall receive the following:

Hazard Allowance — x x x *provided that* those who are on authorized leave of absence with or without pay, and those who are attending seminars, training, or any similar activity are not entitled to receive a hazard allowance.

Subsistence Allowance — Public Social Workers who render services in communities, institutions, hospitals, and other locations and are required to make

their services available at all times may be granted daily subsistence allowance for each day of actual or full-time service. This does not cover PSWs who are not required to make their services available at all times, who are on leave of absence, with or without pay; while on official travel, and entitled to travel expenses under E.O. No. 298 series of 2004 as amended; and who are attending training, seminars, workshops, and similar activities where meals are provided.

Transportation or Travel Allowance shall be given daily to PSWs assigned outside of their regular work stations under E.O. No. 298 series of 2004 as amended, in lieu of subsistence allowance, and those who are on fieldwork.

X X X

X X X

X X X

The grant of these benefits shall be subject to the availability of funds. In case of insufficiency or lack of funds, the benefits may be granted at lower rates which will be applied proportionately to all public social workers. In the case of LGUs, the grant of these benefits shall be subject to other relevant laws and regulations.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.*— If, for any reason, any section of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional and invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected and shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions, rules, and regulations, contrary to or inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 8. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,