

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 9806



Introduced by Representative CAMILLE A. VILLAR

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE WASTE WORKERS' HEALTH AND WELFARE
PROGRAM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

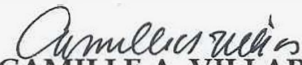
Explanatory Note

The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. They shall be entitled to security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage.¹

"Waste workers" refer to persons engaged in the collection, transportation, processing, and disposal of solid waste, and includes garbage collectors, waste pickers, recyclers, and landfill and dumpsite workers. They play a vital role in solid waste management thereby avoiding the negative effects of hazardous waste, and contribute greatly in protecting the environment. Despite their importance, waste workers are some of the most under-appreciated and unprotected workers.

This bill seeks to acknowledge the contribution of waste workers in our society by establishing and administering the Waste Workers' Health and Welfare Program designed to safeguard and promote their rights and welfare. The program will provide them with health coverage and benefits, occupational safety training, personal protective equipment, educational and financial assistance, and some other benefits.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is urgently sought.


CAMILLE A. VILLAR

¹ Article XIII, Section 3, 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Waste Workers' Health and Welfare Act of 2023."

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to promote the health, safety, and welfare of waste workers in the Philippines through the establishment of a comprehensive program that provides benefits, education, and training, and ensures access to proper equipment and facilities, in recognition of the critical role they play in maintaining the country's cleanliness and sustainability.

Sec. 3. *Definition of Waste Worker* - For the purpose of this Act, "waste worker" refers to any person engaged in the collection, transportation, processing, and disposal of solid waste, and includes, but is not limited to, garbage collectors, waste pickers, recyclers, and landfill and dumpsite workers.

Sec. 4. *Waste Workers' Health and Welfare Program.* - The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall establish and administer the Waste Workers' Health and Welfare Program, designed to safeguard and promote the rights and

welfare of waste workers in the Philippines, which shall include the following components:

- a) Registration and Monitoring System - A system for the registration of waste workers, necessary for them to be covered under this Program.
- b) Health Coverage and Benefits - A package of healthcare benefits, including free annual check-ups, vaccinations, and hospitalization assistance, in partnership with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).
- c) Occupational Safety Training - The provision of regular training programs on methods, techniques, and the proper use of personal protective equipment to minimize the risks associated with waste handling.
- d) Personal Protective Equipment - The mandatory provision to waste workers of suitable and adequate personal protective equipment free of charge by their employers or agencies.
- e) Educational Assistance - The facilitation of access to educational assistance programs and scholarship grants for waste workers and their dependents.
- f) Financial Assistance - The institution of a loan program under the auspices of the Department, in collaboration with qualified financial institutions, to provide waste workers with low-interest loans for housing, emergency situations, or the establishment of sustainable livelihood businesses.

Sec. 4. *Funding.* - The necessary funding for the implementation of the Waste Workers' Health and Welfare Program shall be allocated from the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA). The DOLE may also accept and utilize grants, donations, contributions, or other forms of assistance, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

Sec. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The DOLE, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and other government agencies, shall promulgate and publish the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this law.

Sec. 6. *Separability Clause.* – Any portion or provisions of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid and shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions or provisions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

Sec. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, memoranda, circulars, and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,