

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **11474**



Introduced by
KABATAAN Party-list Representative RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL,
GABRIELA Women's Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS, and
ACT TEACHERS Party-list Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO

THE MAGNA CARTA OF WASTE WORKERS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Waste management is an essential pillar of public health, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. At the heart of this system are waste workers, whose labor ensures the proper collection, disposal, and recycling of waste materials. Despite their critical role, waste workers remain among the most marginalized and vulnerable sectors in the Philippines.

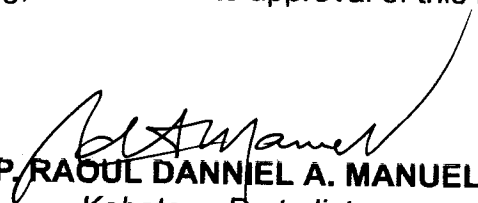
Waste workers in the country are broadly categorized into the formal and informal sectors. Formal waste workers are employed by government agencies, private companies, or cooperatives, while informal waste workers—commonly known as "waste pickers" or "scavengers"—often operate independently or in small groups, without formal employment contracts, legal recognition, or access to basic labor protections.

Both formal and informal waste workers endure harsh working conditions, including exposure to hazardous materials, low wages, job insecurity, and limited access to social protection, health care, and other essential services. Despite their indispensable contributions to waste management and environmental conservation, they face systemic discrimination, stigma, and exclusion due to the informal and precarious nature of their work.

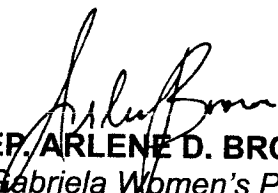
Given their vital role and the challenges they face, there is an urgent need for a Magna Carta for Waste Workers—a comprehensive legislation that will protect their rights, improve their working conditions, and integrate them into the formal waste management system. This legislation will ensure that waste workers are recognized as essential contributors to society, entitled to fair wages, safe working environments, social security, and access to health care and other benefits.

The proposed Magna Carta will not only uphold the rights and welfare of waste workers but also promote a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable waste management system in the Philippines. By empowering waste workers and addressing their vulnerabilities, this measure will strengthen their capacity to contribute to public health, environmental sustainability, and community well-being. Ultimately, the enactment of a law that protects the rights and promotes the welfare of waste workers will contribute to the advancement of Filipino workers' democratic interests in general.

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



REP. RAOUL DANNIEL A. MANUEL
Kabataan Party-list



REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party



REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Party-list

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THE MAGNA CARTA OF WASTE WORKERS

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

CHAPTER I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "Waste Workers' Rights and Welfare Act of 2025", also known as the "Magna Carta of Waste Workers".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect the rights and promote the welfare of waste workers in the country and to take appropriate steps to recognize such rights and welfare. Recognizing the invaluable contribution of waste workers in the preservation of public health, environmental sustainability, and the overall well-being of our communities, the State shall develop and implement policies and programs directed towards the upholding of waste workers' inherent and basic human rights, including but not limited to the right to recognition, the right to self-organization, and the right to just compensation. Finally, the State shall delegate to the appropriate government agency the task of overseeing and ensuring the effective enforcement of this Act.

SECTION 3. Coverage. This Act shall cover all workers and persons economically dependent on the activities involving the collection, transportation,

processing, disposal, and general management of solid wastes, hazardous wastes, residual wastes, medical wastes, among other forms of toxic or harmful chemicals, substances, and materials.

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* For the purposes of this Act:

- (a) “Waste workers” – refers to all persons whose livelihood depends on the collection, transportation, processing, disposal, and general management of wastes, including but not limited to garbage collectors, waste pickers, segregators, and recyclers. Whether employed in the private or public sectors, or belonging to the informal sector of waste workers, the determination of being a waste worker, for the purposes of this Act, shall lie on the nature of their livelihood, in relation to their inclusion to disadvantaged or marginalized groups that have little or no access to basic social services such as health care, education, food security, housing, and the justice system.
- (b) “Private sector” – refers to private individuals or privately-owned and established companies, corporations, firms, or formations, whether or not organized for profit, that are engaged in waste management.
- (c) “Public sector” – refers to entities established by the government or facilities operated by the government that may include departments, agencies, authorities, bureaus, training institutions, and local government units (LGUs) within which waste workers can render their services.
- (d) “Informal sector” – refers to persons who are neither employed by the private sector nor the public sector, but are economically dependent on activities related to waste management.
- (e) “Living wage” – refers to the necessary minimum income for workers to meet their basic needs consistently.
- (f) “Benefits” – refers to the socioeconomic gains of workers beyond their income, including but not limited to bonuses, health insurance, and subsidized housing.
- (g) “Self-organization” – refers to the act of forming, joining, and/or assisting unions or associations established and led by workers to promote their mutual interests and/or to extend mutual aid.

CHAPTER II. COMMON PROVISIONS

SECTION 5. *Right to Recognition.* The State, the private sector, and society in general shall actively work towards the recognition of waste workers, the protection of their democratic rights, and the promotion of their collective welfare, as defined and guaranteed under this Act.

SECTION 6. *Right to Decent Work.* The State shall realize decent work standards that are centered on the rights and welfare of waste workers, including but not limited to job security, readily available work opportunities, just compensation, social protection, and a safe working environment.

SECTION 7. *Right to Information and Participation.* All waste workers have the right to know the policies that affect their lives, and they have the right to participate actively and meaningfully in the policy-making process regarding waste management, as well as in programs, projects, training, and workshops that aim to advance the rights and welfare of waste workers. Their participation shall encompass the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs related to waste management.

To uphold their right to participation, it is hereby mandated that waste workers be represented in both the City or Municipality Solid Waste Management (SWM) Board and the Barangay Solid Waste Management Board, governed by the following guidelines:

- (a) At least one (1) seat in the SWM Board shall be allocated for a representative of waste workers directly involved in the solid waste management within its jurisdiction;
- (b) The waste worker representative/s shall be selected by the workers themselves through a transparent and inclusive process;
- (c) The waste worker representative/s shall report back to their respective constituencies on activities, discussions, and resolutions made by the SWM Board; and
- (d) The SWM Board shall periodically review the effectiveness of worker representation and make adjustments as necessary to ensure the waste workers' active and meaningful participation.

SECTION 8. *Work Days and Work Hours.* The normal hours of work for waste workers should not exceed eight (8) hours a day for five (5) days a week, including Saturdays. If their work hours fall between 10:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M., they are entitled to night shift differential pay of not less than ten percent (10%) of their regular wage for each hour of work in addition to their pay for regular work hours.

SECTION 9. *Living Wages, Benefits, and Regularization.* All waste workers shall be considered as regular employees, entitled to living wages and timely benefits, regardless of employment to either the private or public sector.

SECTION 10. *Right to Self-organization.* All waste workers have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist a workers' union or association, free from interference of their employer or the government, in order to promote their mutual interests and/or to extend mutual aid. All waste workers are allowed to form, join, and/or assist a union for the purpose of collective bargaining and are eligible for union membership on the first day of their employment.

Similarly, waste workers of government corporations have the right to organize and to bargain collectively with their respective employers. All other waste workers in the public sector have the right to form, join, and/or assist an association for the purposes of their collective rights and welfare.

Finally, waste workers in the informal sector also have the right to form, join, and/or assist an association for the purposes of their collective rights and welfare, and to defend their common interests. To gain formal recognition, associations founded by waste workers in the informal sector may be registered with the Department of Labor and Employment. Provided, that this registration will not serve as a requirement for the assertions of their association to be recognized.

SECTION 11. *Freedom from Violations of the Right to Self-organization.* No person shall be allowed to restrain, coerce, or unduly interfere with the waste workers in the exercise of their right to self-organization. It shall be unlawful for any person to commit the following acts of restraint, coercion, or undue interference:

- (a) To prevent a waste worker from carrying out their duties in their union or association;
- (b) To discriminate in hiring a waste worker or to set unfavorable conditions upon them and discourage them from forming, joining, and/or assisting any union or association;

- (c) To require as a condition of employment that a waste worker must not form, join, and/or assist any union or association;
- (d) To interfere with the functions and administration of waste workers and their union or association, thereby undermining their independence and autonomy to direct their own affairs; and
- (e) To perform acts of retaliation, be it directly or indirectly, against waste workers raising grievances.

SECTION 12. *Protection from Discrimination.* No waste workers shall be subjected to any form of discrimination, by reason of socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religious or political beliefs, civil status, physical characteristics, disability, or ethnicity.

SECTION 13. *Occupational Safety and Health Standards.* The State shall take measures to formulate, implement, and continuously evaluate an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) program for all waste workers. To enforce continuity plans that prioritize the safety, security, and well-being of waste workers during times of disasters, calamities, or other such threats, it is hereby mandated that:

- (a) Authorized bodies of the government must regularly inspect and assess OSH standards for waste workers and prohibit any acts of self-regulated inspection in both the public and private sectors; and
- (b) OSH committees must be institutionalized with sufficient and genuine representation from the waste workers.

SECTION 14. *Annual Physical and Mental Health Examinations.* Waste workers shall be provided with annual medical services and undergo free physical and mental health examinations.

SECTION 15. *Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, Vaccinations, and Other Prophylactic Medicines.* Waste workers, as the frontliners of waste management, shall be provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment, free vaccinations and multivitamins, and other prophylactic medicines against common and present diseases.

SECTION 16. *Hazard Allowance.* Waste workers, who are exposed to health hazards or elements involving high risk of perils to life, limbs, or likely deterioration of health shall be compensated with a just and humane hazard allowance.

SECTION 17. *Laundry Allowance.* Waste workers who are required to wear uniforms regularly shall be entitled to a laundry allowance equivalent to One Hundred Fifty Pesos (P150) per month. The laundry allowance shall be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index to account for inflation.

SECTION 18. *Transportation, Communication, and Subsistence Allowance.* Waste workers who are required to render service in the field during emergencies, disasters, calamities, or other such threats in order to make their services available at any time shall be entitled to a full subsistence allowance of three (3) meals per day which may be computed under prevailing circumstances. Likewise, their expenses for transportation and communication shall be compensated accordingly.

SECTION 19. *Security of Tenure.* No waste worker shall be dismissed from work except for a just or authorized cause and only after due process in an administrative proceeding as provided for in this Act.

SECTION 20. *Safeguards in Administrative Proceedings.* In any administrative proceeding, a waste worker shall enjoy the following rights:

- (a) The right to be informed of the charges;
- (b) The right to full access to evidence against them;
- (c) The right to defend themselves or by a counsel of their choice;
- (d) The right to be given adequate time to prepare their case, which shall in no case be less than one (1) week;
- (e) The right to appeal to relevant authorities; and
- (f) Such other rights that will ensure fairness and impartiality during proceedings.

CHAPTER III. WASTE WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

SECTION 21. *Overtime Pay.* A waste worker who performs work beyond eight (8) hours a day shall be paid with additional compensation of overtime pay equivalent to their regular wage plus at least twenty-five percent (25%) thereof. Work performed beyond eight (8) hours on a holiday or rest day shall be paid an additional compensation equivalent to the rate of the first eight (8) hours on a holiday or rest day plus at least thirty percent (30%) thereof.

SECTION 22. *Holiday Pay.* Where a waste worker is made or permitted to work on their scheduled rest day, they shall be paid an additional compensation of at least thirty percent (30%) of their regular wage. The waste worker may be required by their employer to work on a regular holiday but they shall be paid a compensation twice their regular rate. For the purposes of this Section, "holiday" refers to any of the days enumerated under Paragraph C, Article 94 of the Labor Code of the Philippines.

Work performed on any special holiday shall be paid an additional compensation of at least thirty percent (30%) of the regular wage of the employee. Where such holiday work falls on the employee's scheduled rest day, they shall be entitled to an additional compensation of at least fifty percent (50%) of their regular wage.

Where the collective bargaining agreement or other applicable employment contract stipulates the payment of a higher premium pay than that prescribed under this Section, the employer shall pay such a higher rate.

SECTION 23. *Longevity Pay.* A monthly longevity pay equivalent to five percent (5%) of the monthly basic pay shall be paid to a waste worker for every five (5) years of continuous, effective, and meritorious services rendered as certified by the immediate supervisor concerned.

SECTION 24. *Health Services.* Waste workers shall have access to comprehensive health services provided by a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), which covers hospitalization and regular medical check-ups in accredited hospitals, medical facilities, and clinics.

SECTION 25. *Enforcement of Labor Laws.* All other relevant provisions including but not limited to conditions of employment, health, safety and social welfare, labor relations, and post-employment set forth by the Labor Code of the Philippines and Presidential Decree No. 851 shall apply to waste workers.

CHAPTER IV. WASTE WORKERS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

SECTION 26. *Overtime Pay and Holiday Pay.* Where a waste worker performs work (a) beyond eight (8) hours a day, (b) on their scheduled rest day, or (c) on a regular or special holiday, they shall be paid with additional compensation of overtime pay or holiday pay, in accordance with the existing policies of the Department of Budget and Management and of the Civil Service Commission.

SECTION 27. *Health Care Delivery System.* All waste workers shall be guaranteed with a health care delivery system and access to a public or private primary care provider of their choice. The respective LGU shall establish a program and promulgate guidelines for the health care benefits.

SECTION 28. *Financial Assistance.* The LGU shall endeavor to provide assistance to waste workers in crisis situations including but not limited to medical, burial, transportation, education, food, or financial assistance for other support services or needs of a waste worker or their family.

SECTION 29. *Cash Incentives.* In recognition of the waste workers' contribution to public health and safety, the environment, and local economy, the LGU shall grant an annual cash incentive for all waste workers without distinction or discrimination.

SECTION 30. *Subsidized Housing Program.* The LGU shall, through the development and implementation of a subsidized housing program, ensure that waste workers who are able to qualify under the guidelines shall be included as beneficiaries.

CHAPTER V. WASTE WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

SECTION 31. *Right to Recognition.* All civil, political, social, and economic rights of waste workers in the informal sector are hereby guaranteed to be recognized and protected as provided under this Act.

SECTION 32. *Social Protection and Inclusion.* The State, through the Department of Labor and Employment, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Health, and the Local Government Units, shall develop and implement programs for the informal sector of waste workers and ensure their access to basic social services and other forms of aid.

CHAPTER VI. PARTICIPATION OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

SECTION 33. *Role of the Department of Labor and Employment.* The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall:

- (a) Establish guidelines and mechanisms for coordination in overseeing the working conditions, rights, and benefits of waste workers;
- (b) Provide technical assistance to LGUs in the formulation and implementation of programs and initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of waste workers;
- (c) Conduct capacity-building programs for local authorities, waste management agencies, and other relevant stakeholders;
- (d) Enhance employment opportunities through trade policies and skill building;
- (e) Establish guidelines and mechanisms for the application of the occupational health and safety regulations as well as the regular reporting of the working conditions of the waste workers;
- (f) Promulgate the basis for the adjustment of monetary allowances based on the annual inflation; and
- (g) Assist the LGUs in providing necessary training to the collectors and personnel in accordance with the waste management plan of the LGUs.

SECTION 34. *Role of Local Government Units.* The local government units shall be in charge of implementing this Act in their respective localities. Thus, the LGUs shall:

- (a) Ensure the proper enforcement of labor standards, occupational safety, and health regulations, as well as other pertinent laws and policies related to waste workers within their jurisdiction. The LGU shall also assist waste workers in their registration with DOLE;
- (b) Establish local mechanisms to monitor and address issues related to waste workers, including but not limited to, workplace safety, social protection, and access to training and skills development programs;

- (c) Submit periodic reports to the DOLE on the status of waste workers within their jurisdictions, outlining the measures taken to address issues related to employment and working conditions;
- (d) Advocate for the inclusion of waste workers in social protection programs, working with DOLE to explore avenues for health insurance, retirement benefits, and other welfare initiatives.
- (e) Implementation of barangay and city or municipality practices on Solid Waste Management;
- (f) Drafting and Implementation of 10-year plans on Solid Waste Management and Disposal;
- (g) Equip the waste workers directly dealing with waste with personal protective equipment, and other necessary resources to ensure protection from hazards brought about by handling waste;
- (h) Submit periodic reports to the DENR on the status of the implementation of the Solid Waste Management and Disposal to address issues and concerns related to waste management and disposal; and
- (i) Ensure inclusion and active participation of waste workers groups or associations in governing bodies or councils responsible for waste management oversight.

SECTION 35. *Role of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.*
The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall:

- (a) Ensure that the Solid Waste Management and Disposal plans of the LGUs are properly implemented, as per Republic Act No. 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2003;
- (b) Conduct capacity building with the waste workers, LGUs, waste management agencies, and other relevant stakeholders on the assessment of the impact of waste workers on climate change.
- (c) Conduct seminars and workshops on the proper waste management and disposal to help minimize environmental effects specifically climate change;

- (d) Provide technical assistance to LGUs in identifying and implementing best practices on the conduct of work of waste workers that minimizes environmental effects;
- (e) Identify areas with a high risk of adverse environmental effects of waste and implement a mitigation plan through the aid of waste workers; and
- (f) Provide economic incentives and assistance to local governments for their waste reduction, sustainable waste management, safe disposal, and recycling initiatives.

SECTION 36. *Role of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.* The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall:

- (a) Adopt a Social Insurance Policy which aims to mitigate income risks by applying diversification, a risk management technique through a shared fund, including programs for micro-insurance payment that will help shield the waste workers from the unforeseeable risk of unemployment due to sickness, retrenchment, national security issues, and national health issues;
- (b) Provide resources and basic minimum requirements to the marginalized sector to aid in the employment as waste workers, including assistance programs through cash or in-kind transfers as well as alternative care and referral services; and
- (c) Provide social safety nets to respond to urgent issues like disasters, calamities, economic shocks, pandemics and epidemics that will affect the vulnerable part of the waste workforce, including emergency assistance, price subsidies, food programs, employment programs in partnership with DOLE, retraining programs and emergency loans, and health assistance.

The DSWD, in partnership with the Barangay and City or Municipal Officials, shall maintain national and regional profiles of beneficiaries of the programs to be shared with the appropriate stakeholders to assess the applicability and the development of comprehensive statistics for waste workers.

SECTION 37. *Role of the Department of Health.* The Department of Health (DOH) shall:

- (a) Provide for health programs, services, and facilities for waste workers as may be needed, subject to availability of funds and administrative rules and regulations, including but not limited to:
 - i) Vaccinations and anti-tetanus shots;
 - ii) Periodic health check-up;
 - iii) Annual physical examinations; and
 - iv) Supplements and other necessary medicines.
- (b) Coordinate or collaborate with, and assist local communities, agencies and interested groups in the implementation of programs catered for waste workers.
- (c) Collect, analyze and disseminate statistical and other relevant information on the waste worker's health situation, and to revise the Department's programs based on the outcome of the statistics; and
- (d) Propagate health information and educate the waste workers on health hazards and environmental impacts to their health, geared to prevent health related problems while performing their duties.

SECTION 38. *Role of the Public Attorney's Office.* The Public Attorney's Office (PAO) shall:

- (a) Provide waste workers with free access to courts, judicial, and quasi-judicial agencies by ensuring that they receive adequate legal representation, counseling, and assistance;
- (b) Waste workers who encounter legal issues related to their employment, working conditions, or rights violations shall have the right to seek assistance from PAO, which shall endeavor to provide timely and effective support;
- (c) Offer counseling and assistance to waste workers through personalized legal support and guidance, and empower waste workers to assert their rights and seek redress for any injustices or grievances they may face in the course of their work;

- (d) Conduct awareness campaigns and outreach programs targeted at waste workers, ensuring that they are informed about their legal entitlements and the services available to them through PAO;
- (e) Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and legal advocacy groups, to address systemic issues affecting waste workers and advocate for policy reforms that uphold their rights and welfare; and
- (f) Provide waste workers with legal assistance and representation during mediation and arbitration proceedings aimed at resolving labor disputes.

CHAPTER VII. FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 39. *Special Treatment for Benefits of Waste Workers.* All benefits received by a waste worker under this Act, including but not limited to benefits given to rank-and-file employees, whether granted under a collective bargaining agreement or not, fringe benefits, and de minimis benefits, are not taxable pursuant to Section 33(C)(3) of Republic Act No. 8424 or the Tax Reform Act of 1997.

SECTION 40. *National Waste Workers' Appreciation Day.* It is hereby declared that the last Sunday of January of every year shall be celebrated as National Waste Workers' Day in honor of the contributions made by our waste workers to help keep our communities clean and safe.

SECTION 41. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Secretary of Labor and Employment, after consultation with the DENR, DSWD, DOH, and LGUs, as well as environmental workers' unions or associations, shall formulate and prepare the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act. Rules and regulations issued pursuant to this Section shall take effect after thirty (30) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

SECTION 42. *Appropriations.* The initial funding requirements for the enforcement of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the government agencies concerned. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual budgeting of agencies under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 43. *Penal Provision.* Any person or group who violates the provisions of this Act shall be punished with a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000)

but not more than One Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P150,000), and/or a penalty of arresto mayor in its maximum period, or both, at the discretion of the Court.

SECTION 44. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 45. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, ordinances, rules and regulations, other issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this law are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 46. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,