

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4227**



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING VIRTUAL ASSISTANCE SUPPORT FACILITIES IN KEY
PROVINCES AND CITIES, PROVIDING 24/7 INTERNET HUBS, TRAINING
PROGRAMS, AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR REMOTE
WORKERS AND FREELANCERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has emerged as a global hub for virtual assistants (VAs), online freelancers, and remote workers, contributing significantly to foreign exchange earnings and providing flexible livelihood opportunities for Filipinos. With over 1.5 million registered freelancers on various digital platforms and thousands more operating informally, the sector has become one of the fastest-growing pillars of the Philippine digital economy. The country's English proficiency, cultural adaptability, work ethic, and competitive pricing have made Filipino freelancers highly sought after by businesses worldwide.

However, despite this growth, the sector faces structural barriers that hinder its full potential. Many online freelancers and VAs struggle with unreliable internet connectivity, frequent power interruptions, lack of affordable co-working spaces, and limited access to legal, financial, and business support services. Rural communities in particular—where digital freelancing could otherwise bridge geographic and economic inequalities—remain unable to participate meaningfully due to the absence of dedicated facilities. Moreover, most freelancers rely on self-learning, without access to structured training programs or skills certification that would allow them to compete more effectively in global markets.

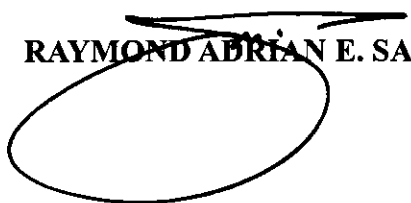
This bill seeks to address these challenges by establishing Virtual Assistance Support Facilities (VASFs) across provinces and key cities. These facilities will provide reliable 24/7 internet access, affordable co-working hubs, skills development and certification programs, and access to legal, financial, and business support. The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will serve as the lead implementing agency, in coordination with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for

training and certification, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for worker protection programs, and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for entrepreneurship support. Local government units (LGUs) will serve as partners in hosting and maintaining these facilities to ensure nationwide reach, especially in rural and underserved areas.

The measure also envisions the integration of VASFs into the broader ecosystem of innovation and rural development. By providing shared infrastructure and institutional support, these facilities will help freelancers and VAs scale up from individual gig work to sustainable microenterprises and service cooperatives. They will also strengthen the country's competitiveness in global outsourcing markets, diversify sources of foreign exchange, and create a more inclusive pathway for Filipinos to participate in the future of work.

By passing this measure, Congress will not only expand economic opportunities for Filipino workers but also position the Philippines as a global leader in digital freelancing and virtual assistance services. It will ensure that the benefits of the digital economy are accessible to workers across social classes and geographic locations. This bill represents a strategic investment in rural development, skills upgrading, foreign exchange generation, and inclusive participation in the rapidly evolving global digital economy

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


RAYMOND ADRIAN E. SALCEDA

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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 “Virtual Assistance and Remote Work Support Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to support the growing sector of virtual assistants, online freelancers, and remote workers by providing enabling infrastructure, capacity building, and market access. The State recognizes that the virtual assistance industry creates jobs, generates foreign exchange, and empowers Filipinos—particularly in rural areas—to participate in the digital economy.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of Virtual Assistance Support Facilities.* The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in partnership with local government units (LGUs) and state universities and colleges (SUCs), shall establish Virtual Assistance Support Facilities (VASFs) in provinces and key cities.

Each VASF shall:

- (a) Provide 24/7 internet facilities with high-speed, stable connections;
- (b) Offer co-working spaces with uninterrupted power supply, meeting rooms, and security;
- (c) Serve as a training and certification hub for virtual assistants, online freelancers, and remote workers;

(d) Provide business development and legal support, including guidance on contracts, taxation, and financial management; and

(e) Host incubation programs for local enterprises supporting the virtual assistant industry.

SEC. 4. *Training and Workforce Development.* The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), in coordination with DICT and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), shall develop training curricula for virtual assistants, remote work skills, digital freelancing, and related online business services. Graduates shall receive TESDA certificates recognized by both domestic and international clients.

SEC. 5. *Market Access and Promotion.* The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall promote Filipino virtual assistants and online freelancers in global markets, provide access to platforms and international clients, and facilitate the participation of Filipino freelancers in trade fairs, expos, and digital economy initiatives.

SEC. 6. *Incentives for Local Government Units.* LGUs hosting Virtual Assistance Support Facilities shall be encouraged to provide counterpart funding, tax relief on facility operations, and support for community-based digital workers' cooperatives.

SEC. 7. *Funding.* The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DICT, TESDA, and DTI. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in their annual appropriations under the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DICT, TESDA, DTI, and DOLE shall jointly issue the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, executive orders, or regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,