

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4707**



Introduced by Representative **MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

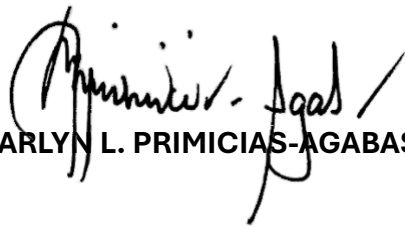
Despite the steady progress in disability rights legislation, Persons with Disability (PWDs) in the Philippines continue to face significant barriers to gainful employment. While landmark laws such as *Republic Act No. 7277*, as amended, have expanded the rights, privileges, and social protection of PWDs, the challenge of translating these rights into real economic opportunities remains.

The establishment of the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) network under *Republic Act No. 8759* institutionalized local employment facilitation services for the general population. However, the unique needs of PWDs, ranging from accessible information and skills training to targeted job matching and employer engagement, require a more specialized, community-based approach. The experience with the Persons with Disability Affairs Office (PDAO), mandated by *Republic Act No. 10070*, demonstrates the value of dedicated local offices in ensuring the effective delivery of programs and services for PWDs.

This bill seeks to create the Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO) in all provinces, key cities, and strategic areas, as a specialized local mechanism to promote, coordinate, and deliver employment facilitation services for PWDs. The PWDEFO will serve as a center for job matching, skills development, career guidance, and employer partnerships, and will be linked to the Department of Labor and Employment's national employment service network. It will also work closely with local government units, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to ensure that PWDs have access to meaningful and productive employment opportunities.

By institutionalizing the PWDEFO, this measure aims to bridge the persistent gap between policy and practice in PWD employment, and to fulfill the State's commitment to full inclusion, equal opportunity, and social justice for all Filipinos.

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



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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT FACILITATION OFFICE
(PWDEFO) IN ALL PROVINCES, KEY CITIES, AND STRATEGIC AREAS, PROVIDING FOR
ITS FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO) Act."

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

SEC. 3. Establishment of the Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO). - There is hereby established on all capital towns of provinces, key cities and other strategic areas, a Person with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO), hereinafter referred to as "PWDEFO", 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).

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

SEC. 4. Objectives of the PWDEFO. - The Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation 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.

Specifically, the PWDEFO shall:

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

SEC. 5. Functions of the PWDEFO. -The PWDEFO shall have the following functions:

- A. Encourage employers to submit to the PWDEFO on a regular basis a list of job vacancies available for persons with disability in their respective establishments in order to facilitate the exchange of labor market information between the PWDs who seek employment and employers by providing employment information services to PWDs jobseekers and recruitment assistance to employers;
- B. Develop training modules for PWDs in order to improve their skills and comply with the skills requirement of the employer;
- C. Provide PWDs with access to the various livelihood and self-employment programs offered by both government and non-government organizations (NGOs) at the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels by undertaking referrals for such programs;
- D. Undertake employability enhancement trainings/seminars for PWDs, as well as those PWDs who would like to enhance their employability;

- E. Provide occupational counseling, career guidance, mass motivation and values development activities to PWDs;
- F. Conduct pre-employment counseling and orientation to PWD;
- G. Provide reintegration assistance services to PWDs who are retrenched or terminated; and
- H. Perform such functions and willfully carry out the objectives of this Act.

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

- A. Jobs Fairs- These shall be conducted periodically all over the country to bring together in one venue PWD job seekers and employers for immediate matching;
- B. Livelihood and Self-Employment Bazaars - These will give the PWDs information on the wide array of livelihood programs they may choose to avail of, particularly in the rural areas;
- C. Work Appreciation Program (WAP) - This program aims to develop the values of work appreciation and ethics by exposing the PWDs to actual work situations; and
- D. Other programs/activities developed by DOLE to enhance provision of employment assistance to PWDs, particularly for special groups of disadvantaged workers.

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

It shall be the responsibility of the DOLE to:

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

- B. Provide office space, equipment and/or supplies, as well as the necessary personnel complement to manage, operate and maintain the PWDEFO;
- C. Designate, in consultation with the LGU or NGO concerned, a qualified project manager and/or key personnel who shall be responsible for the operation and management of the PWDEFO;
- D. Provide technical assistance and allied support services to the PWDEFO;
- E. Train PWDEFO personnel in the various aspects of employment facilitation functions;
- F. Extend/facilitate such other package of employment services through the provision of employment assistance to PWD clients of the LGU or NGO concerned, including the conduct of jobs fairs and other activities; and
- G. Undertake, monitor, assess and evaluate the PWDEFO program implementation.

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

SEC. 9. Conduct of an Annual Nationwide Disability Prevalence Survey. - Realizing the 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,