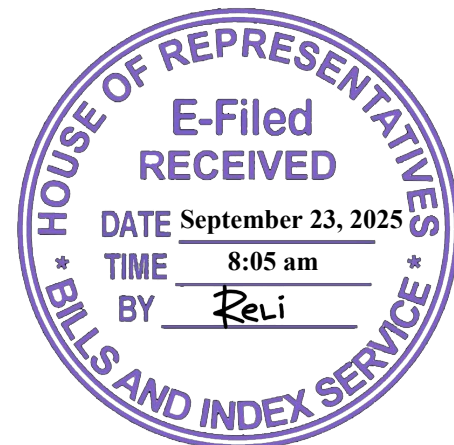


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4749



Introduced by **HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE, HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE, HON. TSUYOSHI ANTHONY G. HORIBATA, AND HON. TERRY L. RIDON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) projects a surplus of 171,960 IT-trained workers in the Philippines by the end of 2025, highlighting a growing skills-industry mismatch in the sector.¹ Joining the information and communications technology (ICT) government workforce, in particular, remained unappealing due to lower salaries relative to opportunities in the private sector and abroad.²

Republic Act No. 11927, also known as the Philippine Digital Workplace Competitiveness Act, was enacted into law in 2022 with the objective of providing access and skills to the Filipino labor force on upskilling, reskilling, and training on digital technology and innovations. This landmark legislation seeks to respond to the rapid global digitization of industry, mobilizing local government units and the private sector to expand digital careers and skill development. While it marks a significant step toward digital readiness, the Philippines must still strengthen its foundational digital infrastructure. As mentioned by Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Secretary Henry Aguda, “digital transformation is 10% technology, 10% process, and 80% people.”³ This underscores the importance of focusing on the workforce, particularly ICT professionals in public service, who play a fundamental role in constructing the country’s digital transformation architecture. This bill seeks to enact a Magna Carta of ICT professionals in the government to ensure talent and skills retention and development in the country.

Section 14, Article XII of the 1987 Constitution provides that “The sustained development of a reservoir of national talents consisting of Filipino scientists, entrepreneurs, professionals, managers, high-level technical manpower and skilled workers and craftsmen in all fields shall be promoted by the State. The State shall encourage appropriate technology and regulate its transfer for the national benefit.”

In response, this bill seeks to:

- Define the various classifications of ICT professionals in the government as enshrined in Republic Act No. 8439 and mandate the DICT to establish the specific criteria and guidelines for the said classification.

¹ Laforga, Beatrice M. (2021, February 26). *Philippines facing oversupply in IT graduates, STEM shortage*. Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <https://www.pids.gov.ph/details/philippines-facing-oversupply-in-it-graduates-stem-shortage>

² Cabato, Luisa. (2024, December 9) *DICT: Low salary discourages cybersecurity experts from joining gov't*. Inquirer.net. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2013929/dict-low-salary-discourages-cybersecurity-experts-from-joining-govt>

³ DICT. (2025, April 10). *Sec. Aguda vows to champion increased benefits for government ICT workers*. Philippine Information Agency. <https://pia.gov.ph/sec-aguda-vows-to-champion-increased-benefits-for-government-ict-workers/>

- Establish minimum compensation standards, provide comprehensive benefits and incentives, and guarantee equal pay for equal work of ICT professionals.
- Mandate agencies to provide career progression and opportunities to ICT professionals through relevant training programs, mentorship, and professional certifications.
- Establish an accessible and quality Continuing Professional Development Program, including scholarships and training opportunities.
- Set labor protection and welfare standards such as overtime pay, leave benefits, social security, housing and transport allowances, and safe working conditions.
- Establish an alternative compensation framework for ICT professionals engaged in national security, digital infrastructure, and innovation sectors.
- Ensure access to psychological support services, both in the workplace and remotely.
- Guarantee higher retirement benefits by calculating retirement pay at one salary grade above the basic salary.
- Clarify DICT's responsibilities and formally recognize accredited ICT professional organizations for effective implementation.
- Establish a National ICT Awards program, along with incentives and support.
- Allow ICT professionals to render consulting services upon DICT Secretary approval.
- Create an ICT scholarship and grant program for current and aspiring ICT professionals.
- Exempt ICT professionals from the Civil Service "Attrition Law" and nepotism restrictions.
- Form a monitoring and evaluation committee to oversee implementation, continuous improvement, and accountability.
- Institute administrative penalties for non-compliance.

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



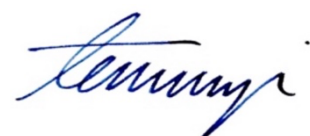
HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE



HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE



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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) PROFESSIONALS
IN THE GOVERNMENT**

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

**CHAPTER 1
TITLE, DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, AND OBJECTIVES**

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Magna Carta of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Professionals in the Government.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The foundational contribution of ICT professionals is indispensable to national progress. To this end, the State aims to prioritize research, development, and science and technology (S&T) education, promote Filipino labor and domestic industry competitiveness, and affirm the vital role of youth in nation-building.

The State is committed to actively supporting ICT professionals’ welfare and development and seeks to guarantee their rights, provide incentives to boost productivity and innovation, and foster an environment that attracts, retains, and empowers them.

The State aims to enhance the Philippines’ progress and competitiveness in the global digital arena in direct alignment with the constitutional principles of promoting national development and empowering its citizens.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall be construed as:

- (a) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) – embodies the ongoing, lifelong process of actively maintaining and progressively enhancing the knowledge, technical skills, professional competencies, and ethical standards of ICT professionals.
- (b) Government ICT Professional – refers to an ICT professional employed by any branch, department, bureau, office, agency, or instrumentality of the national government, government-owned or controlled corporations (GOCCs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), and local government units (LGUs).

- (c) ICT Professional – refers to an individual who, through formal education, specialized training, relevant experience, or recognized professional certification, is engaged in activities intrinsically related to and in support of ICT. This includes, but is not limited to, roles in software development, network administration, cybersecurity, data science, artificial intelligence, systems design, IT project management, technical support, ICT education and training, and emerging ICT specializations.
- (d) ICT Professional Organization – signifies any association, society, or institute of ICT professionals duly recognized and accredited by the appropriate government agency.

SECTION 4. Classification of ICT Professionals. – For the effective implementation of this Act, ICT professionals shall be classified analogous to those defined in R.A. 8439, the “Magna Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers, and Other Science and Technology Personnel in Government,” as follows:

- (a) ICT Specialists – individuals who possess a high degree of expertise and specialization in a specific field of ICT, demonstrated by advanced education, professional certifications, significant experience, and recognized contributions. This may include, but not limited to, cybersecurity experts, data scientists, AI/Machine Learning engineers, cloud architects, and senior software architects.
- (b) ICT Engineers – individuals who apply engineering principles and methodologies to the design, development, implementation, and maintenance of ICT systems, infrastructure, and solutions. This may include, but not limited to, network engineers, systems engineers, software engineers, and hardware engineers.
- (c) ICT Researchers – individuals primarily engaged in research and development activities aimed at advancing knowledge and innovation in ICT, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, emerging technologies, and software engineering.
- (d) ICT Technologists – individuals with the technical skills and knowledge to implement, operate, and maintain ICT systems and equipment. This may include, but not limited to, network administrators, systems administrators, database administrators, and IT support specialists.
- (e) ICT Educators – individuals primarily engaged in teaching and training ICT-related subjects in academic institutions, technical-vocational schools, and training centers. This may include, but not limited to, professors, instructors, and trainers in various ICT fields.
- (f) Other ICT Professionals – individuals providing support services to ICT personnel enumerated above, as certified by the Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and further defined in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act.

SECTION 5. Criteria for Classification. – The DICT, in consultation with the CSC and DBM, shall establish specific criteria and guidelines for the classification of ICT professionals under the categories defined in the preceding section. These criteria shall take into account factors such as educational attainment, professional certifications, relevant experience, level of responsibility, and contributions to the ICT sector.

The DICT shall publish a *Competency Framework for ICT Roles* and require a *National Registry of Government ICT Professionals* aligned with ICT industry standards, local and international competency frameworks, and mutual recognition agreements.

CHAPTER 2 EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

SECTION 6. *Fair Compensation, Comprehensive Benefits, and Incentives.* –

- (a) Establishment of Minimum Compensation Standards – The DICT, in close coordination with the CSC and the DBM, shall establish and regularly review equitable minimum compensation standards for ICT professionals across various specializations and experience levels. These standards shall take into account the complexity of their responsibilities, the required specialized skills, the extent of their professional experience, and prevailing equitable industry rates.
- (b) Provision of Comprehensive Benefits and Incentives – Government agencies and institutions are strongly encouraged to provide a comprehensive package of additional benefits and meaningful incentives to their ICT professionals, including but not limited to performance-based bonuses, professional development allowances, comprehensive health insurance coverage, adequate retirement benefits, and facilitated opportunities for advanced education and specialized training.
- (c) Guarantee of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value – ICT professionals performing work of demonstrably equal value shall receive equal remuneration and benefits, without any form of discrimination based on gender or other irrelevant personal circumstances.

SECTION 7. *Structured Career Progression and Opportunities for Specialization.* – Government agencies and institutions shall establish transparent and well-defined career progression pathways for ICT professionals, providing clear opportunities for professional advancement based on demonstrated performance, accumulated relevant experience, and commitment to continuous professional development. They shall also actively support specialization in emerging and critical ICT fields through the provision of relevant training programs, mentorship opportunities, and professional certification support.

SECTION 8. *Mandatory and Accessible Continuing Professional Development (CPD).* –

- (a) Establishment of a Mandatory CPD Program – The DICT, in close collaboration with duly recognized relevant professional organizations, locally or internationally, shall establish and implement a robust and mandatory CPD program for all ICT professionals to ensure the continuous updating and enhancement of their knowledge, technical skills, professional competencies, and ethical awareness.
- (b) CPD Credit Units and Recognition of Diverse Learning Activities – ICT professionals shall be required to earn a specified number of CPD credit units within a defined period for the maintenance and renewal of their professional licenses or certifications, where such are applicable. The CPD program shall recognize a diverse range of learning activities, including but not limited to:
 - i. formal training and seminars;
 - ii. workshops, online courses, research publications;
 - iii. professional certifications such as CompTIA, Cisco, AWS, Google, ISC2, PMI; and
 - iv. participation in hackathons, innovation bootcamps, and coding academies.

- (c) Ensuring Accessible and Quality CPD Programs – The government shall actively promote and provide substantial support for the development and widespread accessibility of affordable and high-quality CPD programs for ICT professionals throughout the nation, including the strategic utilization of online and blended learning methodologies to reach a wider audience.

SECTION 9. *Strategic Training and Scholarship Programs in ICT.* – The government shall establish and substantially support comprehensive training and scholarship programs across diverse and specialized fields of ICT, with a particular focus on emerging technologies and critical skills identified as essential for national development and global competitiveness. These programs shall be made accessible to deserving individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds, including those from marginalized communities, to ensure equitable access to opportunities in the ICT sector.

CHAPTER 3 WORKING CONDITIONS, SOCIAL WELFARE, AND BENEFITS

SECTION 10. *Standard Working Hours and Fair Overtime Compensation.* – The standard working hours for ICT professionals in government shall be governed by Executive Order 292, otherwise known as the Administrative Code of 1987, and by CSC rules and regulations. Any work rendered beyond these standard hours shall be compensated fairly and promptly in accordance with applicable overtime pay regulations and industry standards.

SECTION 11. *Comprehensive Leave Benefits and Entitlements.* – ICT professionals shall be entitled to a comprehensive range of leave benefits, including but not limited to ample sick leave, generous vacation leave, full maternity leave, supportive paternity leave, and other special leaves as mandated by existing labor laws and the specific policies of their respective employers.

SECTION 12. *Guarantee of a Safe and Healthy Working Environment.* – Employers shall ensure and maintain a safe, healthy, and ergonomically sound working environment for all ICT professionals. This includes the provision of necessary ergonomic equipment, adequate facilities, and comprehensive training on occupational safety and health protocols to mitigate workplace hazards.

SECTION 13. *Robust Social Security and Comprehensive Welfare Benefits.* – ICT professionals shall be entitled to full coverage under the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) for government employees, as well as all other relevant social welfare benefits as mandated by existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SECTION 14. *Facilitation of Housing and Transportation Assistance.* – Government agencies and institutions are strongly encouraged to facilitate access to affordable housing options and provide adequate transportation assistance to ICT professionals, particularly those working in geographically remote or economically disadvantaged areas, to enhance their quality of life and reduce commuting burdens.

SECTION 15. *Compensation and Benefits for ICT Professionals in Government.* – To recognize the unique expertise and evolving demands of ICT professionals in government service, an alternative compensation framework shall be established, notwithstanding the provisions of Republic Act No. 6758.

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall jointly issue regulations governing the classification, compensation, and benefits of ICT professionals, ensuring competitiveness with private sector standards while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

ICT positions identified as critical to national security, digital infrastructure, and innovation shall be exempt from standard salary grades under R.A. 6758, subject to CSC and DBM approval. Such exemptions shall be based on industry benchmarks, specialized skill requirements, and market conditions.

The CSC and DBM shall periodically review and adjust the compensation framework to reflect technological advancements and labor market trends, ensuring the retention and motivation of highly skilled ICT personnel in government service.

SECTION 16. *Access to Psychological Support Services.* – Agencies shall ensure ICT professionals in government access to the following:

- (a) On-site or partner mental health professionals for counseling and psychological first aid;
- (b) Tele-mental health services for remote or field-based personnel; and
- (c) Peer support programs and mental health champions within the workplace.

SECTION 17. *Highest Basic Salary Upon Retirement.* – Upon retirement, the ICT personnel concerned shall automatically be granted one (1) salary grade higher than his/her basic salary, and his/her retirement benefits shall be computed on the basis of his/her highest salary received.

CHAPTER 4

ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

SECTION 18. *Role and Responsibilities of the DICT.* – The DICT shall serve as the primary government agency vested with the comprehensive responsibility for the effective implementation and rigorous enforcement of this Act. Its mandated responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Proactively formulating and strategically implementing policies and comprehensive programs designed to promote the overall welfare and continuous professional development of all ICT professionals in the Philippines.
- (b) Establishing, regularly reviewing, and ensuring the enforcement of equitable minimum compensation standards and comprehensive guidelines for ICT professionals across all sectors, in close collaboration with the CSC, and duly recognized relevant professional organizations.
- (c) Developing, implementing, and continuously improving a robust and accessible national CPD program that caters to the diverse needs and specializations within the ICT profession.
- (d) Actively promoting and providing substantial support for the establishment and expansion of high-quality training and scholarship programs in critical and emerging fields of ICT.
- (e) Facilitating the meaningful and substantive participation of ICT professionals, through their accredited professional organizations, in the critical processes of policy formulation, legislative review, and strategic decision-making that directly impact the ICT sector.

- (f) Diligently monitoring and rigorously evaluating the effective implementation of this Act, identifying areas for improvement, and recommending necessary legislative or regulatory amendments to ensure its continued relevance and impact.
- (g) Establishing clear criteria and procedures for the formal accreditation of professional organizations of ICT professionals, ensuring their active and constructive engagement in the sector's development.

SECTION 19. *Vital Role of Accredited Professional Organizations.* – Duly accredited professional organizations of ICT professionals shall play a vital and recognized role in:

- (a) Effectively representing the collective interests of their members and actively advocating for the comprehensive protection and advancement of their rights, welfare, and professional standing.
- (b) Collaborating closely and constructively with the DICT and other relevant government agencies in the strategic development, thorough review, and effective implementation of policies and programs that directly affect ICT professionals.
- (c) Developing, actively promoting, and rigorously enforcing high ethical standards and comprehensive codes of professional conduct for their members, ensuring accountability and responsible practice.
- (d) Proactively developing and delivering relevant and high-quality CPD programs and diverse professional development opportunities that cater to the evolving needs of their membership.
- (e) Actively participating in the establishment and implementation of fair and transparent accreditation and certification processes for ICT professionals, where such mechanisms are deemed necessary and beneficial for the profession.

CHAPTER 5 RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVES

SECTION 20. *Establishment of National ICT Awards.* – The government shall establish a National ICT Awards program to recognize and honor outstanding ICT professionals, groundbreaking innovations, and significant contributions to the ICT sector and national development. Awards shall be conferred annually with prestige and incentives.

SECTION 21. *Incentives for Innovation, Research, and Development.* – The government shall provide incentives and substantial support for ICT professionals actively engaged in research and development, innovation, and intellectual property creation. These may include, but are not limited to, research grants, tax exemptions or credits, access to specialized facilities, and commercialization assistance.

SECTION 22. *Non-DICT ICT Professionals.* – ICT personnel not employed by the DICT, but is an employee of any executive, legislative, judicial, constitutional offices, including local government units (LGUs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), and other instrumentalities, whether in the Philippines or abroad, may also avail of the benefits provided under this Act. Provided, That, they are involved in ICT functions provided in Section 4 of this Act, and they secured certification from the DICT.

SECTION 23. *Consultancy Services.* – ICT personnel shall be allowed to render consultancy services to the private sector and shall be entitled to receive such honorarium that may be paid to them by the private entity concerned. Such payments shall be over and above their

salary from the government during the period of the consultancy and shall not be considered as double compensation: Provided, That the consultancy work will not compromise or adversely affect the operations or activities of his originating office: Provided, further, That the Secretary of the DICT approves such consultancy.

SECTION 24. *Detail to the Private Sector.* – ICT personnel who are employed on a regular basis in the government shall be allowed secondment to any private entity whenever such services are required: Provided, That the duration of such service with a private entity shall not exceed one (1) year: Provided, further, That the detail or secondment of said personnel will not hamper or adversely affect the operations or activities of his originating office: Provided, finally, That the head of the agency approves such detail or secondment.

CHAPTER 6 SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS FOR ICT DEVELOPMENT

SECTION 25. *Establishment of ICT Scholarship and Grant Programs.* – The government, through the DICT in collaboration with DOST, CHED, TESDA, and other relevant government agencies, shall establish and administer comprehensive scholarship and grant programs to support the education, training, and professional development of ICT professionals and individuals aspiring to enter the ICT sector.

SECTION 26. *Coverage of Scholarships and Grants.* – These programs shall cover various aspects of ICT education and training, including but not limited to:

- (a) Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs – Scholarships for deserving students pursuing bachelor's and postgraduate degrees in ICT-related fields in accredited higher education institutions, both local and international, where deemed strategic.
- (b) Technical and Vocational Training – Grants and financial assistance for individuals undertaking technical and vocational courses in ICT skills identified as critical for national development and industry needs, provided by TESDA-accredited institutions.
- (c) Specialized Skills Development – Grants for ICT professionals seeking to acquire advanced or specialized skills in emerging technologies and strategic ICT domains through certificate programs, short courses, and industry-recognized certifications.
- (d) Research and Development Grants – Grants to support ICT professionals and researchers engaged in innovative research and development projects that contribute to the advancement of the ICT sector in the Philippines.
- (e) Faculty Development Grants – Grants to support the professional development of ICT educators, including opportunities for further studies, research, and training in emerging ICT fields.

SECTION 27. *Funding and Administration.* – The funds necessary for the implementation of these scholarship and grant programs shall be sourced from the national budget and may be augmented through partnerships with private sector entities, international organizations, and other funding sources. The DICT shall be responsible for the overall administration and monitoring of these programs to ensure equitable distribution.

CHAPTER 7 MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 28. *Exemption from Attrition Law and CSC Rule on Nepotism.* – Appointments of ICT personnel to positions of research assistant and upwards shall not be covered by the

Attrition Law and Civil Service Commission (CSC) rule on nepotism in cognizance of the highly technical nature of their functions.

SECTION 29. *Provision Against Double Benefits.* – ICT personnel receiving the same benefits under any other law shall not be allowed to avail of the benefits under this Act unless they submit in writing their intention to withdraw the benefits already being received and opt for those provided hereunder.

SECTION 30. *Magna Carta Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MCMEC).* – To ensure the effective implementation, continuous improvement, and accountability of this Magna Carta, a Monitoring and Evaluation Committee shall be established.

(a) Composition and Leadership – The MCMEC shall be co-chaired by the DICT and CSC, with members from:

- i. DBM;
- ii. DOST;
- iii. COA;
- iv. PRC;
- v. DOH (for physical and mental health well-being);
- vi. CSC;
- vii. Representative from CSC-accredited Employees' Organization in the DICT;
and
- viii. Representative from ICT professional association.

(b) Mandate and Functions – The Committee shall:

- i. Monitor agency compliance with the provisions of this Magna Carta;
- ii. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs related to ICT workforce development, mental health, and professionalization; and
- iii. Recommend policy enhancements and implementation strategies.

(c) Annual Reporting to Congress – The MCMEC shall submit an annual Implementation Report to Congress, which shall include:

- i. Status of compliance by government agencies;
- ii. Participation rates in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs
- iii. Data on the mental health and well-being of the ICT workforce;
- iv. Recommendations for legislative or administrative actions; and
- v. Transparency and Public Access – The annual report shall be made publicly accessible through the DICT website and other appropriate platforms to promote transparency and stakeholder engagement.

SECTION 31. *Administrative Penalties for Non-Compliance.* – Government officials or personnel who willfully or negligently fail to implement or comply with the provisions of this Magna Carta shall be subject to appropriate administrative sanctions in accordance with existing Civil Service laws and regulations. These may include:

- (a) Written reprimand for minor infractions;
- (b) Suspension for repeated or moderate violations; and
- (c) Dismissal from service for grave or willful neglect of duty.

The CSC, in coordination with the DICT, shall issue the implementing rules to guide the investigation and imposition of penalties. Agencies found to be non-compliant may also be subject to audit observations and recommendations by the COA, including possible disallowance of funds related to unimplemented benefits or programs.

SECTION 32. *Appropriations.* – The initial funding required for the effective implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned government agencies. Thereafter, the necessary financial resources shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act to ensure the sustained and effective implementation of its provisions.

SECTION 33. *Periodic Review.* – To ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of this Act in addressing the evolving needs and challenges of the ICT sector and its professionals, the DICT, CSC, DBM (where applicable), accredited professional organizations of ICT professionals, and other relevant stakeholders shall conduct a comprehensive review of this Magna Carta at least once every five (5) years from the date of its effectivity.

SECTION 34. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DICT, in close coordination with the CSC, DBM, and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary IRR for this Act within ninety (90) days from the date of its effectivity.

SECTION 35. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 36. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 37. *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,