



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5578



**Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez,
Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez
and Jude A. Acidre**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL JOBS GUARANTEE PROGRAM TO BE
KNOWN AS THE "BAYANIHAN WORK PROGRAM," PROVIDING
FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

While social protection through *ayuda* or emergency cash assistance plays an important role during times of acute crisis, we must also confront its limitations as a long-term strategy. Cash transfers provide immediate relief, but they do not create jobs, build skills, or offer a pathway to sustainable livelihoods. Worse, when used as a default response to unemployment or economic displacement, *ayuda* risks fostering dependency, straining government resources without strengthening individual or community resilience.

This proposed measure, establishing the Bayanihan Work Program, a national jobs guarantee program, offers a fundamentally better approach.

Rather than simply handing out aid, the Bayanihan Work Program ensures that all Filipinos who are willing and able to work can do so in dignified, meaningful, and socially valuable employment. This program reorients public spending from passive assistance to active investment in people's labor, skills, and dignity. It affirms the right to work and provides a direct response to

structural unemployment, especially in times of economic downturn, technological transition, or regional inequality.

Under the Program, participants will work on projects that meet urgent community needs, such as environmental rehabilitation, security and safety, infrastructure maintenance, disaster preparedness, essential care services, and educational support. In return, they will receive wages not lower than the regional minimum, plus full benefits such as PhilHealth and SSS contributions.

Importantly, the Program seeks to align work assignments with participants' educational background and existing skills and training. In doing so, the Program opens up opportunities for participants to build on their education and competencies and pursue more sustainable career pathways. Moreover, the Program includes training and skills development to prepare workers for long-term employment in the private or public sector.

- Instead of creating dependence, builds agency and employability.
- Instead of providing one-time relief, it contributes to long-term economic participation and productivity.
- Instead of depleting public funds, it multiplies value by producing public goods and stimulating local economies.

The Bayanihan Work Program serves as an employer of last resort, but also as a builder of human potential and national capacity. It empowers individuals while serving the common good.

In a time when many Filipinos feel left behind, this bill asserts a clear and hopeful message: that decent work is not a privilege for the few, but a guarantee for all.

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



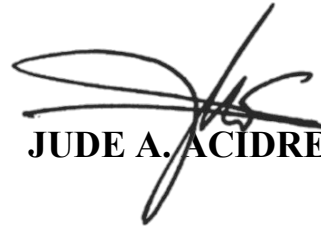
FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



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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 “Bayanihan Work
Program Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
recognize and uphold the right of every Filipino to decent and gainful
employment. The State shall guarantee the availability of work opportunities for
all individuals willing and able to work, particularly during periods of economic
downturn, technological disruption, or structural transitions in the economy. To

this end, the government shall serve as an employer of last resort, ensuring dignified, productive, and community- beneficial work that supports inclusive development, economic resilience, and social cohesion.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of the Bayanihan Work Program.* – There is hereby established a permanent, nationwide National Jobs Guarantee Program, to be known as the Bayanihan Work Program, which shall be administered by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and other relevant government agencies and stakeholders.

SEC. 4. *Objectives.* – The Bayanihan Work Program shall have the following objectives:

- a) To provide public employment opportunities to all Filipino citizens aged eighteen (18) years and above who are willing, able, and available to work but are unable to secure suitable employment in the private sector;
- b) To address unmet public needs and support local development through projects that promote infrastructure development, environmental conservation, safety and security, disaster risk reduction, care services, health and nutrition, educational support, and cultural preservation;
- c) To ensure that participants receive just compensation, social protection, and opportunities for skills development and career progression;
- d) To stabilize household incomes, alleviate poverty, reduce inequality, and enhance the economic resilience of communities.

SEC. 5. *Eligibility and Enrollment.* – All Filipino citizens aged eighteen (18) and above, legally employable and actively seeking work, shall be eligible to enroll in the Bayanihan Work Program. Priority shall be accorded to long-term

unemployed individuals, youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET), persons with disabilities, senior workers, and those residing in economically depressed or climate- vulnerable areas.

DOLE, in partnership with Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs), barangay units, and accredited civil society organizations, shall ensure inclusive, accessible, and efficient enrollment procedures, including digital and on-site registration platforms.

SEC. 6. *Nature of Work and Compensation.* – Work provided under the Program shall be productive, socially beneficial, and aligned with local development and climate resilience goals. Projects may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Public infrastructure maintenance and greening;
- b) Reforestation and climate adaptation initiatives;
- c) Disaster preparedness and emergency response;
- d) Security and safety;
- e) Health and nutrition;
- f) Childcare, elder care, and community health services;
- g) Educational and cultural support services.

Provided, That, To the extent practicable, the nature of work assigned to participants shall be aligned with their educational background, prior work experience, and existing skills and training. The Program shall endeavor to build on and further develop participants' competencies to enhance employability and support longer-term career pathways.

Provided further, That, participants shall receive a wage not lower than the prevailing regional minimum wage, along with social security coverage,

PhilHealth benefits, and other mandatory contributions in accordance with existing labor laws.

Provided finally, that, while full-time employment shall be prioritized, part-time or flexible work arrangements may be provided in consideration of project requirements and individual circumstances, including caring responsibilities.

SEC. 7. *Skills Development and Transition Support.* – The Program shall integrate mandatory skills development and capacity-building interventions, including but not limited to: foundational literacy and numeracy, digital skills, green skills, technical and vocational training, and workplace readiness competencies.

DOLE, in collaboration with TESDA, DepEd, SUCs, LUCs, and private sector partners, shall offer career counseling, job matching, and placement services to support participant transitions to long-term employment in the private or public sector.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of the Bayanihan Work Program shall be funded through annual General Appropriations, supplemented by grants, donations, and other allowable sources. A dedicated Bayanihan Work Program fund shall be created under the National Treasury. LUs shall submit project proposals to DOLE for approval and funding under the Program, ensuring alignment with local development priorities, employment needs, and climate goals.

SEC. 9. *Oversight.* – A National Oversight Committee shall be constituted, co-chaired by the Secretary of Labor and Employment and the Secretary of Budget and Management, with representation from:

- a) The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG),

- b) Leagues of LGUS
- c) Labor unions and workers' organizations,
- d) Employers' groups,
- e) Civil society representatives.

This Committee shall ensure effective program design, inter-agency coordination, budget utilization, and policy coherence.

SEC. 10. *Reporting and Evaluation.* – DOLE shall submit an annual report to Congress, detailing:

- a) The number and profile of program participants;
- b) Types and scope of projects implemented;
- c) Wages and benefits disbursed;
- d) Skills acquired and certifications obtained;
- e) Number of individuals transitioned to private or public sector employment;
and
- f) Recommendations for program improvement, scalability, and sustainability.

An independent program evaluation shall be commissioned every three (3) years to assess long-term impacts on employment, poverty reduction, and local development.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, DOLE, in consultation with relevant government agencies, LGUs, and stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,