

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5916



Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN “LENLEN” A. ORETA III

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

In periods of national crisis, emergency financial assistance or commonly referred to as *ayuda*, has served as an essential support for millions of Filipinos. While such interventions address immediate socioeconomic needs, they are inherently temporary and insufficient to foster long-term resilience. To build a more secure and inclusive future, it is imperative to transition from short-term relief toward sustainable employment solutions.

Anchored in Article XIII, Section 3 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, this legislative proposal affirms the State’s duty to protect labor; local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and to promote full employment and equal opportunity for all. The proposed Bayanihan Work Program guarantees access to dignified, socially beneficial employment for every Filipino who is willing and able to work. This approach not only enhances individual welfare but also contributes meaningfully to national development.

Recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) underscored both progress and persistent challenges in the labor sector. The unemployment rate declined to 3.7% in June 2025 from 3.9% the previous month, yet approximately 5.76 million Filipinos remain underemployed, actively seeking additional hours or supplementary income. The labor force participation rate (LFPR) reached 65.7%, indicating increased engagement among working-age individuals. These figures highlight the urgent need for a more empowering and sustainable employment strategy.

This measure proposes a national job guarantee program that affirms decent work as a right, not a privilege. By redirecting public resources toward productive labor, community development, and human capital investment, the program ensures that all willing and able individuals are engaged in work that contributes positively to society.

More than a safety net — the proposed measure serves as a platform for inclusive growth, economic resilience, and civic empowerment. It fosters self-reliance, revitalizes local economies, and generates public goods that uplift communities.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate enactment of this measure is earnestly sought to institutionalize decent work as a constitutional right for all Filipinos and to advance a more equitable and sustainable national development agenda.


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Lone District of Malabon City

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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 (NEED), 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

66 created under the National Treasury.

67 LGUs shall submit project proposals to DOLE for approval and funding under the Program,
68 ensuring alignment with local development priorities, employment needs, and climate goals.

69
70 **SEC. 9. Oversight.** — A National Oversight Committee shall be constituted, co—chaired by the
71 Secretary of Labor and Employment and the Secretary of Budget Management, with
72 representation from:

- 73 (a) The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG),
74 (b) Leagues of LGUs,
75 (c) Labor unions and workers' organizations,
76 (d) Employers' groups,
77 (e) Civil society representatives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

99 *Approved,*