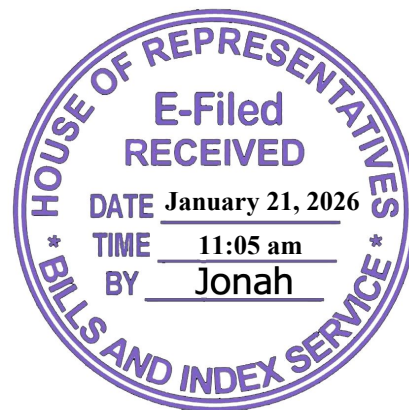




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7218



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

AN ACT
FORMALIZING DIGITAL FREELANCE WORK THROUGH
BARANGAY-BASED TRAINING, COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION,
AND ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR ONLINE
FREELANCERS, TO BE KNOWN AS THE “BARANGAY-BASED ONLINE
FREELANCERS ASSISTANCE ACT”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 9 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.

Freelancers are highly relevant in today's economy, representing a significant and growing portion of the global workforce and contributing heavily to national economies. Their importance stems from the benefits they offer to both individuals seeking work flexibility and businesses needing agile, cost-effective access to specialized talent. Freelancing has enticed many Filipinos since it allows them to actively shape their own career paths, choose projects that align with their passions, and continuously develop diverse skills by working with various clients and industries.

However, it cannot be denied that many freelancers still suffer from instability - lack of job security, health benefits and consistent income, leading to exploitation and blurring work-life boundaries. They often lack legal protections found in traditional employment, struggle with taxes, and face hyper-competition, creating significant stress despite the flexibility freelancing offers.

Thus, this bill seeks to support the entry of online freelancers into the formal economy through proper recognition and registration. Through this bill, local government units will also be mandated to establish at least one Barangay Freelancer Hub within their jurisdiction, which will serve as an avenue for freelancer assistance and trainings.

When freelancers feel secure, they can focus on delivering quality work, leading to better, more stable collaborations.

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



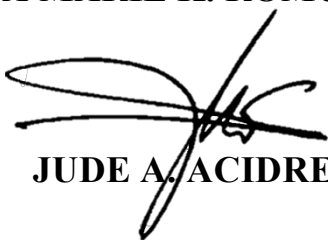
FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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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 “Barangay-Based Online Freelancers Assistance Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State recognizes the growing digital economy and the significant contribution of online freelancers—such as virtual assistants, writers, artists, coders, and digital service providers—to employment generation,

innovation, and inclusive growth. The government shall support the formalization, protection, and upskilling of online freelancers, especially at the barangay level.

SEC. 3. Objectives. - This Act seeks to:

- a) Support the formal entry of online freelancers into the formal economy through proper recognition and registration;
- b) Provide accessible digital skills training and certification programs at the barangay level;
- c) Encourage the formation of cooperatives or shared service groups for bargaining, market access, and support; and
- d) Link freelancers to benefits, platforms, and financing through a government-backed assistance system.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act:

- a) **Online Freelancer** refers to any individual engaged in remote, internet-based work, such as virtual assistance, content creation, programming, online tutoring, design, marketing, and other digital services, whether full-time or part-time.
- b) **Barangay Freelancer Hub** refers to a designated space or virtual network within a barangay that provides information, training, registration, and cooperative assistance for online workers.

- c) **Freelancer Cooperative** refers to a duly registered workers' cooperative composed of digital freelancers providing mutual support, pooled services, and market access.

SEC. 5. Establishment of Barangay Freelancer Hubs. - Each LGU shall establish at least one Barangay Freelancer Hub in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). These hubs shall:

- a.) Serve as a registration and assistance center for online freelancers;
- b.) Host regular digital upskilling workshops, webinars, and certification courses;
- c.) Assist in organizing Freelancer Cooperatives; and
- d.) Provide internet access and shared working tools where feasible.

SEC. 6. Digital Skills Training and Certification. - TESDA, in collaboration with DICT and accredited private institutions, shall provide:

- a) Free or subsidized training in digital freelancing skills tailored to in-demand platforms and client needs;
- b) National Certification for online freelancers to enhance global competitiveness;
- c) Special modules on client communication, freelance platforms, intellectual property, and digital taxes.

SEC. 7. Freelancer Cooperative Formation. - The Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) shall:

- a.) Simplify the registration of digital freelancer cooperatives;
- b.) Provide model charters, templates, and technical guidance; and
- c.) Enable access to financial services, pooled insurance, shared workspaces, and bulk marketing tools for cooperatives.

SEC. 8. Freelancer Assistance and Benefits Access. - Registered online freelancers shall be eligible for:

- a) Voluntary SSS, PhilHealth, and Pag-IBIG enrollment with reduced minimum premiums;
- b) Participation in government financing programs, including startup loans and livelihood grants through DTI and DOLE; and
- c) Inclusion in the Barangay Employment and Skills Registry (BESR) for tracking and opportunity matching.

SEC. 9. Freelancer E-Registry. - The DICT shall maintain a National E-Registry of Online Freelancers, integrated with DTI's Business Name Registry and DOLE's labor database, to:

- a. Verify freelance activity and skillsets;
- b. Match freelancers to training, jobs, or contracts;
- c. Enable targeted support programs and policy design; and
- d. Data privacy protections shall be strictly observed.

SEC. 10. Funding. - The initial implementation of this Act shall be funded through the existing budgets of DICT, TESDA, and DOLE. Succeeding funds shall be appropriated through the annual General Appropriations Act. LGUs may allocate counterpart funding from their Special Education Fund (SEF) or Gender and Development (GAD) budget if applicable.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DICT, in coordination with DOLE, TESDA, CDA, DTI, and the League of Barangays, shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

SEC. 12. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of the Act shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. Repealing Clause. - All laws, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 14. 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,