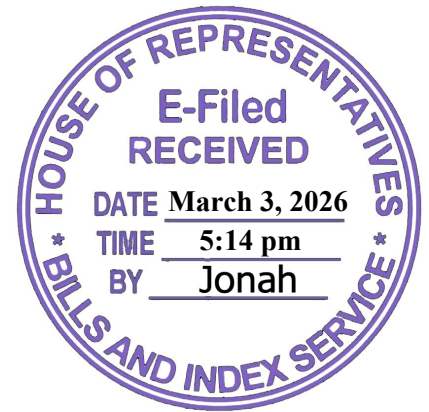




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 8263

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” – Proverbs 29:18

The digital transformation of governance is no longer optional. It is a national imperative. At the heart of this transformation are Information and Communications Technology (ICT) professionals who design, secure, maintain, and innovate the digital infrastructure that powers public services, national security systems, financial platforms, data governance, and citizen engagement.

Despite their indispensable role in sustaining government operations and advancing national competitiveness, ICT professionals in government service continue to face structural disadvantages. These include non-competitive compensation compared to the private sector, limited career progression pathways, insufficient continuing professional development support, heavy workloads without commensurate recognition, and increasing cybersecurity and infrastructure responsibilities without institutional reinforcement.

Republic Act No. 8439, or the Magna Carta for Scientists, Engineers, Researchers, and Other Science and Technology Personnel in Government, recognizes the strategic importance of science and technology professionals. However, the rapid evolution of digital systems and the growing reliance on ICT infrastructure require a more tailored and comprehensive framework specifically addressing the unique conditions, competencies, and demands placed upon ICT professionals.

This proposed “Magna Carta for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Professionals in Government” seeks to institutionalize a structured and sustainable support system for government ICT personnel. It provides for clear classification standards, competency frameworks, structured career progression, mandatory continuing professional development, scholarship and training programs, mental health support, fair compensation mechanisms, retirement benefits, and competitive remuneration aligned with industry benchmarks.

The measure further strengthens the role of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) as the lead agency in professionalizing and modernizing the ICT workforce in government, while establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation Committee to ensure transparency, accountability, and periodic review of the law's implementation.

Recognizing the global competition for highly skilled ICT talent, the bill introduces an alternative compensation framework that allows exemptions from rigid salary structures where necessary to protect critical digital infrastructure and national security systems. It likewise affirms the importance of research, innovation, intellectual property development, and youth participation in shaping the country's digital future.

By institutionalizing protections and incentives for government ICT professionals, this measure does not merely grant benefits—it safeguards the backbone of the nation's digital governance. A modern state cannot function without secure networks, resilient systems, and competent digital leadership. Investing in ICT professionals is therefore an investment in national stability, economic growth, and global competitiveness.

Where there is vision, there must also be infrastructure. And where there is digital infrastructure, there must be people equipped, protected, and empowered to sustain it.

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


EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA



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HOUSE BILL NO. 8263

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

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the *"Magna Carta for*
2 *Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Professionals in Government."*
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The foundational contribution of ICT
5 professionals is indispensable to national progress. To this end, the State aims to
6 prioritize research, development, and science and technology (S&T) education,
7 promote Filipino labor and domestic industry competitiveness, and affirm the vital role
8 of youth in nation-building.
9

10 The State is committed to actively supporting ICT professionals' welfare and
11 development and seeks to guarantee their rights, provide incentives to boost
12 productivity and innovation, and foster an environment that attracts, retains, and
13 empowers them.
14

15 The State aims to enhance the country's progress and competitiveness in the
16 global digital arena, directly aligning with the constitutional principles of promoting
17 national development and empowering its citizens.
18

19 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** - For the purpose of this Act, the following terms
20 shall mean as follows:

- 21 a) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) - refers to the ongoing, lifelong
22 process of actively maintaining and progressively enhancing the knowledge,
23 technical skills, professional competencies, and ethical standards of ICT
24 professionals.
25 b) Government ICT Professional - refers to an ICT professional employed by
26 any branch, department, bureau, office, agency, or instrumentality of the
27 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 roles in software development, network administration, cybersecurity, data science, artificial intelligence, systems analysis and design, IT project management, technical support, ICT education and training, and emerging ICT specializations.
- d) ICT Professional Organization - refers to any association, society, or institute of ICT professionals duly recognized and accredited by the appropriate government agency.

SEC. 4. Classification of ICT Professionals. – For the effective implementation of the benefits and incentives provided under this Act, ICT professionals shall be classified analogous to those defined in Republic Act No. 8439, or 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 to their area of specialization. This may include 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 network engineers, systems engineers, software engineers, and hardware engineers.
- c) ICT Researchers - individuals who are primarily engaged in the conduct of research and development activities aimed at advancing knowledge and innovation in the field of ICT. This includes those involved in basic and applied research in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, emerging technologies, and software engineering.
- d) ICT Technologists - individuals who possess the technical skills and knowledge to implement, operate, and maintain ICT systems and equipment. This may include network administrators, systems administrators, database administrators, and IT support specialists.
- e) ICT Educators - individuals who are primarily engaged in the teaching and training of ICT-related subjects in academic institutions, technical-vocational schools, and training centers. This includes professors, instructors, and trainers in various ICT fields.
- f) Other ICT Professionals - individuals providing support services to the ICT Personnel enumerated in the preceding subsections as certified by the Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and as may be further defined in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act.

SEC. 5. Criteria for Classification. – The DICT shall, in consultation with the Civil Service Commission (CS) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), establish specific criteria and guidelines for the classification of ICT professionals under the categories defined under Section 4 of this Act. 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.

SEC. 6. 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.

SEC. 7. Mandatory and Accessible Continuing Professional Development (CPD). —

- a) Establishment of a Mandatory CPD Program. - The DICT shall, in close collaboration with relevant professional organizations, duly recognized locally or internationally, 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 specified 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 formal training, seminars, workshops, online courses, research, publications, and professional practice such as but not limited to the following:
 - i. CompTIA, Cisco, AWS, Google, ISC2, MI certifications; and
 - ii. 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.

SEC. 8. 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

1 marginalized communities, to ensure equitable access to opportunities in the ICT
2 sector.

3
4 **SEC. 9. Compensation for ICT Professionals in Government.** – To recognize
5 the unique expertise and evolving demands of ICT professionals in government
6 service, an alternative compensation framework shall be established, notwithstanding
7 the provisions of Republic Act No. 6758, or the "Compensation and Position
8 Classification Act of 1989."

9
10 The CSC and the DBM shall jointly issue regulations governing the classification,
11 compensation, and benefits of ICT professionals, ensuring competitiveness with
12 private sector standards while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

13
14 ICT positions identified as critical to national security, digital infrastructure, and
15 innovation shall be exempt from standard salary grades under R.A. 6758, subject to
16 CSC and DBM approval. Such exemptions shall be based on industry benchmarks,
17 specialized skill requirements, and market conditions.

18
19 The CSC and the DBM shall periodically review and adjust the compensation
20 framework to reflect technological advancements and labor market trends, ensuring
21 the retention and motivation of highly skilled ICT personnel in government service.

22
23 **SEC. 10. Standard Working Hours and Fair Overtime Compensation.** – The
24 standard working hours for ICT professionals in government shall be governed by
25 Executive Order No. 292, or the Administrative Code of 1987, and by CSC rules and
26 regulations. Any work rendered beyond these standard hours shall be compensated
27 fairly and promptly in accordance with applicable overtime pay regulations and
28 industry standards.

29
30 **SEC. 11. Comprehensive Leave Benefits and Entitlements.** – ICT
31 professionals shall be entitled to a comprehensive range of leave benefits, including,
32 but not limited to, ample sick leave, generous vacation leave, full maternity leave,
33 supportive paternity leave, and other special leaves as mandated by existing labor
34 laws and the specific policies of their respective employers.

35
36 To ensure fair and equitable compensation, all Job Order (JO) and similarly
37 situated ICT workers who are engaged to perform, and do perform, work beyond the
38 standard working hours shall be entitled to overtime pay in accordance with applicable
39 pay regulations and industry standards.

40
41 **SEC. 12. Guarantee of a Safe and Healthy Working Environment.** –
42 Employers shall have a fundamental responsibility to ensure and maintain a safe,
43 healthy, and ergonomically sound working environment for all ICT professionals. This
44 includes the provision of necessary ergonomic equipment, adequate facilities, and
45 comprehensive training on occupational safety and health protocols to mitigate
46 workplace hazards.

47
48 **SEC. 13. Robust Social Security and Comprehensive Welfare Benefits.** –
49 ICT professionals shall be entitled to full coverage under the Government Service

Insurance System (SIS) for government employees, as well as all other relevant social welfare benefits as mandated and provided by existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 14. Facilitation of Housing and Transportation Assistance. – Government agencies and institutions shall 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.

SEC. 15. Access to Psychological Support Services. – Government agencies shall ensure that their ICT Professionals have 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.

SEC. 16. 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.

SEC. 17. Enhanced Role and Responsibilities of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (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. It shall:

- a) Proactively formulate and strategically implement policies and comprehensive programs designed to promote the overall welfare and continuous professional development of all ICT professionals in the Philippines;
- b) Establish, regularly review, and ensure 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) Develop, implement, and continuously improve a robust and accessible national CPD program that caters to the diverse needs and specializations within the ICT profession;
- d) Actively promote and provide substantial support for the establishment and expansion of high-quality training and scholarship programs in critical and emerging fields of ICT;
- e) Facilitate 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 monitor and rigorously evaluate the effective implementation of this Act, identify areas for improvement, and recommend necessary legislative or regulatory amendments to ensure its continued relevance and impact; and

- 1 g) Establish clear criteria and procedures for the formal accreditation of
2 professional organizations of ICT professionals and ensure their active and
3 constructive engagement in the sector's development.
4

5 **SEC. 18. Vital Role of Accredited Professional Organizations.** – Duly
6 accredited professional organizations of ICT professionals shall play a vital and
7 recognized role in:

- 8 a) Effectively representing the collective interests of their members and actively
9 advocating for the comprehensive protection and advancement of their rights,
10 welfare, and professional standing;
11 b) Collaborating closely and constructively with the DICT and other relevant
12 government agencies in the strategic development, thorough review, and
13 effective implementation of policies and programs that directly affect ICT
14 professionals;
15 c) Developing, actively promoting, and rigorously enforcing high ethical standards
16 and comprehensive codes of professional conduct for their members, ensuring
17 accountability and responsible practice;
18 d) Proactively developing and delivering relevant and high-quality CPD programs
19 and diverse professional development opportunities that cater to the evolving
20 needs of their membership; and
21 e) Actively participating in the establishment and implementation of fair and
22 transparent accreditation and certification processes for ICT professionals,
23 where such mechanisms are deemed necessary and beneficial for the
24 profession.
25

26 **SEC. 19. Establishment of National ICT Awards.** – The government shall
27 establish a National ICT Awards program to recognize and honor outstanding ICT
28 professionals, groundbreaking innovations, and significant contributions to the ICT
29 sector and national development. These awards shall be conferred annually and shall
30 carry appropriate prestige and incentives.
31

32 **SEC. 20. Incentives for Innovation, Research, and Development.** – The
33 government shall provide meaningful incentives and substantial support for ICT
34 professionals actively engaged in research and development, fostering innovation,
35 and creating valuable intellectual property within the field of ICT. These incentives may
36 include research grants, tax exemptions or credits, access to specialized facilities, and
37 assistance in the commercialization of their innovations.
38

39 **SEC. 21. Non-DICT ICT Professional.** – ICT personnel not employed by the
40 DICT, but is an employee of any executive, legislative, judicial and constitutional
41 offices, including local government units (LGUs), state universities and colleges
42 (SUCs), government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and other
43 instrumentalities, whether located in the Philippines or abroad may also avail benefits
44 outlined in this Act: Provided, That they are involved in ICT functions as provided in
45 Section 4 of this Act and have secured certification from the DICT.
46

47 **SEC. 22. Establishment of ICT Scholarship and Grant Programs.** – The
48 government shall, through the DICT, in collaboration with the Department of Science
49 and Technology (DOST), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical
50 Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and other relevant government

1 agencies, establish and administer comprehensive scholarship and grant programs to
2 support the education, training, and professional development of ICT professionals
3 and individuals aspiring to enter the ICT sector.
4

5 **SEC. 23. Coverage of Scholarships and Grants.** – Scholarship and grant
6 programs shall cover various aspects of ICT education and training, such as:
7

- 8 a) Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs. - Scholarships for
9 deserving students pursuing bachelor's and postgraduate degrees in ICT-
10 related fields in accredited higher education institutions, both local and
11 international, where deemed strategic.
- 12 b) Technical and Vocational Training. - Grants and financial assistance for
13 individuals undertaking technical and vocational courses in ICT skills
14 identified as critical for national development and industry needs, provided
15 by TESDA-accredited institutions.
- 16
- 17 c) Specialized Skills Development. - Grants for ICT professionals seeking to
18 acquire advanced or specialized skills in emerging technologies and
19 strategic ICT domains through certificate programs, short courses, and
20 industry-recognized certifications.
- 21
- 22 d) Research and Development Grants. - Grants to support ICT professionals
23 and researchers engaged in innovative research and development projects
24 that contribute to the advancement of the ICT sector in the Philippines.
- 25
- 26 e) Faculty Development Grants. - Grants to support the professional
27 development of ICT educators, including opportunities for further studies,
28 research, and training in emerging ICT fields.
- 29

30 **SEC. 24. Funding and Administration.** – The funds necessary for the
31 implementation of these scholarship and grant programs shall be sourced from the
32 national budget and may be augmented through partnerships with private sector
33 entities, international organizations, and other funding sources. The DICT shall be
34 responsible for the overall administration and monitoring of these programs, ensuring
35 their effective and equitable distribution.
36

37 **SEC. 25. Provision Against Double Benefits.** – ICT personnel receiving the
38 same benefits under any other law shall not be allowed to avail of the benefits under
39 this Act unless they submit in writing their intention to withdraw the benefits already
40 being received and opt for those provided hereunder.
41

42 **SEC. 26. Magna Carta Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.** – To ensure
43 the effective implementation, continuous improvement, and accountability of this Act,
44 a Magna Carta Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MCMEC) shall be established.
45

- 46
- 47 a) Composition and Leadership. - The MCMEC shall be co-chaired by the DICT
48 and the CSC, with members from:
 - 49 i. DBM
 - 50 ii. DOST

- iii. Commission on Audit (COA
- iv. Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)
- v. Department of Health (DOH)
- vi. Career Executive Service Board (CESB)
- vii. Representative from the CSC-accredited Employees' Organization in the DICT
- viii. Representative from an accredited ICT professional organization
- b) Mandate and Functions. - The Committee shall:
 - i. Monitor agency compliance with the provisions of this Act
 - ii. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs related to ICT workforce development, mental health, and professionalization
 - 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 CPD programs
 - iii. Data on the mental health and well-being of the ICT workforce
 - iv. Recommendations for legislative or administrative actions

The annual report shall be made publicly accessible through the DICT website and other appropriate platforms to promote transparency and stakeholder engagement

SEC. 27. Administrative Penalties for Non-Compliance. – Government officials or personnel who willfully or negligently fail to implement or comply with the provisions of this Act 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 shall, in coordination with the DICT, 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.

SEC. 28. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, such sums necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 29. 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, the CSC, the DBM, where applicable, accredited professional organizations of ICT professionals, and other relevant stakeholders, shall conduct a comprehensive review of this Act at least once every five (5) years from the date of its effectivity.

1
2 **SEC. 30. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within ninety (90) days from
3 the effectivity of this Act, the DICT shall, in coordination with the CSC, DBM, and other
4 relevant agencies, promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for the
5 effective implementation of this Act.
6

7 Unjustified or willful failure or refusal of the relevant government agencies to
8 promulgate the IRR within the specified period shall subject the heads of these
9 government agencies to administrative penalties under applicable civil service laws.

10 Should the IRR contain provisions that are contrary to this Act, the heads of the
11 government agencies responsible for such provision, when done in bad faith or with
12 gross negligence, shall be held administratively liable.
13

14 **SEC. 31. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
15 unconstitutional, the remainder hereof or any provisions not affected thereby shall
16 remain in force and effect.
17

18 **SEC. 32. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
19 executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions
20 of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

21 **SEC. 33. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
22 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
23

24 *Approved,*