

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9189



Introduced by **Representative Jose Manuel “JM” F. Lagdameo**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Persons with disabilities remain among the most economically marginalized sectors in Philippine society. Despite existing laws, such as Republic Act No. 7277, or the “Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities” and related policies aimed at promoting their welfare, many of them still encounter significant barriers to employment, entrepreneurship, access to capital, and skills development. These challenges perpetuate dependency and hinder their full integration into the country’s socio-economic life.

While various government agencies implement programs intended to address these issues, these initiatives often remain fragmented, poorly coordinated, and insufficiently linked to sustainable livelihood and enterprise development.

This measure aims to institutionalize a comprehensive Economic Independence Program for persons with disabilities, anchored not just on a whole-of-government but on a whole-of-society approach. The bill establishes a framework that brings together national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations, government financial institutions, state universities and colleges, local government units, and civil society organizations to work collaboratively with sustained funding.

The proposed measure provides for concrete program components: (a) enhancement of social, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills; (b) guaranteed market access for products and services provided by persons with disabilities cooperatives and organizations through inclusive government procurement and employment measures; (c) identification and utilization of accessible work centers; (d) improved access to livelihood capital and appropriate financial services; and (e) institutionalized collaboration in agency work and financial planning.

By institutionalizing these mechanisms, the proposed measure will transform persons with disabilities from passive beneficiaries into active economic actors and empowered members of society.

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


JOSE MANUEL “JM” F. LAGDAMEO
Representative
Second District, Davao del Norte

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AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be referred to as the “Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities Act”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Article XIII of the Constitution mandates the protection of the rights of Persons with Disabilities and the promotion of their welfare and development. Consequently, it is the policy of the State to ensure the rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance of disabled persons and their integration into mainstream society. Towards this end, the State shall utilize a whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach anchored on inclusivity, equity, accessibility, and empowerment.

SEC. 3. *The Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities.* All national government agencies, including government-owned and controlled corporations, are enjoined to support and cooperate in the planning and implementation of the Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities.

SEC. 4. *Program Components.* The Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities shall have the following components:

- (a) Enhancement of the social and vocational skills capabilities of persons with disabilities;
- (b) Marketing of products and services of cooperatives of persons with disabilities and other organizations of persons with disabilities engaged in livelihood;

- (c) Identification of accessible work center;
- (d) Accessing of capital for livelihood programs; and
- (e) Collaboration in the preparation of work and financial plans of all national agencies including Local Government Units (LGU), Government Financial Institutions (GFI), Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GOCC), and State Universities and Colleges (SUC).

SEC. 5. *Enhancement of the Social and Vocational Skills Capabilities of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).* – In order to develop and enhance the social and vocational skills capacities of persons with disabilities–

- (a) The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shall develop and implement a National Social Preparation Program that will deal on moral values and work ethics of entrepreneurs with disabilities;
- (b) The Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall continually develop a system of equivalency to ensure access to employment and entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities;
- (c) The TESDA shall develop and implement relevant unified training programs, basic organizational and entrepreneurial skills that eventually make persons with disabilities self-reliant and not a burden to society;
- (d) The Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) shall develop and implement programs to promote cooperative organizing and development among persons with disabilities.

SEC. 6. *Marketing of Products and Services of Cooperatives and Organizations of PWDs.* – In order to ensure markets for products and services of cooperatives and organizations of persons with disabilities–

- (a) All government agencies, bureaus, offices, instrumentalities, SUCs, GFIs, and GOCCs shall:
 - (i) Employ persons with disabilities, reserving at least one percent (1%) of all positions for them; and
 - (ii) Procure, whenever possible and in accordance with government procurement guidelines, not less than ten percent (10%) of their goods and services requirements from cooperatives and organizations of persons with disabilities.

Local government units (LGUs) are likewise enjoined to adopt the same measures.

- (b) The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), together with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), shall develop and implement marketing promotion and product development and to come up with a database of persons with disabilities organizations and directory of their products and services.
- (c) All government offices and LGUs are enjoined to reserve display spaces for persons with disabilities products and services in their respective offices upon request and where appropriate.
- (d) The Philippine Information Agency (PIA) shall create promotional programs on the positive image of persons with disabilities focusing on their abilities rather than their disabilities.

SEC. 7. *Identification of Work Centers.* – In order to provide accessible work centers with adequate equipment in strategic areas, especially near export processing zones or economic zones, for viable endeavors by persons with disabilities–

- (a) The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) shall conduct an inventory of unused government buildings for free temporary usage as work centers for persons with disabilities.
- (b) The DSWD shall facilitate post-identification activities, including assisting persons with disabilities organizations to source equipment and other operational assistance. It shall also enhance the implementation of its existing social and vocational rehabilitation training centers and sheltered workshops.
- (c) The Department of Finance (DOF) shall provide policy direction and operational decisions on the use of unused government buildings, in coordination with concerned agencies and subject to Commission on Audit (COA) rules and regulations.

SEC. 8. *Accessing Capital for Work Programs.* – In order to ensure continuous source of capital for livelihood programs for persons with disabilities–

- (a) The Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), and People's Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC) shall make available funds for the credit requirements of eligible persons with disabilities cooperatives and organizations, as well as develop other financial services where viable.
- (b) The PCFC shall enjoin its affiliated microfinance institutions to open programs for persons with disabilities entrepreneurs and promote the development of microfinance schemes designed for persons with disabilities micro-enterprises.

SEC. 9. *The National Anti-Poverty Commission.* The NAPC shall serve as the central coordinating and oversight body for the Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities. It shall have the following functions:

- (a) Coordinate with all national government agencies, GOCCs, GFIs, SUCs, and LGUs to align their programs with the objectives of this Act.
- (b) Monitor and evaluate existing programs and projects that promote economic independence, self-reliance, and integration of persons with disabilities into mainstream society.
- (c) Initiate the formation of technical committees composed of GFIs and representatives of the Persons with Disabilities Sectoral Council to provide technical assistance and facilitate access to funding facilities for persons with disabilities organizations and cooperatives.
- (d) Coordinate with the Government Procurement Policy Board to establish mechanisms ensuring that at least ten percent (10%) of government procurement is sourced from persons with disabilities organizations and cooperatives, provided that such goods and services meet established standards.

SEC. 10. *The Persons with Disabilities Basic Sectoral Council.* – The NAPC shall recognize the Persons with Disabilities Basic Sectoral Council as the official representative body of the disability sector within its organizational framework. The Council shall initiate and fully participate in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of programs under the Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities. The NAPC shall consult the Council in the formulation of guidelines, criteria, and recommendations, and shall collaborate with it in the development of the components of the Program.

The Council shall likewise be involved in the preparation of annual work and financial plans of all concerned agencies to ensure that the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities are integrated into national and local development policies.

SEC. 11. *Selection of Organizations in the Council.* – The Persons with Disabilities Sectoral Council, in consultation with the National Council for Disability Affairs (NCDA), shall formulate guidelines and criteria for the selection of organizations that will qualify for participation in the activities and components of the Program for Persons with Disabilities enumerated in Section 4 of this Act.

SEC. 12. *Reporting and Monitoring.* – All concerned government agencies, bureaus, offices, instrumentalities, GOCCs, GFIs, SUCs, and LGUs, shall submit, at least on a semi-annual basis, reports on the implementation of the Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities, to the NAPC and the NCDA. The NCDA shall assist the NAPC in monitoring and evaluating programs to ensure the effective implementation of the Economic Independence Program for Persons with Disabilities.

SEC. 13. *Guidelines and Work and Financial Plans.* – All concerned government agencies, bureaus, offices, instrumentalities, GOCCs, GFIs, SUCs, and LGUs shall formulate their respective guidelines and shall institutionalize the funding of the implementation of this Act in their annual work and financial plans.

SEC. 14. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The NAPC, together with the NCDA, in cooperation and consultation with other relevant government agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 15. *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 amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 16. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected there shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 17. *Repealing Clause.* – All Acts, Presidential Decrees, Executive Orders and Administrative Orders, Rules and Regulations and other such issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 18. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,