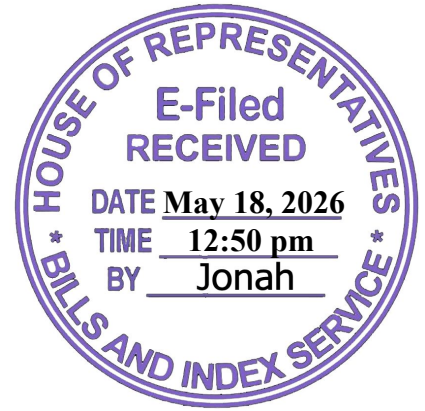


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9287



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP

AN ACT
INSTITUTING THE FORMER PRISONERS' EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, PROVIDING
FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

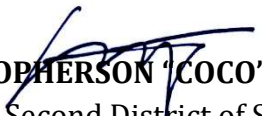
Prison is meant not only to punish, but also to help people change. Once a person has served their sentence or has been legally released, they should be given a real chance to start over, find work, and live honestly. However, many former prisoners struggle to get jobs because of stigma, lack of connections, and limited opportunities. Without support, these challenges can push them back into crime and make it harder for them to reintegrate into society.

The government already recognizes that helping former prisoners rebuild their lives is important for both public safety and the common good. One existing tool is the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), which helps people find jobs, provides training, and offers career guidance. By strengthening and using this system, the government can directly address the barriers that former prisoners face when looking for employment.

This bill proposes a Former Prisoners' Employment Program that will connect qualified individuals to job opportunities through PESO. It will offer job matching, skills training, and support to help them become employable. At the same time, the bill encourages businesses to give former prisoners a fair chance by providing incentives to employers who hire and retain them, while still ensuring that labor standards are followed.

Giving former prisoners a fair opportunity to work is not just an act of compassion, it is a practical step toward safer communities and a stronger economy. By helping them become productive members of society, this measure benefits not only the individuals involved but the nation as a whole.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte

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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 “*Former Prisoners’ Employment Act.*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to promote the reformation, social reintegration, and productive employment of persons released from detention or imprisonment, and to strengthen coordination among government agencies, local government units, and the private sector to reduce recidivism and support public safety.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act:

- (a) “**Former prisoner**” refer to any person who was convicted by final judgment and has been released from confinement by reason of service of sentence, probation, parole, pardon, or other lawful mode of release, including those released from preventive imprisonment who are no longer detained by lawful order.
- (b) “**Employer**” refers to any private business establishment, partnership, corporation, cooperative, or sole proprietorship duly registered in the

Philippines, including government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) when applicable, that hires a Former Prisoner pursuant to this Act.

(c) **“Program”** refers to the **Former Prisoners’ Employment Program (FPEP)** instituted under this Act.

(d) **“PESO”** refers to the **Public Employment Service Office** established and maintained by local government units and linked with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

SECTION 4. Former Prisoners’ Employment Program (FPEP). — There is hereby instituted a **Former Prisoners’ Employment Program (FPEP)**, which shall include:

- (a) **Employment facilitation and job matching** through PESOs and other DOLE-recognized employment service channels;
- (b) **Pre-employment readiness and life skills training**, including workplace values, financial literacy, and interview skills;
- (c) **Skills assessment, certification, or referral to training** in coordination with concerned agencies; and
- (d) **Employer engagement**, including orientation on fair chance hiring and workplace support mechanisms.

SECTION 5. Lead Agencies; Inter-Agency Coordination. —

- (a) The DOLE shall be the lead implementing agency for employment facilitation, job matching, employer engagement, and reporting, consistent with its administration of employment facilitation programs.
- (b) The Department of Justice (DOJ), through its relevant offices and in coordination with correctional authorities, shall provide pre-release referral, maintain coordination for documentation support, and assist in developing reintegration protocols.
- (c) The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall support coordination with LGUs for PESO participation and local reintegration initiatives.
- (d) LGUs shall ensure that PESOs under their jurisdiction provide accessible referral and facilitation services for Former Prisoners, consistent with PESO operational standards.

This approach aligns the Program with the existing statutory PESO network administered by DOLE and maintained by LGUs.

SECTION 6. Employer Incentives (Tax Treatment). —

- (a) Incentive. Employers hiring a Former Prisoner under the Program and retaining such employee for at least six (6) months shall be entitled to an additional deduction equivalent to fifteen percent (15%) of the total salaries and wages actually paid to such Former Prisoner during the taxable year, subject to the limitations and substantiation requirements under the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC), as amended, and the implementing rules to be jointly issued by the Department of Finance (DOF) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), in coordination with DOLE and DOJ.
- (b) Anti-abuse and documentation. The claim of incentive shall require: (i) proof of employment and payment of wages; (ii) proof of the employee's status as a Former Prisoner; and (iii) compliance with labor standards and non-discrimination requirements under existing laws.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOLE and DOJ, in coordination with the DILG, DOF/BIR (for the tax incentive), and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SECTION 8. Appropriations. — The amounts necessary to implement this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the agencies concerned. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

An initial amount of One Hundred Million Pesos (Php100,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated for the first year of implementation.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. — If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. — All laws, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. 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,