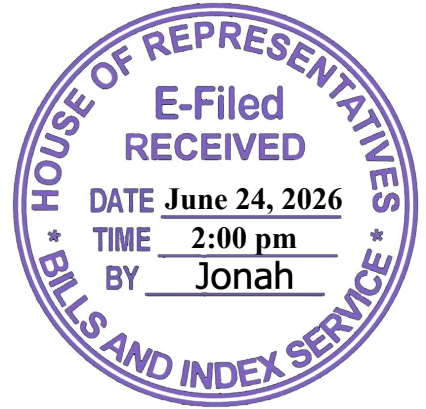




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9936



Introduced by: Congressman Irwin C. Tieng

**"AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE REHABILITATION OF PRISONERS
AND THE RESTITUTION OF DAMAGES CAUSED BY THEIR CRIMES
THROUGH PRISON WORK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES "**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine justice system recognizes that criminal liability carries with it not only punishment but also civil liability. Victims of crime are entitled to damages as awarded by the courts. However, in practice, many convicts are indigent and unable to pay these damages, leaving victims uncompensated and justice incomplete.

At present, the Revised Penal Code provides for subsidiary imprisonment in cases where fines are not paid, but this mechanism does not extend to civil damages. As a result, victims often face the harsh reality that while offenders serve their prison sentences, the civil obligations remain unsatisfied, sometimes indefinitely.

This bill seeks to address that gap by establishing a Prisoner Work Program. It introduces a structured system where prisoners engage in productive labor while incarcerated, and a significant portion of their earnings is automatically allocated to pay damages awarded to their victims.

The proposed law balances three important objectives:

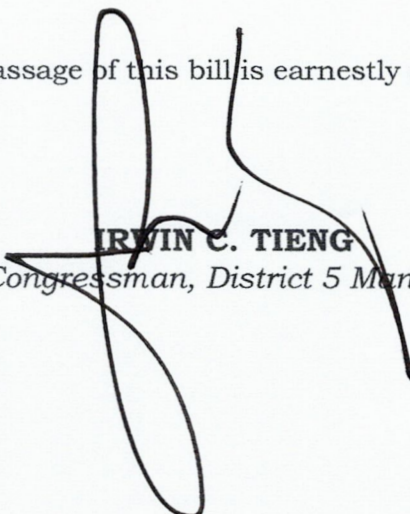
Justice for victims – ensuring that damages awarded by courts are not merely symbolic but actually enforced.

Rehabilitation of offenders – providing prisoners with meaningful work, skills training, and preparation for reintegration into society.

Social responsibility – reinforcing the principle that offenders must contribute to repairing the harm they have caused.

By enacting this measure, the State affirms its commitment to restorative justice — one that not only punishes crime but also repairs the harm done to victims and communities. This bill will strengthen the moral fabric of our justice system by ensuring that restitution is not left to chance, but is made a concrete and enforceable reality.

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



IRWIN C. TIENG
Congressman, District 5 Manila



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Section 1. Short Title

This Act shall be known as the "Prisoner Work Program Act of 2026.

Section 2. Declaration of Policy

It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure that victims of crimes are duly and fully compensated for damages as awarded by the courts; to promote the rehabilitation of prisoners through productive labor as an integral component of their reformation; and to establish a just and equitable system whereby the earnings of prisoners shall contribute to restitution, provided that such measures shall at all times be implemented in a manner consistent with, and respectful of, the constitutional prohibition against imprisonment for debt.

Section 3. Coverage

This Act shall apply to all persons convicted by final judgment of crimes under the Revised Penal Code or special penal laws, where civil damages have been awarded to victims. This covers prisoners detained in the national and local correctional facilities under the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

Section 4. Prisoner Work Program

The BuCor and BJMP shall establish Prisoner Work Programs in industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, crafts, infrastructure, government projects and other services.

Prisoners shall be compensated with wages commensurate to the work performed, subject to minimum standards set by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

Sec. 5. Secure Work Program. - The Bureau may establish a secure work program for qualified prisoners working outside the prison proper while appropriately restrained for security purposes. Qualified prisoners on a work secure program shall be required to wear distinctively colored outer garments and such other devices that would preserve and secure the Bureau's custody over them.

Any qualified prisoner on a secure work program who escapes shall be punished with the penalty of prison correccional in a special summary procedure to be promulgated by the Supreme Court.

Section 6. Allocation of Earnings

Prisoner wages shall be allocated as follows:

Restitution to Victims - At least 50% of net earnings shall be automatically applied to pay damages awarded by the court.

Savings for Reintegration - Up to 25% shall be deposited in a reintegration fund for the prisoner's release.

Personal Use - Up to 25% may be used for commissary purchases or family support.

Section 7. Restitution Fund

(a) *Establishment.* There is hereby created a National Restitution Fund under the administration of the Department of Justice (DOJ).

(b) *Source of Funds.* All deductions from prisoner wages earmarked for restitution shall be remitted directly to the National Restitution Fund.

(c) *Disbursement.* The Fund shall disburse payments directly to victims of crime or their lawful heirs, in accordance with final judgments, settlement agreements, or other lawful orders.

(d) *Oversight.* The National Restitution Fund shall be subject to audit by the Commission on Audit (COA), which shall ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with applicable laws.

Section 8. Pay Slips and Remittance Reports

All prisoners under the Work Program shall be issued monthly pay slips detailing gross earnings, deductions, and allocations. Employers shall submit certified quarterly remittance reports to the DOJ and the COA, attesting to the proper remittance of restitution and savings contributions.

Section 9. Enforcement of Civil Liability

The obligation to pay civil damages shall remain enforceable even after release. Any unpaid balance after release shall be collectible under existing civil procedures. Moreover, prisoner work contributions shall be credited against the total liability.

Section 10. Prisoner Safeguard and Welfare

Prisoners must be protected from exploitative or unsafe labor practices, ensuring that any work they undertake respects their dignity and well-being. They are entitled to fair wages that align with recognized human rights

standards, providing compensation that is just and transparent. Furthermore, no prisoner should be compelled to work beyond reasonable hours, safeguarding their health and guaranteeing that labor remains humane and consistent with principles of justice and equity.

Section 11. Voluntary Participation and Consent

Participation in any Prisoner Work Program shall be strictly voluntary, and enrollment shall take place only upon the prisoner's execution of written informed consent following advertisement of wage allocation. Consent may be withdrawn at any time in accordance with reasonable administrative protocols, and such withdrawal shall never be the basis for punitive retaliation. Neither refusal to enroll nor withdrawal of consent shall constitute grounds for extending confinement, imposing disciplinary punishment, or denying benefits otherwise granted by law.

Section 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations

The DOJ, in coordination with BuCor, BJMP, DOLE, and COA shall issue the necessary rules and regulations within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act. The implementing Rules and Regulations shall strictly confine to implementing this Act and shall not expand, restrict, or add disqualifications beyond the statute.

SECTION 13. Separability Clause

If, for any reason, any provision of this Act or part thereof is declared unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the other provisions or parts hereof not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. Repealing Clause

All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, ordinances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 15. Effectivity

This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,