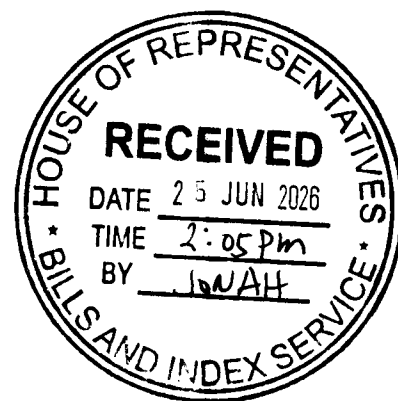




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **9944**

Introduced by Representative EDGAR R. ERICE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Every day, thousands of Filipino waste workers perform one of the most essential yet least recognized services in society. They collect garbage from homes and establishments, recover recyclable materials, segregate waste, maintain the cleanliness of communities, and help reduce the environmental burden on our cities and municipalities. Through their labor, they contribute significantly to public health, environmental protection, and sustainable waste management.

Despite the indispensable role they play, waste workers remain among the most marginalized and vulnerable members of society. Many work under hazardous conditions, exposed daily to contaminated materials, toxic substances, infectious waste, extreme weather conditions, and other occupational dangers. Yet a significant number of them continue to endure inadequate compensation, job insecurity, lack of protective equipment, limited access to healthcare, and insufficient social protection. Many waste pickers, recyclers, and other informal waste workers remain unrecognized by government systems and are excluded from programs and benefits available to other sectors of the workforce.

The Constitution mandates the State to afford full protection to labor, promote social justice in all phases of national development, and ensure humane conditions of work. These guarantees must extend to waste workers whose labor, though often unseen, is vital to the health, sanitation, and environmental sustainability of our communities.

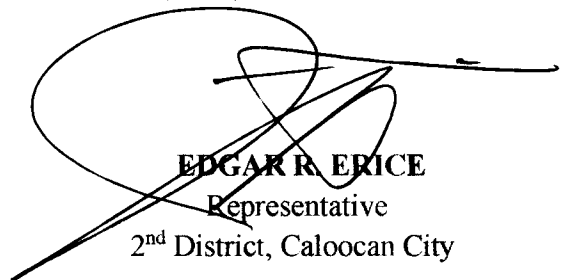
This proposed Magna Carta of Waste Workers seeks to recognize waste workers as a distinct sector entitled to protection, support, and opportunities for advancement. The measure establishes and safeguards their rights to decent work, just compensation, safe and healthy working conditions, social protection, healthcare, housing assistance, and meaningful participation in matters affecting their welfare and livelihood. It likewise provides for hazard pay, annual medical, dental, mental, and psychosocial examinations, occupational health and safety programs, access to government assistance, and the strict enforcement of labor standards and protections.

Moreover, the bill promotes the formalization and recognition of waste workers, particularly those operating in the informal sector, to ensure their inclusion in government programs, labor protections, and social security systems. By integrating waste workers into the formal economy and extending to them the benefits and protections accorded to other workers, the State affirms their dignity and recognizes the invaluable contribution they make to society.

This measure is not merely a labor reform. It is an act of social justice for a sector that has long remained invisible despite its critical role in maintaining public health and environmental sustainability. It acknowledges that those who handle society's waste should not themselves be discarded or neglected. They deserve protection, recognition, and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

By safeguarding the welfare of waste workers, the State strengthens not only the rights of labor but also the nation's commitment to environmental stewardship, public health, and inclusive development.

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



EDGAR R. ERICE
Representative
2nd District, Caloocan City



Republic of the Philippines
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. **9944**

Introduced by Representative EDGAR R. ERICE

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MAGNA CARTA OF WASTE WORKERS

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

TITLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER I
BASIC PRINCIPLES

SEC. 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the “**Magna Carta of Waste Workers.**”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. Recognition of the vital role played by Waste Workers in preserving public health, environmental sustainability, and the overall wellbeing of our communities, the State shall endeavor to develop plans, policies, programs, measures, and mechanisms rooted in principles of fairness and social justice, safeguarding the rights and dignity of Waste Workers.

The State shall ensure the protection of their rights and welfare through inclusive, rights-based, and gender-responsive policies and programs. It shall guarantee fair compensation, safe and humane working conditions, and access to comprehensive health and social protection benefits.

1 Waste Workers shall be free from discrimination, exploitation, and harassment, and shall be
2 recognized as essential partners in sustainable development.

3 The State shall institutionalize mechanisms for training, occupational safety, and access to
4 protective equipment and medical support. It shall also promote public awareness on proper
5 waste management and the indispensable contributions of Waste Workers, in accordance with
6 Republic Act Nos. 6969 and 9003.

7 The State shall ensure that collaborative efforts involving the government, civil society, and
8 the private sector aim to raise public awareness about the vital contributions of Waste Workers
9 and foster a culture of respect for their profession.

10 The State shall establish mechanisms for the effective implementation and monitoring of this
11 Act. There shall be regular assessments of working conditions, benefits, and overall well-being
12 of Waste Workers conducted, with policy adjustments made as necessary to address emerging
13 challenges.

14
15 **SEC. 3. Coverage.** - This law shall apply to all persons employed, contracted, or engaged, and
16 all those economically dependent on the marginalized sectors, in activities on the management,
17 collection, transportation, processing, and disposal of solid wastes, hazardous wastes, and toxic
18 chemicals and substances including but not limited to residual and healthcare wastes.

19
20 **CHAPTER II**
21 **DEFINITION OF WASTE WORKERS**

22 **SEC. 4. Waste Workers.** - Waste workers shall refer to all persons whose livelihood is
23 dependent on waste management, collection, transportation, processing, and disposal, and
24 include, but are not limited to, garbage collectors, waste pickers, segregators, and recyclers.

25 Waste workers, by the nature of their livelihood, are considered part of the disadvantaged and
26 vulnerable sectors of society. They are often among those living in poverty, with limited or no
27 access to essential resources and basic social and economic services, including health care,
28 education, housing security, and access to the justice system.

29
30 **TITLE II**
31 **RIGHTS AND PROTECTION OF WASTE WORKERS**

32 **CHAPTER I**
33 **COMMON PROVISIONS**
34

35 **SEC 5. Right to Decent Work.** - The State shall ensure the promotion and protection of decent
36 work standards for Waste Workers, grounded in the full recognition of their rights and dignity

as laborers. This includes the guarantee of fair terms of employment, protection from occupational and health hazards, and access to essential support services that enable the fulfillment of their rights.

SEC. 6. Right to Participation and Information. All Waste Workers shall have the right to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their work, health, and overall well-being. This right includes access to timely and relevant information on policies, programs, projects, training, and other initiatives concerning Waste Workers.

Participation shall extend to the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, regulations, and practices related to waste management and labor rights. Waste Workers shall be represented in relevant consultative and decision making bodies to ensure that their voices are heard and their interests safeguarded.

Waste Workers shall be accorded representation in both the City or Municipal Solid Waste Management Board (SWM Board) and the Barangay Solid Waste Management Board (BSW Board), to wit:

- a) At least one seat in the SWM Board shall be allocated for a representative(s) of waste workers directly involved in solid waste management activities within the jurisdiction.
- b) The waste worker representative(s) shall be selected through a transparent and inclusive process.
- c) The waste worker representative(s) shall report back to their respective constituencies on SWM Board activities, decisions, and outcomes.
- d) The SWM Board shall periodically review the effectiveness of worker representation and make adjustments as necessary to ensure meaningful participation and accountability.

SEC. 7. Social Protection. The State shall ensure that all Waste Workers are covered under appropriate social protection programs. This includes mandatory coverage under the Social Security System (SSS) or the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), as applicable, as well as membership in the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig), and Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth).

SEC. 8. Hazard Pay. - Waste Workers, in both private and public sectors, who are regularly exposed to health and occupational hazards, or to working conditions that involve a high risk of injury, illness, or deterioration of health, shall be entitled to hazard pay. The amount and conditions for the grant of such compensation shall be determined in accordance with existing labor laws, occupational safety and health standards, and the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

Section 9. Annual Medical, Dental, Mental, and Psychosocial Examination. All Waste Workers shall be provided with free annual medical services, which shall include, but not be limited to, physical, dental, mental health, and psychosocial examinations. These health services shall aim to monitor, prevent, and address occupational illnesses and work-related health conditions. This shall be administered by accredited health institutions in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), local government units, and other relevant agencies.

SEC. 10. Occupational Health and Safety Standards Program. - There shall be an established occupational health program for all Waste Workers to provide basic equipment such as, but not limited to, the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) based on the nature of their work.

This program shall be implemented in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), local government units, and other concerned agencies. The OHS Program shall be regularly reviewed and updated to respond to emerging occupational risks and public health concerns affecting Waste Workers.

CHAPTER II WASTE WORKERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

SEC. 11. Right to a Minimum Wage. Waste Workers shall be entitled to receive no less than the minimum wage prescribed for non-agricultural workers in their respective regions, as determined by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB). The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall issue the appropriate rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this provision, including wage payment schedules, methods, and compliance mechanisms.

SEC. 12. Work Days and Work Hours. Waste Workers shall be entitled to regular work hours and rest periods in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Code of the Philippines and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations. This includes entitlement to night shift differential pay for work performed between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., as may be prescribed by the DOLE.

SEC. 13. Overtime Pay. Waste Workers who render services beyond the prescribed working hours shall be entitled to overtime pay in accordance with the rates, conditions, and procedures provided under the Labor Code of the Philippines, its implementing rules, and other relevant regulations.

SEC. 14. Holiday Pay and Rest Day. Waste Workers who are required or permitted to work on a regular holiday, special holiday, or rest day shall be entitled to additional compensation, as mandated by the Labor Code and relevant issuances of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The determination of applicable rates, holiday classifications, and

entitlement shall be governed by existing laws and DOLE regulations: Provided, where the collective bargaining agreement or other applicable employment contract stipulates the payment of a higher premium pay than that prescribed under this Section, the employer shall pay such a higher rate.

SEC. 15. Enforcement of Labor Laws. All rights and benefits pertaining to conditions of employment, occupational safety and health, social welfare, labor relations, and post-employment shall be enforced in accordance with the existing and applicable laws and rules. The DOLE, in coordination with concerned agencies and local government units, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective enforcement of this Act.

SEC. 16. Health Services. Waste Workers shall be entitled to access comprehensive health services, including regular medical check-ups, hospitalization, and preventive health care, through arrangements with Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) or other accredited medical providers, subject to guidelines to be issued in the implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 17. Security of Tenure. No Waste Worker shall be dismissed from employment except for a just or authorized cause, and only after the observance of due process, in accordance with the Labor Code and existing rules and regulations.

SEC. 18. Self-Organization and Union Membership. All Waste Workers shall have the right to self-organization, including the right to form, join, or assist legitimate labor organizations, cooperatives, or associations of their own choosing, for the purpose of promoting, protecting, and advancing their collective interests, and extending mutual support and assistance. This right shall be exercised free from interference, restraint, or coercion by employers, government authorities, or any other entity.

Waste Workers shall be eligible for union membership from the first day of their employment, and may engage in collective bargaining and other lawful concerted activities, in accordance with the Labor Code of the Philippines and applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 19. Non-Abridgement of the Right to Self-Organization. No person shall be allowed to restrain, coerce, or unduly interfere with the Waste Workers in their exercise of their right to self-organization in accordance with law.

It shall be unlawful for any person to commit the following acts of restraint, coercion, or undue interference:

- a) To prevent a Waste Worker from carrying out his duties in his organization or association;
- b) To discriminate in hiring a Waste Worker or setting unfavorable conditions upon him to discourage him from membership in any organization or association;
- c) To require as a condition of employment that a Waste Worker must not join any organization or association;
- d) To interfere in the functioning and administration of the organization or association.

1 **SEC. 20. Emergency Allowance Provision.** Waste Workers who are required to render
2 service in the field during emergencies and disasters shall be entitled to emergency allowance
3 computed based on prevailing rates and conditions as may be determined by the DOLE.

4
5 **CHAPTER III**
6 **WASTE WORKERS IN THE GOVERNMENT**

7 **SEC. 21. Coverage.** This Chapter shall apply to all persons rendering services in the
8 Government for compensation, regardless of status of employment and/or engaged or
9 contracted for services.

10 **SEC. 22. Right to self-organization.** Waste Workers of government corporations established
11 under the Corporation Code shall have the right to organize and to bargain collectively with
12 their respective employers. All other employees in the civil service shall have the right to form
13 associations for purposes not contrary to law.

14 **SEC. 23. Health Care System.** Every Waste Worker shall be guaranteed with a health care
15 delivery system and access to public or private primary care provider of choice. The respective
16 LGU shall establish a program and promulgate guidelines for the availment of health care
17 benefits.

18 **SEC. 24. Financial Assistance.** Local Government Units (LGUs) shall endeavor to provide
19 financial assistance to Waste Workers in crisis situations, including but not limited to, medical
20 assistance, burial, transportation, education, food or financial assistance for other support
21 services or needs of a Waste Worker or family

22 **SEC. 25. Cash Incentive.** In recognition of the contribution of Waste Workers to public health
23 and safety, environment, and local economy, LGUs shall include Waste Workers in the grant
24 of an annual cash incentive for all their personnel

25 **SEC. 26. Socialized Housing Program.** The Local Government Unit shall, in the
26 implementation and development of socialized housing program, ensure that Waste Workers
27 who are able to qualify under the guidelines shall be included as target beneficiaries.

28
29 **CHAPTER IV**
30 **WASTE WORKER IN THE FORMAL SECTOR**

31 **SEC. 27. Waste Workers in the Informal Sector.** Waste Workers in the informal sector are
32 hereby guaranteed all civil, political, social and economic rights recognized, promoted and
33 protected under existing laws, including, but not limited to. Article II Section 9 of the 1987
34 Constitution, the Republic Act No. 8425, otherwise known as the Social Reform and Poverty
35 Alleviation Act, and Republic Act No. 7875, otherwise known as the National Health Insurance
36 Act.

1 **SEC. 28. Formalization and Recognition of Waste Workers.** Waste Workers in the informai
2 sector shall have the right to form or join organizations or associations for purposes not contrary
3 to law, and to promote, defend, and protect their mutuai interests or extend mutuai aid and
4 cooperation.

5 Organizations or associations established by informal Waste Workers shall be recognized and
6 registered with the DOLE or other appropriate government agencies, in accordance with
7 existing laws, rules, and regulations. Such recognition shall serve as a basis for accessing
8 government support, representation, and participation in decision-making processes affecting
9 their work and welfare.

10 **SEC. 29. Social Protection and Inclusion.** The DOLE, in consultation with the Department of
11 Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Health, Commission on Human Rights,
12 and the Local Government Units, shall develop programs for the informal sector of Waste
13 Workers and ensure their access to medical assistance, burial, transportation, education, food,
14 or financial assistance for other support services or needs.

15 **SEC. 12. Repealing Clause.** All laws, executive orders, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent
16 with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

17

18 **SEC. 13. Effectivity Clause.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
19 in the Official Gazette or in a newspapers of general circulation.

20

21 Approved,