

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **10329**



Introduced by REP. YSABEL MARIA J. ZAMORA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For many Filipinos who lost their jobs or sought alternative sources of income during the COVID-19 pandemic, online freelancing and virtual assistance emerged as indispensable livelihood alternatives. This accelerated the shift toward remote work and the digital economy. What began as a crisis response has evolved into one of the country's fastest-growing sectors, employing thousands while enabling work from home.

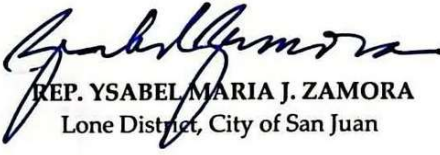
Globally, Filipino virtual assistants and digital freelancers are widely valued for their skills, adaptability, and work ethic. They execute a broad spectrum of services, ranging from administrative and customer support to advanced software development, digital marketing, and project management. As these professionals acquire specialized competencies, they are able to negotiate competitive compensation and establish sustainable careers in the international digital marketplace.

Beyond creating employment opportunities, this sector has made a significant contribution to the Philippine economy. By servicing international clientele, digital workers generate a steady influx of foreign exchange, which fortifies our currency reserves and stimulates local consumption.

Despite these valuable contributions, virtual assistants and online freelance workers lack adequate legal protection. Because most engagements occur through online platforms or direct contracts with foreign clients, workers face unfair terms, delayed or non-payment of compensation, excessive hours, sudden terminations, and exposure to scams.

Article XIII, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution requires the State to "*afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all.*" In keeping with this mandate, the State should recognize the contributions of virtual assistants and online freelancers by promoting fair labor practices and providing safeguards that protect their rights and welfare.

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



REP. YSABEL MARIA J. ZAMORA
Lone District, City of San Juan

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF FILIPINO
VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS (VAs) AND ONLINE FREELANCERS, 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 known as the “Virtual Assistants (VAs) and Online Freelancers Rights Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – Pursuant to Article II, Section 18, and Article XIII, Section 3 of the Constitution, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect the rights of workers, promote their welfare, and afford full protection to labor. To this end, the State shall ensure equal protection and recognition of the rights of Filipino Virtual Assistants and Online Freelancers, as well as uphold the legitimate interests of their employers.

SEC. 3. Coverage. – This Act shall apply to all Filipino virtual assistants and online freelancers, including but not limited to self-employed individuals, independent contractors, or project-based workers hired or retained to provide services in exchange for compensation.

This shall include those who render services remotely through digital platforms, communication technologies, or direct client arrangements, whether local or foreign employers, and regardless of the frequency, duration, or scope of the engagement.

SEC. 4. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

(a) Employer/s refers to any digital platform, website, person or legal entity that obtains the services of a virtual assistant and/or online freelancer;

(b) Online Freelancers refers to an individual who earns income by providing services remotely through digital means to clients, whether local or foreign;

(c) Virtual Assistants (VAs) refer to a type of online freelancer who provides remote, client-directed services through digital means.

SEC. 5. Right to Written Contracts – All freelance engagements shall be written in plain language, understood by both parties. It shall include, at the minimum, the following:

(a) Itemization of all services to be provided by the virtual assistant or online freelancer;

(b) Details of compensation and other worker's benefits, including rate, method, and schedule of payment;

(c) Period of employment;

(d) Grounds for breach of contract on the part of the employer and of the virtual assistant or online freelancer; and

(e) Any other condition, term, or clause that the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) may direct, subject to the provisions of this Act.

The contract must state the necessary personal circumstances of the virtual assistant or online freelancers, such as but not limited to the virtual assistant or online freelancer's name, address and the worker's Tax Identification Number (TIN). No modification of the terms of the contract shall be enforceable unless signed by both the employer and the virtual assistant or online freelancers.

SEC. 6. Fair and Timely Compensation. – All virtual assistants and online freelancers must have the right to fair and timely compensation from their employers.

SEC. 7. Social Protection. – All virtual assistants and online freelancers shall have access to voluntary coverage under social protection agencies, including but not limited to the Social Security System (SSS), the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth), and the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund).

SEC. 8. Remedies and Grievance Redress. – The DOLE shall establish a Digital Labor Rights Help Desk for virtual assistants and online freelancers. This mechanism shall provide access to:

- (a) Filing of complaints related to non-payment, underpayment, breach of contract, or unfair practices by employers;
- (b) Mediation and conciliation services to facilitate amicable dispute resolution;
- (c) Legal advisory services, including guidance on contracts, taxation, and rights of virtual assistants and online freelancers, as provided by this Act, and other relevant laws; and
- (d) Reporting and tracking for recurrent or high-risk violators, including mechanism for blacklisting abusive employers.

SEC. 9. Implementation. The Secretary of Labor and Employment, in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and other relevant agencies shall issue such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,