



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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10856



Introduced by **Representative EDUARDO R. RAMA JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Media personnel play an essential role in keeping the public informed and holding democratic institutions accountable. Despite this immense responsibility, journalists, newsroom staff, and field personnel often work under hazardous conditions, economic instability, and a lack of adequate social safety nets.

The proposed bill, entitled the "**Media Personnel Welfare Act,**" intends to address these systemic challenges by establishing clear social, economic, and safety protections for all media personnel in the private sector, including freelancers and regular employees.

Specifically, the measure provides a guaranteed minimum compensation and benefits by enforcing compliance with standard labor laws, minimum wage rates, mandatory coverage under the SSS, Pag-IBIG, PhilHealth, and retirement benefits, mandates a minimum hazard pay of ₱500.00 per day for personnel assigned in dangerous, distressed, or emergency areas, alongside compulsory provision of basic protective gear such as bulletproof vests, helmets, and medical equipment. Further, entitles workers to compulsory coverage including ₱200,000 for death benefits, up to ₱200,000 for disability benefits, and up to ₱100,000 for medical insurance, grants automatic regular status to media personnel after six (6) months of service- whether continuous or cumulative—to curb unfair employment practices and finally, establishes the *News Media Tripartite Council* under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to serve as a platform for policy alignment, dispute resolution, and stakeholder dialogue.

By improving working conditions and ensuring fair compensation, this legislation seeks to build a safer and more secure environment for a responsible and sustainable media.

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



REP. EDUARDO R. RAMA JR.

2nd District, City of Cebu



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AN ACT
PROVIDING ENHANCED PROTECTION, SECURITY, AND SAFETY BENEFITS
FOR MEDIA PERSONNEL

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

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Media Personnel Welfare Act."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote and improve the social and economic well-being of media personnel, including their living and working conditions. Towards this end, the State shall provide the necessary support to ensure that media personnel are protected, secured, and well compensated.

SECTION 3. *Objectives.* This Act shall have the following objectives:

- (a) Ensure that media personnel shall, at minimum, be paid the wages, allowances, and benefits provided by law to media personnel;
- (b) Motivate and encourage media personnel to be truthful and responsible sharers of information; and
- (c) Promote an atmosphere that is conducive to productive, free, and fruitful media work.

SECTION 4. *Coverage.* - This Act shall apply to all media personnel and media entities in the private sector.

SECTION 5. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in this Act:

- (a) ***Blocktimer*** refers to one who buys airtime from radio and television franchise holders;
- (b) ***Contract*** refers to any written agreement between a media entity and media worker, whether regular or freelance, that specifies the term of engagement, compensation, duties, benefits, safety provisions, and obligations in accordance with this Act
- (b) ***Media entities*** refer to persons or organizations, including media networks and operators that actively gather information of potential interest to a segment of the public, turn collected information into a distinct work, or distribute that work to an audience within the Philippines; and
- (c) ***Media Personnel*** refer to those who are legitimately engaged in news media practice, directly or indirectly, whether as a principal occupation or not.

SECTION 6. *Minimum Compensation.* Media personnel shall not receive less than the applicable minimum wage rate prescribed by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board, and shall be entitled to overtime pay and night shift premiums, as well as other forms of compensation provided by the Presidential Decree No. 442, as amended, otherwise known as the "Labor Code of the Philippines", and other related laws and issuances.

SECTION 7. *Social Security and Welfare Benefits.* -Media personnel shall be covered by the Social Security System, the Home Development Mutual Fund or the Pag-IBIG Fund, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation upon employment. The payment of monthly contributions shall be jointly shared by the media worker and the employer, when applicable, in accordance with existing rules and regulations. Media personnel shall also be entitled to retirement benefits as provided under Republic Act No. 11199, otherwise known as the "Social Security Act of 2018".

SECTION 8. *Pay.* – Media personnel required to physically report for work in dangerous areas such as strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated stations, disease-infested areas or in areas declared under a state of calamity or emergency for the duration thereof which expose them to great danger, contagion, radiation, volcanic activity or eruption, occupational risks or perils to life as determined by the Department of Labor and Employment

(DOLE), shall be compensated with a hazard pay in the minimum amount of Five hundred pesos (P500.00) per day, with no diminution, which shall be computed as follows:

Hazard Pay = P500 x number of days physically reporting for work in dangerous areas.

The base amount of the hazard pay of media personnel may be increased as decided upon by the News Media Tripartite Council created under Section 15 of this Act.

Employers shall also provide media personnel covering events in dangerous areas with basic safety gear and equipment such as bulletproof vests and helmets, first-aid kits, fire protection jackets, face shields, medical grade protective equipment, harnesses, safety shoes, and life vests.

SECTION 9. *Mandatory Additional Insurance Benefits.* Employers shall provide additional insurance coverage to media personnel as follows:

(a) Death benefit of two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) for each media worker who shall perish in the line of duty;

(b) Disability benefit of up to two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) for each media worker who shall suffer total or partial disability, whether permanent to temporary, arising from any injury sustained in the line of duty; and

(c) Medical insurance benefit for each media worker of up to one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00).

SECTION 10. *Security of Tenure.* - Media personnel shall be deemed as regular employees after six (6) months from the start of employment, regardless of the nature of employment. However, the said six (6) months period shall be computed cumulatively if a media worker is repeatedly engaged for shorter periods. An employer shall not terminate the services of a media worker except for a just or authorized cause, and with the observance of procedural due process.

SECTION 11. *Settlement of Disputes.* All labor-related disputes shall be elevated to the DOLE regional office that has jurisdiction over the workplace.

SECTION 12. *Liability of Media Entities.* - Media entities shall be responsible for all content released under their name. Owner of media entities or franchise holder shall be liable for claims arising from gross negligence, malicious acts, and violation of laws in connection with the work of blocktimers and media personnel, regardless of the nature of engagement, except when the owners of the media entities or franchise holders can prove that due diligence was exercised

or that the fault is attributable solely to the concerned blocktimer or media worker. Any agreement to the contrary shall be void.

SECTION 13. *Compliance.* The DOLE is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Act's provisions.

SECTION 14. *Administrative Penalties.* Violations of the provisions of this Act shall be subject to applicable penalties provided in Presidential Decree No. 442, as amended, and other related laws and issuances.

SECTION 15. *News Media Tripartite Council.* - The DOLE shall initiate the creation of the News Media Tripartite Council, which shall serve as a link among various stakeholders, provide a platform where media personnel and employers can agree upon mutually beneficial policies that will promote the interests of the media industry, and serve as avenue to express their aspirations, discuss their programs or settle conflicts.

SECTION 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Labor and Employment shall, in coordination with media groups, associations, publishers, guilds, and other concerned groups, issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 17. *Separability Clause.* If any part, section, or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 18. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 19. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,