



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS

Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 11383



Introduced by Representative Jernie Jett V. Nisay

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Journalists go where the story takes them, even when that means entering places where others are trying to escape. In conflict areas, disaster zones, and other dangerous surroundings, they risk their safety and their lives simply to bring the truth to the public.

Behind every journalist who goes into harm's way is a family waiting for their safe return. When injury, disability, or death occurs, the consequences are not borne by the journalist alone, but also by the loved ones who depend on them.

This proposed measure seeks to provide mandatory insurance coverage and hazard pay for journalists, field assigned media employees, and qualified freelance journalists exposed to dangerous conditions in the performance of their work. Their duty to inform the public should not come at the cost of leaving them and their families without adequate protection.

Those who risk their lives so that the public may know what is happening deserve the assurance that, when the worst happens, they and their families will not be left without support.

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


REP. JERNIE JETT V. NISAY
Pusong Pinoy Partylist



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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY INSURANCE COVERAGE, BENEFITS AND
HAZARD PAY FOR JOURNALISTS, EMPLOYEES OF MEDIA ENTITIES ON
FIELD ASSIGNMENTS AND FREELANCE JOURNALISTS,
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 "Journalists Protection Act of 2026."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policies and Objectives. - The State recognizes the invaluable role of the free press in the protection and promotion of democracy, good citizenship, civic mindedness, and good governance. Towards this end, the State shall provide the necessary support to ensure that the journalists are properly compensated and insured as they practice their profession.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

(a) Editorial and/or News Department - refers to editors-in-chief, news editors, columnists, deskmen, reporters, correspondents, and photographers in the case of the print media; and news editors, newscasters, commentators/announcers, field reporters, field correspondents, and cameramen in the case of the broadcast media;

(b) Freelance Journalist - one who pursues journalism and writes for any publication without being regularly employed by such publication, television or radio, wire, wireless broadcasting and online services;

1 (c) Front-line media persons - refers to those directly involved in data-gathering from
2 the field, and news reporting whether in print, on television or on radio, such as, but not
3 limited to, print reporters, cameramen, photojournalists, radio reporter and television
4 reporters;

5 (d) Journalism -the gathering, writing, editing, processing and dissemination of news
6 and production or publishing of newspapers and other such publications such as
7 magazines and pamphlets and other processes through wire, wireless, broadcasting,
8 and online services;

9 (e) Journalist - shall mean any member of the Editorial and/or News Department
10 including front-line media persons;

11 (f) Media entities - refers to all companies in the print and broadcast media (radio,
12 television and newspapers) that are involved in the dissemination of news and
13 information for public consumption and are duly accredited by and duly registered with
14 the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and by any reputable association of
15 media persons such as, but not limited to, the Philippine Information Agency (PIA),
16 Philippine Press Institute (PPI), Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines
17 (FOCAP), Photojournalists' Center of the Philippines (PCP), People's Alternative Media
18 Network (Altermidya), National Press Club (NPC), National Union of Journalists of the
19 Philippines (NUJP) and Kapisanan ng mga Broadcaster ng Pilipinas (KBP).

20 **Sec. 4. Coverage.** — This Act shall apply to all permanent, temporary, contractual,
21 and casual journalists employed or engaged to work by all existing media entities in the
22 Philippines, as well as freelance journalists plying their trade in war-torn,
23 diseasestricken, or otherwise perilous areas.

24 **Sec. 5. Mandatory Additional Insurance Benefits for Journalists, and Employees of**
25 *Media Entities on Field Assignments.* - In addition to the present insurance benefits
26 provided to journalists and employees of media entities on field assignments by the
27 Social Security System (SSS) as mandated under Republic Act No. 8282, otherwise
28 known as the Social Security Law, and by the Government Service Insurance System
29 (GSIS) under R.A. No. 8291, there shall be an additional insurance coverage to be
30 provided by media entities to journalists and their employees on field assignments and
31 front-line media persons which shall give the following minimum benefits:

32 1. Disability Benefits of Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P350,000.00) for all
33 mass media practitioners who shall suffer total or partial disability, whether permanent
34 or temporary, as a result of any injury sustained during performance of duty;

35 2. Death benefits amounting to Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000.00) for all
36 mass media practitioners and employees on field assignment who shall perish in the
37 line of duty; and

38 3. Reimbursement of actual medical costs up to Two Hundred Thousand Pesos
39 (P200,000.00) for all mass media practitioners and employees on field assignments

1 who shall be hospitalized or who shall require medical assistance for injuries sustained
2 while in the performance of duty.

3 The media entity shall have the option of selecting the insurance company and shall
4 be responsible for paying the insurance premiums for their journalists and employees.

5 **Sec. 6. Insurance for Freelance Journalists.** - The SSS and GSIS shall create a
6 special insurance program for freelance journalists that shall include, among others, a
7 coverage of risks incurred while working in war zones, conflict-stricken areas, and
8 calamityaffected places.

9 **Sec. 7. Grant of Hazard Pay.** - All qualified journalists, employees of media entities
10 on field assignments and freelance journalists deployed in calamity-affected places,
11 strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated stations, prison camps, mental
12 hospitals, radiation-exposed clinics, laboratories or disease-infested areas or in areas
13 declared under state of calamity or emergency for the duration thereof which expose
14 them to great danger, contagion, radiation, volcanic activity/eruption, occupational risks
15 or perils to life shall be compensated with hazard pay equivalent to at least twenty-five
16 percent (25%) of their gross monthly basic salary for the duration 28 of such
17 deployment.

18 **Sec. 8. Tax Exemption and Non-Diminution of Benefits.** - Hazard pay for journalists,
19 employees of media entities on field assignments and freelance journalists shall not be
20 subject to tax and nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, in any manner,
21 any benefit granted by existing laws, rules and regulations and other 33 issuances
22 especially favorable to said journalists and employees of media entities.

23 **Sec. 9. Prohibited Acts.** - The following acts shall be prohibited:

24 (a) Refusal or failure by a media entity to provide additional insurance coverage
25 referred to in Section of this Act;

26 (b) Refusal or failure by a media entity to provide hazard pay referred to in Section
27 7 of this Act;

28 (c) Refusal by an insurance company to enrol journalists, employees of mass media
29 entities on field assignment and freelance journalists on account of the nature of their
30 work; and

31 (d) Non-compliance with the rules and regulations that the GSIS, SSS, and PIA shall
32 adopt for the implementation of this Act.

33 **Sec. 10. Penal Provisions.** - Any person who shall wilfully commit any of the
34 prohibited acts enumerated under this Act shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine
35 not less than Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000.00) but not more than Five
36 Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than one (1) year
37 but not more than six (6) years or both depending upon the discretion of the court.

1 Provided, that if the offender is a public official, in addition to the penalties stated in
2 the preceding paragraph, the penalty of perpetual disqualification from office shall be
3 imposed.

4 In the case of associations, partnerships or corporations, the penalty shall be
5 imposed on the partner, president, chief operating officer, chief executive officer,
6 directors or officers responsible for the violation, and cancellation of registration with
7 the SEC.

8 **Sec. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - The GSIS, SSS, PIA, in
9 consultation with the NPC, NUJP, KBP and other duly registered media associations,
10 shall promulgate and issue the rules and regulations necessary to implement the
11 provisions of this Act.

12 **Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees,
13 presidential proclamations, letters of instructions, rules and regulations or parts thereof
14 which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
15 accordingly.

16 **Sec. 13. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional
17 or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof not affected shall continue to be in full force
18 and effect.

19 **Sec. 14. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following
20 its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in
21 the Philippines.

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23 *Approved,*