

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*First Regular Session* )



23 JAN 25 P 3:52

**SENATE**

**S. No. 1765**

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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Introduced by Senator MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID

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**AN ACT  
PROVIDING PROTECTION, SECURITY, AND BENEFITS  
FOR NEWS MEDIA WORKERS**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Journalists and media workers face serious risks in the performance of their tasks, which include gathering news, research, and dissemination of information to the public. Every step, especially in issues involving powerful individuals and organizations, are mired with threat to the safety and security of media workers

As recognized by the Constitution, these media workers aid in the overall development of our society including dealing and combating the proliferation of misinformation (unintentional mistakes), disinformation (false information that is intended to manipulate and cause damage), and malinformation (information that stems from the truth but is often exaggerated in a way that misleads and causes harm).

Truth and information are indispensable elements to our democracy. Well-informed voters elect better leaders and support more effective policies. As such, the protection and promotion of free press and strong and independent media should be considered as protection and promotion of our very democracy.

With this, it hereby proposed to make it a policy of the State to provide the necessary support to ensure that our media workers are protected, secured, and well-

compensated.

Unfortunately, despite having proven to be frontliners to various emergencies and to be faced with serious risks and threats, the media workers remain not well-protected and well-compensated. The protection, security, and benefits that they receive are not commensurate to the crucial tasks that they perform. Many of them do not enjoy the benefits of the Social Security System, Pag-IBIG, and Philhealth. Further, they are vulnerable to unfair labor practices.

Thus, this bill aims to ensure that they are, at the minimum, paid the wages, allowances, and benefits provided by law to workers. This will, in turn, motivate and encourage them to be responsible and accountable in performing their duties.

Under this bill, the Department of Labor and Employment will be tasked to create a News Media Tripartite Council to serve as a link among various stakeholders to promote the interests of the news media industry and to serve as an avenue to express their aspirations, discuss their programs, or settle conflicts.

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



**MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID**  
*Senator*

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**FOR NEWS MEDIA WORKERS**

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

2 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "News Media Workers'  
3 Welfare Act."

4 Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State considers news media workers as  
5 chroniclers of our history and pillars of our democracy. As such, it is hereby declared  
6 the policy of the State to promote and improve the social and economic well-being of  
7 media workers, including their living and working conditions. Towards this end, the  
8 State shall provide the necessary support to ensure that media workers are protected,  
9 secured, and well-compensated.

10 Section 3. *Objectives.* – This Act shall have the following objectives:

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

1 Section 4. *Coverage.* – This Act shall apply to all news media workers and  
2 entities in the public and private sector.

3 Section 5. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

4 a) *Blocktimers* refers to persons or organizations who buy airtime from radio  
5 and television franchise holders;

6 b) *Media entities* refer to persons or organizations, including media networks  
7 and operators that actively gather information of potential interest to a  
8 segment of the public, turn collected information into a distinct work or  
9 distribute that work to an audience within the Philippines; and

10 c) *News media workers* refer to persons who are legitimately engaged in  
11 journalism and news media practice, directly and indirectly, whether as a  
12 principal occupation or not.

13 Section 6. *Minimum Compensation.* – News media workers shall not receive  
14 less than the applicable minimum wage rate prescribed by the Regional Tripartite  
15 Wages and Productivity Board and shall be entitled to overtime pay and night shift  
16 premiums, as well as other forms of compensation provided by Presidential Decree  
17 No. 442, as amended, otherwise known as the “Labor Code of the Philippines”, and  
18 other related laws and issuances.

19 Section 7. *Social Security and Welfare Benefits.* – News media workers shall be  
20 covered by the Social Security System, the Home Development Mutual Fund or the  
21 Pag-IBIG Fund, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation upon employment.  
22 The payment of monthly contributions shall be jointly shared by the news media  
23 worker and the employer, when applicable, in accordance with existing rules and  
24 regulations. News media workers shall also be entitled to retirement benefits as  
25 provided under R.A. No. 11199, otherwise known as the “Social Security Act of 2018”.

26 Section 8. *Hazard Pay.* – News media workers required to physically report for  
27 work in dangerous areas such as strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated  
28 stations, disease-infested areas, or in areas declared under a state of calamity or  
29 emergency for the duration thereof which expose them to great danger, contagion,

1 radiation, volcanic activity or eruption, occupational risks or perils to life as determined  
2 by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), shall be compensated with a  
3 hazard pay in the minimum amount of Five hundred pesos (P500.00) per pay, with no  
4 deduction.

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

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

12 Section 9. *Mandatory Additional Insurance Benefits.* – Employers shall provide  
13 additional insurance coverage to news media workers as follows:

- 14 a) Death benefit of Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) for each news  
15 media worker who shall perish in the line of duty;
- 16 b) Disability benefit of up to Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) for  
17 each news media worker who shall suffer total or partial disability, whether  
18 permanent or temporary, arising from any injury sustained in the line of  
19 duty; and
- 20 c) Medical insurance benefit for each news media worker of up to One hundred  
21 thousand pesos (P100,000.00).

22 Section 10. *Security of Tenure.* – News media workers shall be deemed as  
23 regular employees after six (6) months from the start of employment, regardless of  
24 the nature of employment. However, the said six (6) months period shall be computed  
25 cumulatively if a news media worker is repeatedly engaged for shorter periods within  
26 a period of two (2) years. An employer shall not terminate the services of a news  
27 media worker except for a just or authorized cause, and with the observance of  
28 procedural due process.

1           Section 11. *Settlement of Disputes.* – The DOLE shall have exclusive jurisdiction  
2 over all labor-related disputes and claims under this Act provided that the DOLE shall  
3 likewise establish in the implementing rules alternative modes of dispute resolution.

4           Section 12. *Compliance.* – The DOLE shall monitor compliance with the  
5 provisions of this Act.

6           Section 13. *Administrative Penalties.* – Violations of the provisions of this Act  
7 shall be subject to applicable penalties provided in Presidential Decree No. 442, as  
8 amended, and other related laws and issuances.

9           Section 14. *News Media Tripartite Council.* – The DOLE shall initiate the creation  
10 of the News Media Tripartite Council which shall serve as a link among various  
11 stakeholders, provide a platform where news media workers and employers can agree  
12 upon mutually beneficial policies that will promote the interests of the media industry,  
13 and serve as an avenue to express their aspirations, discuss their programs or settle  
14 conflicts.

15           Section 15. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days  
16 from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Labor and Employment shall, in  
17 coordination with media groups, associations, publishers, guilds, and other concerned  
18 groups, issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this  
19 Act.

20           Section 16. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is declared  
21 invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall  
22 remain in full force and effect.

23           Section 17. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions,  
24 rules and regulations contrary or inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby  
25 amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

26           Section 18. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
27 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

28           *Approved,*