



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

**Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL NO. 6245



Introduced by Representative Rudys Caesar G. Fariñas I

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Media is the fourth estate – they are the watchdogs of our constitutional system and are a vital part of our democratic system. Therefore, it should be the policy of the State to promote and improve the social and economic well-being of media workers, including their living and working conditions. Towards this end, the State must provide the necessary support to ensure that media workers are protected, secured, and well-compensated.

This measure seeks to achieve this goal, among others, by ensuring that media workers shall be deemed as regular employees after six (6) months from the start of employment, regardless of the nature of employment. Furthermore, 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. Likewise, this bill ensures that the Social Security System, the Home Development Mutual Fund or the Pag-IBIG Fund, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, upon employment, cover media workers. They shall also be entitled to retirement benefits as provided under RA No. 11199, otherwise known as the "Social Security Act of 2018."

Finally, employers who fail to comply with the protections provided by this bill shall be liable for penalties and fines.

Hence, this representation seeks the passage of this measure.


RUDYS CAESAR G. FARIÑAS I



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

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

1
2 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Media Workers’*
3 *Welfare Act*”.

4
5 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to promote
6 and improve the social and economic well-being of media workers, including
7 their living and working conditions. Towards this end, the State shall provide the
8 necessary support to ensure that media workers are protected, secured, and
9 well-compensated.

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

- 12
13 a) Ensure that media workers shall, at the minimum, be paid the wages,
14 allowances and benefits provided by law to workers;
15
16 b) Motivate and encourage media workers to be truthful and responsible
17 sharers of information; and
18
19 c) Promote an atmosphere that is conducive to a productive, free, and
20 fruitful media work.

21
22 **SEC. 4. Coverage.** – This Act shall apply to all media workers and media
23 entities in the private sector.

24
25 **SEC. 5. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:
26

- 1 a) *Blocktimer* refers to one who buys airtime from radio and television
2 franchise holders;
3
4 b) *Media entities* refer to persons or organizations, including media networks
5 and operators that actively gather information of potential interest to a
6 segment of the public, turn collected information into a distinct work or
7 distribute that work to an audience within the Philippines; and
8
9 c) *Media workers* refer to those who are legitimately engaged in news media
10 practice, directly or indirectly, whether as a principal occupation or not.
11

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

19 **SEC. 7. Social Security and Welfare Benefits.** – Media workers shall be
20 covered by the Social Security System, the Home Development Mutual Fund or
21 the Pag-IBIG Fund, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation upon
22 employment. The payment of monthly contributions shall be jointly shared by
23 the media worker and the employer, when applicable, in accordance with
24 existing rules and regulations. Media workers shall also be entitled to retirement
25 benefits as provided under RA No. 11199, otherwise known as the “Social
26 Security Act of 2018”.
27

28 **SEC. 8. Hazard Pay.** – Media workers required to physically report for
29 work in dangerous areas such as strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or
30 isolated stations, disease-infested areas or in areas declared under a state of
31 calamity or emergency for the duration thereof which expose them to great
32 danger, contagion, radiation, volcanic activity or eruption, occupational risks or
33 perils to life as determined by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE),
34 shall be compensated with a hazard pay in the minimum amount of Five hundred
35 pesos (₱500.00) per day, with no diminution, which shall be computed as
36 follows:
37

38
$$\text{Hazard pay} = \text{₱}500 \times \text{number of days physically reporting for work in}$$

39 *dangerous areas*
40

41 The base amount of the hazard pay of media workers may be increased as
42 decided upon by the News Media Tripartite Council created under Section 15 of
43 this Act.
44

45 Employers shall also provide media workers covering events in dangerous
46 areas with basic safety gear and equipment such as bulletproof vests and
47 helmets, first-aid kits, fire protection jackets, face shields, medical grade
48 protective equipment, harnesses, safety shoes, and life vests.
49

50 **SEC. 9. Mandatory Additional Insurance Benefits.** – Employers shall
51 provide additional insurance coverage to media workers as follows:
52

- 53 a) Death benefit of Two hundred thousand pesos (₱200,000.00) for each
54 media worker who shall perish in the line of duty;
55

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

5
6 c) Medical insurance benefit for each media worker of up to One hundred
7 thousand pesos (P100,000.00).
8

9 **SEC. 10. Security of Tenure.** – Media workers shall be deemed as regular
10 employees after six (6) months from the start of employment, regardless of the
11 nature of employment. However, the said six (6) months period shall be
12 computed cumulatively if a media worker is repeatedly engaged for shorter
13 periods. An employer shall not terminate the services of a media worker except
14 for a just or authorized cause, and with the observance of procedural due
15 process.
16

17 **SEC. 11. Settlement of Disputes.** – All labor-related disputes shall be
18 elevated to the DOLE regional office which has jurisdiction over the workplace.
19

20 **SEC. 12. Liability of Media Entities.** – Media entities shall be
21 responsible for all contents released under their name. Owners of media entities
22 or franchise holders shall be liable for claims arising from gross negligence,
23 malicious acts, and violation of laws in connection with the work of blocktimers
24 and media workers, regardless of the nature of engagement, except when the
25 owners of the media entities or the franchise holders are able to prove that due
26 diligence was exercised or that the fault is attributable solely to the concerned
27 blocktimer or media worker. Any agreement to the contrary shall be void.
28

29 **SEC. 13. Compliance.** – The DOLE shall monitor compliance with the
30 provisions of this Act.
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32 **SEC. 14. Administrative Penalties.** – Violations of the provisions of this
33 Act shall be subject to applicable penalties provided in Presidential Decree No.
34 442, as amended, and other related laws and issuances.
35

36 **SEC. 15. News Media Tripartite Council.** – The DOLE shall initiate the
37 creation of the News Media Tripartite Council which shall serve as a link among
38 various stakeholders, provide a platform where media workers and employers
39 can agree upon mutually beneficial policies that will promote the interests of the
40 media industry, and serve as an avenue to express their aspirations, discuss
41 their programs or settle conflicts.

42 **SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90)
43 days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Labor and Employment shall,
44 in coordination with media groups, associations, publishers, guilds and other
45 concerned groups, issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement the
46 provisions of this Act.
47

48 **SEC. 17. Separability Clause.** – If any part, section or provision of this
49 Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by
50 such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.
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52 **SEC. 18. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules,
53 and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed
54 or modified accordingly.

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SEC. 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,