

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1092



Introduced by Representatives
HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR. and ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT FACILITATION
SERVICE NETWORK FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY (PWD) THROUGH THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERSONS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT
FACILITATION OFFICE IN EVERY PROVINCE, KEY CITY AND OTHER
STRATEGIC AREAS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the duty of the State to promote equal employment opportunities for all. The 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that:

“The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all.”

The Constitution also mandates Congress to give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all people to human dignity and that reduce social, economic and political inequalities.

To protect the welfare of persons with disabilities, Congress enacted Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 (1982), otherwise known as the “Accessibility Law”. In 1991, Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons was promulgated, providing for the rehabilitation, self-development, and self-reliance of disabled persons and their integration. The benefits and privileges granted by the said law was subsequently expanded through the enactment of its amendatory laws, Republic Act Nos. 9442 and 10754. The Philippine Government is also a signatory to the ILO Convention No. 159, otherwise known as the “Convention on Vocational Rehabilitation of Persons with Disability”.

The United Nations has also called upon government agencies all over the world to develop and provide the needed programs to promote the welfare of persons with disabilities in their proclamation of the “Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons” from 1993 to 2002 and its extension to another decade from 2003-2012, which emphasized a paradigm shift from a charity-based approach to a rights-based approach to disability.

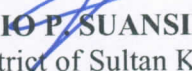
In accordance with the measures mentioned above, this bill seeks to promote employment opportunities for persons with disability (PWDs) and strengthen the government’s existing employment facilitation service machinery for PWDs, particularly at the local level. Specifically, this measure aims to establish a “Person with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO)” in all capital towns of provinces, key cities and other

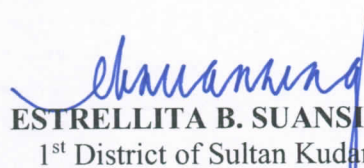
strategic areas, which shall be community-based and maintained largely by local government units (LGUs) and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs). The said Office shall ensure prompt, appropriate and timely employment facilitation services for persons with disability, and the provision of relevant information, education and communication (IEC) materials for the benefit of PWDs seeking productive employment opportunities.

The PWDEFO will provide a venue where PWDs could find and explore various employment options and seek training assistance for possible employment ventures, and will serve as a referral and information center for the various services and programs being provided by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and other government agencies with respect to the welfare and employment of PWDs.

Through the employment opportunities provided by the State, we will aid not only with boosting the self-confidence of PWDs, but also with enabling them to become independent and productive members of our society.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.¹


HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.
2nd District of Sultan Kudarat


ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING
1st District of Sultan Kudarat

¹ This bill was filed by Rep. Horacio P. Suansing, Jr. and Rep. Estrellita B. Suansing in the 16th Congress and 17th Congress.

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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 “Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO) Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is a declared policy of the State to promote employment opportunities for persons with disability and strengthen existing employment facilitation service machinery of the government for persons with disability, particularly at the local levels.

SECTION 3. *Establishment of the Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO).* – There is hereby established in all capital towns of provinces, key cities and other strategic area a Person with Disability Employment Facilitation Office (PWDEFO), hereinafter referred to as “PWDEFO”, which shall be community-based and maintained largely by local government units (LGUs) and a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs).

The PWDEFO shall be linked to the regional offices of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for coordination and technical supervision, and to the DOLE Central Office, to constitute the national employment service network.

SECTION 4. *Objectives of the PWDEFO.* – The Persons with Disability Employment Facilitation Office shall endure the prompt, appropriate, and timely employment facilitation service for persons with disability and the provision of relevant information, education and communication (IEC) materials for the benefits of the PWDs seeking for productive employment opportunities.

Specifically, the PWDEFO shall:

- a. Provide a venue where PWDs could find and explore various employment options and seek training assistance for possible employment venture;
- b. Serve as referral and information center for the various services and programs being provided by the DOLE and other government agencies with respect to the welfare and employment of PWDs;
- c. Provide PWDs with sufficient information on employment opportunities and labor market situation in the area; and
- d. Network with other PWDEFOs within the province and/or region on employment opportunities for PWDs.

SECTION 5. *Functions of the PWDEFO.* – The PWDEFO shall have the following functions:

- a. Encourage employers to submit to the PWDEFO on a regular basis a list of job vacancies available for persons with disability in their respective establishments in order to facilitate the exchange of labor market information between PWDs who seek employment and employers by providing employment information services to PWDs jobseekers and recruitment assistance to employers;
- b. Develop training modules for PWDs in order to improve their skills and comply with the skills requirement of the employer;
- c. Provide PWDs with access to the various livelihood and self-employment programs offered by both government and non-government organizations (NGOs) at the provincial, city, municipal, and barangay levels by undertaking referrals for such programs;
- d. Undertake employability enhancement trainings/seminars for PWDs, as well as those PWDs who would like to enhance their employability;
- e. Provide occupational counseling, career guidance, mass motivation and values development activities to PWDs;
- f. Conduct pre-employment counseling and orientation to PWDs;
- g. Provide reintegration assistance services to PWDs who are retrenched or terminated; and
- h. Perform such functions as willfully carry out the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Other Services of the PWDEFO.* – In addition to the functions enumerated in the preceding Section, every PWDEFO shall also undertake the following programs and activities:

- a. Jobs Fairs – These shall be conducted periodically all over the country to bring together in one venue PWD job seekers and employers for immediate matching;
- b. Livelihood and Self-Employment Bazaars – These will give the PWDs information on the wide array of livelihood programs they choose to avail of, particularly in the rural areas;

- c. Work Appreciation Program (WAP) – This program aims to develop the values of work appreciation and ethics by exposing the PWDs to actual work situations; and
- d. Other programs/activities developed by DOLE to enhance provision of employment assistance to PWDs, particularly for special groups of disadvantaged workers.

SECTION 7. *Role of DOLE, LGUs and NGOs.* – Upon the request of the LGUs and NGOs which do not have existing PWDEFOs, the establishment, operation and maintenance of PWDEFOs shall be undertaken by the DOLE. The DOLE shall enter into memoranda of agreements (MOAs) with the concerned LGUs and NGOs for the establishment, operation, and maintenance of PWDEFO in their respective areas of jurisdiction, and the institutionalization of existing PWDEFOs.

It shall be the responsibility of the DOLE to:

- a. Establish and maintain a computerized PWDs manpower registry of skills and employment and business opportunities to facilitate the provision and packaging of employment assistance to PWD clients and the setting-up of regional job clearance systems as part of the overall employment network;
- b. Provide office space, equipment and/or supplies, as well as the necessary personnel complement to manage, operate and maintain the PWDEFO;
- c. Designate, in consultation with the LGU or NGO concerned, a qualified project manager and/or key personnel who shall be responsible for the operation and management of the PWDEFO;
- d. Provide technical assistance and allied support services to the PWDEFO;
- e. Train PWDEFO personnel in the various aspects of employment facilitation functions;
- f. Extend/facilitate such other package of employment services through the provision of employment assistance to PWD clients of the LGU or NGO concerned, including the conduct of jobs fairs and other activities; and
- g. Undertake, monitor, assess and evaluate the PWDEFO program implementation.

SECTION 8. *Administration of the PWDEFO Program.* – The DOLE shall be primarily responsible for the administration of the PWDEFO Program through the Bureau of Local Employment, as well as its regional offices throughout the country. The Secretary of Labor and Employment, in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and in consultation with the presidents of the various local government leagues, namely the League of Provinces, the League of Cities, the League of Municipalities, and the League of Barangays, shall accordingly promulgate, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the Program.

SECTION 9. *Conduct of an Annual Nationwide Disability Prevalence Survey.* – Realizing the need to develop a system of reliable information on disability, the Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the DOLE, and the National Council on the Welfare of Disabled Persons, is hereby mandated to conduct an annual Nationwide Disability Prevalence Survey.

The objectives of the Annual Nationwide Disability Prevalence Survey shall include the following:

- a. To determine the prevalence of disability in the country in general and in the various regions of the country in particular;
- b. To determine the distribution of disability in the country and the various regions with respect to age, sex, and type of disability; and
- c. To determine the status of rehabilitation and the rehabilitation needs of PWDs in the country.

SECTION 10. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the existing appropriations of the DOLE and its other operating agencies. Thereafter, the amounts needed for the full implementation of this Act shall be included in the budget of the DOLE in the succeeding annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation

Approved,