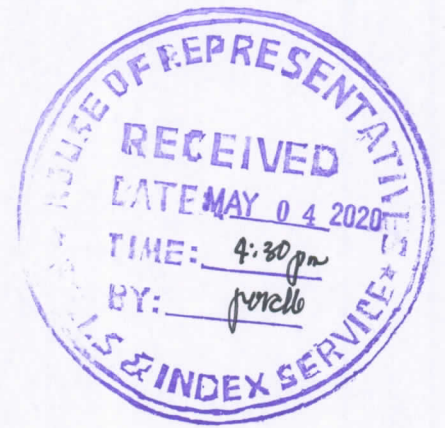




Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City



**EIGHTEENTH (18<sup>th</sup>) CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 6677**

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Introduced by REP. JOSE CHRISTOPHER Y. BELMONTE

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#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Disruptions to business operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted to the detriment of the economic conditions of many Filipino families. With the extended implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine in Luzon and in other provinces since the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, many workers who rely on their day-to-day labor for survival now gravely experience economic decline in different ways. Some are faced with significant labor income losses with unemployment estimated at 1.2 million Filipino workers.<sup>1</sup> Whereas, unprotected workers, including contractual workers, are disproportionately hit as they do not have access to paid or sick leave mechanisms, and are less protected by conventional social protection mechanisms.<sup>2</sup>

However, these disruptions do not mean that we ought to resume to regular programming in the workplace. It would only prove to be more disadvantageous and even deadlier for our workers as long as the virus is not fully contained. It is enshrined in no less than the 1987 Constitution that the State affirms labor as a primary social economic force and that it shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare.

According to the International Labor Organization, International Labor Standards entail three key pillars to fight COVID-19: (1) supporting employment and incomes, (2) stimulating the economy and labor demand, and (2) protecting workers in the workplace. This measure aims to uphold the protection of workers in the workplace by strengthening occupational safety and

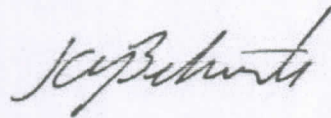
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/733277/1-2-million-workers-face-temporary-job-loss-due-to-covid-19-dof-chief/story/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_738753.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_738753.pdf)

health standards, adapting conducive work arrangements, providing health access for workers, and expanding access to paid sick and care leaves.

Beyond Republic Act No. 11058 or "An Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof," in these crucial times, we should ascertain that the State is able to meet the specific needs of our workers. Ultimately, no worker should feel that they are being neglected and exploited by their own country.

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





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Introduced by REP. JOSE CHRISTOPHER Y. BELMONTE

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS TO**  
**PREVENT THE SPREAD OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

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

1       SECTION. 1. ***Declaration of Policy.*** – The State shall protect every worker against  
2 injury, sickness, or death through safe and healthy working conditions in accordance to their  
3 workplace needs shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby assuring the conservation of  
4 valuable manpower resources and the prevention of loss or damage to lives and properties to  
5 mitigate the damages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and containing the spread of  
6 infection.

7  
8       SEC. 2. ***Coverage.*** – This Act shall apply to all establishments, projects and sites, and  
9 all other places where work is undertaken in all branches of economic activity, including:

- 10       (a) Establishments located inside special economic zones and other investment  
11       promotion agencies (e.g., Philippine Economic Zone Authority, Clark  
12       Development Corporation);  
13       (b) Utilities engaged in air, sea, and land transportation;  
14       (c) Industries such as mining, fishing, construction, agriculture, and maritime.; and



1 (d) Contractors and subcontractors, their representatives, or successors in interest  
2 including those engaged in the projects of the public sector.  
3

4 SEC. 3. *Duties of Employers and Managers.* Every employer, contractor or  
5 subcontractor, if any, and any person who manages, controls or supervises the work being  
6 undertaken shall:

7 (a) *Overall Responsibility on Occupational Safety and Health.* Employers and Managers  
8 shall assume overall responsibility to ensure that all necessary preventive and protective  
9 measures are taken to minimize occupational safety and health risks;  
10

11 (b) *Provision of Adequate Training and Information.* Employers and Managers shall  
12 provide information, instruction and training on occupational safety and health,  
13 including

14 (i) Refresher training on infection prevention and control (IPC); and

15 (ii) Use, putting on, taking off and disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE);  
16

17 (c) *Provision of Adequate Supplies and Equipment.* Employers and Managers shall  
18 provide adequate IPC and PPE supplies (masks, gloves, goggles, gowns, hand sanitizer,  
19 soap and water, cleaning supplies) in sufficient quantity to healthcare or other staff  
20 caring for suspected or confirmed patients of emerging infectious diseases;  
21

22 (d) *Provision of Education Test and Treatment on Emerging Infectious Diseases.*  
23 Employers and Managers shall educate personnel with technical updates on emerging  
24 infectious diseases and provide appropriate tools to assess, triage, test and treat patients  
25 and to share infection prevention and control information with patients and the public,  
26 *Provided,* That all workers, including new hires, shall be provided training and  
27 information for all types of hazards in the workplace in a language and dialect that  
28 workers can understand, *Provided further,* That training and information materials used  
29 shall be made readily available and accessible to workers;  
30

31 (e) *Provision of Security Measures.* Employers and Managers shall, as needed, provide  
32 with appropriate security measures for personal safety;  
33

1 (f) ***Provision of a Proper Incident Report Mechanism.*** Provide a blame-free environment  
2 for workers to report on incidents, such as exposures to blood or bodily fluids from the  
3 respiratory system or to cases of violence, and to adopt measures for immediate follow-  
4 up, including support to victims;

5  
6 (g) ***Health Protocol Advice to Workers.*** Employers and Managers shall advise workers on  
7 self-assessment, symptom reporting and staying home when ill;

8  
9 (h) ***Observe Mandatory Working Breaks to Workers.*** Employers and Managers shall  
10 maintain appropriate working hours with breaks;

11  
12 (i) ***Provision of Consultation Mechanisms with Health and Occupational Experts for***  
13 ***Occupational Safety.*** Employers and Managers shall consult with health and  
14 occupational experts on occupational safety and health aspects of their work and notify  
15 the labor inspectorate of cases of occupational diseases;

16  
17 (j) ***Ensure a Safety Work Environment.*** Employers and Managers shall ensure a safe  
18 work environment, including the risk assessments that will allow workers to avoid  
19 imminent danger.

20 (i) Prohibit the return to a work situation where there is continuing or serious  
21 danger to life or health, until the employer has taken any necessary remedial  
22 action;

23 (ii) Allow workers to exercise the right to remove themselves from a work situation  
24 that they have reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and  
25 serious danger to their life or health. When a health worker exercises this right,  
26 they shall be protected from any undue consequences;

27  
28 (k) ***Honor Just Compensation to Workers.*** Employers and Managers shall honor the right  
29 to compensation, rehabilitation and curative services if infected with COVID-19  
30 following exposure in the workplace. This would be considered occupational exposure  
31 and resulting illness would be considered an occupational disease; and

32  
33 (l) ***Provision of Access to Mental Health Services.*** Employers and Managers shall provide  
34 access to mental health and counselling resources;



1  
2       **SEC. 4. *Workers' Right to Compensation, Rehabilitation, and Curative Services.*** –  
3 Every worker shall have the right to compensation, rehabilitation, and curative services if  
4 infected with emerging infectious diseases following exposure in the workplace, and mental  
5 health and counselling services if affected by the workplace hazards that negatively affect one's  
6 mental health. These would be considered occupational exposure and resulting illness would  
7 be considered an occupation disease.  
8

9       **SEC 5. *Workers' Right to Free and Adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)***  
10 ***and Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Supplies*** - Every employer, contractor or  
11 subcontractor, if any, shall provide their workers, free of charge, adequate IPC and PPE  
12 supplies for any part of the body that may be exposed to hazards, such as masks, gloves,  
13 goggles, gowns, protective face shields, hand sanitizer, soap and water, and cleaning supplies  
14 whenever necessary by reason of the hazardous work process or infectious hazards capable  
15 of causing COVID-19 infection. The PPE provision should be subjected to the following:  
16

- 17       (a) All PPE must be of appropriate size, weight, and type to specific workers exposed to  
18 hazards from which PPE are meant to ensure effective protection.;  
19  
20       (b) Issuance of PPE and IPC supplies shall be supplemented by training on the application,  
21 use, handling, cleaning, maintenance, and disposal of said PPE and IPC supplies in  
22 accordance with the DOH's recommendations.; and  
23  
24       (c) Failure to provide appropriate PPE in high-risk workplace activities shall give rise to  
25 the right of the worker to refuse unsafe work.  
26

27       **SEC. 6. *Workers' Right to Refuse Unsafe Work*** - The worker has the right of refusal  
28 to work or remove themselves from a work situation without threat or reprisal from the  
29 employer if, as determined by DOLE, there is continuing or serious danger to life or health in  
30 the workplace.  
31

- 32       (a) ***Work Stoppage and Notification as Injury Preventive Measure.*** As a preventive  
33 measure, the safety officer may, following his/her own determination and without fear  
34 of reprisal, implement a work stoppage or suspend operations in cases of imminent

1 danger. The employer, safety officer or worker shall immediately notify the DOLE that  
2 an imminent danger situation exists in the workplace  
3

4 (b) ***Right of Refusal until the lifting of the Work Stoppage Order.*** The employer or safety  
5 officer cannot require the workers to return to work where there is a continuing  
6 imminent danger. A worker may also refuse to work until the lifting of Work Stoppage  
7 Order (WSO) after implementing the appropriate corrective measures.  
8

9 (c) ***Reassignment to a Safe Area of Work.*** Workers affected by the existence of an  
10 imminent danger situation may be temporarily assigned to other areas within the  
11 workplace provided there is no impending issue with safety and health.  
12

13 SEC. 7. ***Role of the Department of Labor and Employment.*** – The Department of  
14 Labor and Employment (DOLE) shall be the lead agency assigned for agency coordination and  
15 maintenance of database mechanisms on a digital labor compliance system. The following are  
16 the dynamics:  
17

18 (a) ***DOLE as Lead Agency Convener.*** The DOLE shall ensure the coordinated  
19 effort and cooperation among agency departments, including the Department of  
20 Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Energy, Department of  
21 Transportation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Public Works and  
22 Highways, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of the Interior and  
23 Local Government, Department of Health, Philippine Economic Zone  
24 Authority, Department of Information and Communications Technology and all  
25 other government agencies, including local government units, within 60 days  
26 from the issuance of the implementing rules and regulations of this Act,  
27 pursuant to RA 11058.  
28

29 (b) ***Inclusion of Occupational Safety Hazards on Emerging Infectious Diseases***  
30 ***in the DOLE Labor Law Digital Database.*** The DOLE shall include a section  
31 on digital monitoring on labor compliances, enforcement and workplace disease  
32 tracking on occupational safety for emerging infectious diseases, in pursuant to  
33 RA 11058.  
34

1  
2       SEC. 8. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or section of this Act is declared  
3 unconstitutional, the other provisions and sections not affected thereby shall remain in full  
4 force and effect.

5  
6       SEC. 9. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders and their  
7 implementing rules inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed,  
8 amended, or modified accordingly.

9  
10       SEC. 10. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect immediately after its publication in at  
11 least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

12  
13       *Approved,*