

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6114



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**Introduced by Representative Ron P. Salo**

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### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**


The Philippines is considered as having one of the freest press in Asia. Our government views the role of media as indispensable in the checks and balance of the government. Often, the media are referred to as the Fourth Estate because they yield significant influence in society.

The risk that media professionals face in performing their functions is very high – they oftentimes risk their lives covering the most dangerous places in order to report news, provide information, and update on societal affairs. As purveyors of truth, media professionals risk their lives in order to bring to people awareness regarding local, national and international events. They provide the essential vehicle for the exchange of ideas between cultures and nations. And yet, there are very few laws that protect the rights and welfare of the media professionals in the country. Thus, it is necessary to enact a law that will promote and protect the rights of media professionals.

In this bill, it is proposed that a Magna Carta for Media Professionals shall be established. This Magna Carta shall ensure a living wage for the media professionals, provide an atmosphere conducive to productive work as well as development programs that will deepen the practice of their profession, inculcate and stress the value of ethics, and promote the defense and protection of freedom and human rights of media professionals and their organizations.

Further, in view of the various risks that media professionals face in the performance of their functions, it is mandated that media professionals on field assignments shall be covered by additional insurance benefits as well as a corresponding hazard pay. The proposal seeks to ensure that the media professionals are properly compensated and insured as they pursue their profession.

Hence, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**RON P. SALO**  
KABAYAN Partylist

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA FOR MEDIA PROFESSIONALS**

*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 "*Magna Carta for Media Professionals*".

**SEC. 2. Definition of Terms.** – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a) "*Media Professionals*" shall refer to persons who are regularly or professionally engaged in the collection, processing and dissemination of information to the public via any means of mass communication, including journalists, cameramen and photographers, technical supporting staff, drivers and interpreters, editors, translators, publishers, broadcasters, printers and distributors.
- b) "*Media entities*" shall refer to all companies in the print and broadcast media (newspapers, radio, television and online services) that are involved in the dissemination of news and information for public consumption and are duly accredited by any reputable association of media persons;
- c) "*Media Organizations*" shall refer to groups, unions, clubs, or associations of media professionals organized for the purpose of advancing the interests of media professionals.
- d) "*Front-line media persons*" shall refer to those directly involved in data-gathering from the field and news reporting whether in print on television, on radio, or online services such as but not limited to, print reporters, cameramen, photo-journalists, radio reporters and television reporters;
- e) "*Freelance Journalist*" shall refer to a person who pursues journalism as a profession without a long-term commitment to any one media entity.



**SEC. 3. Coverage.** – This Act shall cover all media professionals as defined herein.

**SEC. 4. Philippine Council for Media Professionals.** – There shall be created a Philippine Council for Media Professionals (PCMP) that shall serve as the development center for journalism. It shall also act as a self-regulatory body for media professionals.

**SEC. 5. Composition of the Philippine Council for Media Professionals.** – The PCMP shall be composed of media organizations duly recognized by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The organizations shall be represented to the PCMP by their respective head or president. The following organizations shall compose the Council:

- a) National Press Club;
- b) Philippine Press Institute;
- c) Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas;
- d) Manila Overseas Press Club;
- e) National Union of the Journalists of the Philippines;
- f) Publishers Association of the Philippines;
- g) Federation of Provincial Press Club; and
- h) All local and international media entities operating in the Philippines; and
- i) Other organizations admitted by the Council.

The PCMP shall elect its own officers and shall adopt its internal rules of procedure.

**SEC. 6. Functions of the Philippine Council for Media Professionals.** – The PCMP shall have the following functions:

- a) Accredite media professionals and media organizations as defined in this Act;
- b) Establish criteria for accreditation, including passing a Media Professional Examination;
- c) Adopt a Code of Ethics for Journalists;
- d) Act on complaints on violations of the Code of Ethics by media professionals, whether accredited or not;
- e) Mete penalties, including removal of accreditation, to erring media professionals or media organization;
- f) Administer Media Professional Examination for either print, television, radio, on-line services, or photo journalism, and collect reasonable fees from examinees;
- g) Collect reasonable membership fees from accredited media professionals and media organizations;
- h) Conduct capacity-building and training among media professionals;
- i) Create an updated database and directory of accredited media professionals;
- j) Administer the PCMP fund created under Section 14 of this Act;

- k) Conduct annual awarding ceremonies to recognize accredited media professionals and media organizations who are outstanding in their fields of practice; and
- l) Perform other functions which are necessary in order to achieve the objectives of this Act.

**SEC. 7. Classification of Media Professionals.** – Media Professionals shall be classified into two categories; namely: 1) Accredited Media Professionals, and 2) Non-Accredited Media Professionals.

Accredited media professionals shall be issued an Accreditation Identification Card issued by the PCMP and shall be required to wear such at all times when covering their beat or gathering news for special assignments. Accredited media professionals shall be entitled to all benefits and privileges accorded to them by law, by their employers and by the PCMP.

Non-accredited media professionals shall enjoy only those benefits and privileges accorded to them by their employers. The absence of an accreditation, however, shall in no way bar them from exercising their duties and rights as media professionals.

The PCMP shall establish separate criteria for accreditation to media professionals already in practice for at least ten years, including exemption from Media Professional Examination.

Media entities may require their media professional employees to be accredited by the PCMP.

**SEC. 8. Salaries and Wages.** – In the determination of the salary scale of media professionals to where they are employed, the following factors, among others, shall be considered by their employers:

- a) Comparable wages and benefits in other occupations with the same degree of training and qualifications;
- b) Prevailing cost of living; and
- c) Imperatives of economic and social development.

**SEC. 9. Code of Ethics for Media Professionals.** – A Code of Ethics (code) for Media Professionals shall be promulgated by the PCMP within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act. The Code shall be applicable to all media professionals, whether accredited or not.

Violations of the said Code shall be a ground for appropriate sanctions as may be determined by the PCMP after due process. Such sanctions shall include but not limited to suspension or permanent withdrawal of accreditation, and suspension of benefits and/or privileges accorded to accredited media professionals or dropping from the roster of accredited media professionals.



The PCMP may *motu proprio*, or through complaint by a concerned party, including the general public, investigate any violation of the Code. The PCMP shall have original jurisdiction over cases involving violations of the provisions of the Code.

The Code of Ethics for Media Professionals shall form part of the core subjects in the school curriculum for journalism.

**SEC. 10. Protection and Security.** – Any warrant of arrest or search issued against any media practitioner accused of any offense related to the practice of his/her profession shall be served in coordination with the PCMP or the local media organization in the place where the media practitioner operates.

The Council or the appropriate media organization shall be immediately informed of any media professional under custodial investigation. Said media professional shall have the right to counsel.

Any citizen's arrest of a media professional pursuant to the provisions of the new Rules of Court on the nature of the offense involved shall be immediately communicated by the responsible Commanding Officer of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) or any of the Departments of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Task Force or the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to the PCMP, or their duly designated officers, or to the local media organization, if outside Metro Manila. The arresting element shall, with dispatch, inform the PCMP or the local media organization of the details thereof, such as, but not limited to, the place and time of the arrest, offense charged and place of confinement.

Any reported killing, abduction, or harassment of a media professional, regardless of whether or not the suspect/s are law enforcers, shall be investigated with dispatch and the result shall be made known to the PCMP, or local media organization, or his/her employer media company.

Within the limits of the Constitution and existing laws, utmost cooperation and courtesies shall be extended by law enforcers to ensure the unhampered media exercise of their profession.

**SEC. 11. Mandatory Additional Insurance Benefits for Media Professionals of Media Entities on Field Assignments.** – In addition to the existing insurance benefits provided by the Social Security System (SSS) to those employed by private media entities, or by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) under R.A. 8291 for media professionals employed in the government, the employer, whether private or the government, shall provide additional insurance coverage to media professionals on field assignments and front-line media persons with the following minimum benefits:

- a) Death Benefits of at least Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 200,000.00) for media professionals on field assignment who shall perish in the line of duty;
- b) Disability benefits of at least Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 200,000.00) for all media professionals who shall suffer total or partial



disability, whether permanent or temporary, arising from any injury sustained in the line of duty; and

- c) Reimbursement of actual medical expenses incurred by the media professionals or employees on field assignment who were hospitalized or who required medical attendance for injuries sustained while in the line of duty.

The media entity shall pay for the premium of the insurance policy.

**SEC. 12. Coverage of Insurance.** – This Act shall apply to all permanent, temporary, contractual and casual front-line media professionals employed by all existing media entities in the Philippines and freelance journalists.

**SEC. 13. Grant of Hazard Pay.** – All qualified media professionals employed by media entities on field assignments and freelance journalists deployed in difficult areas, strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated stations, prison camps, mental hospitals, radiation-exposed clinics, laboratories or disease-infested areas or in areas declared under state of calamity or emergency for the duration thereof which expose them to great danger, contagion, radiation, volcanic activity/eruption, occupational risks or perils to life shall be compensated hazard pay equivalent to at least twenty-five percent (25%) of their gross monthly salary for the duration of such assignment.

**SEC. 14. PCMP Fund.** – There shall be a PCMP Fund which shall comprise of all collections made by PCMP, including contributions made by media entities. In this regard, all media entities shall contribute an amount equivalent to one percent (1%) of the basic monthly salary of the employed media professionals. The amount shall be remitted to PCMP monthly, not later than every 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

The Fund shall be used to support the daily operations of the PCMP and to promote the welfare of media professionals, including the conduct of training, engagement of lawyers for those criminally charged in relation to the performance of their functions, payment of bail, and assistance to the families of media professionals who perished in pursuit of their profession.

**SEC. 15. Prohibited Acts.** – The following acts shall be prohibited:

- a) Refusal by a media entity to provide additional insurance coverage referred to in Section 11 of this Act;
- b) Refusal by an insurance company to enroll media professionals employed by media entities on field assignment and freelance journalists on account of the nature of their work; and
- c) Non-compliance with the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

**SEC. 16. Penal Provision.** – Any employer who willfully commit any of the prohibited acts enumerated under the preceding section shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not less than Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 200,000.00)

but not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 500,000.00), or imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than six (6) years, or both such fine and imprisonment upon the discretion of the court.

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

**SEC. 17. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The PCMP, in consultation with other media organizations and concerned groups, shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations of this Act within sixty (60) days from its approval.

**SEC. 18. Separability Clause.** – If for any reason any provision or section of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such portions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 19. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 20. Effectivity Clause.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved.*