

**HONORABLE ROSANNA “RIA” V. VERGARA**

Chairperson  
Committee on Social Services  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City

Dear **Representative VERGARA:**

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) **fully supports House Bill No. 1449** entitled: **“An Act Increasing Compensation of Social Workers in Government Service, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 9433, Otherwise Known as the “Magna Carta for Public Social Workers,”** introduced by Representative Jose Francisco “Kiko” B. Benitez, Ph.D.

We commend the good Representative Benitez for recognizing the importance of the entry-level public social workers who are dedicated to serve the public by increasing their compensation.

The DSWD respectfully submits the following comments and recommendations for the enhancement of the bill, to wit:

**1. On the Explanatory Note**

1.1 To rephrase the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, which will be read as follows:

*“Social workers are in the frontlines of delivering social services for the poor, vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged... The entry level position for social workers at the local level is Social Welfare Aide (SWA) which is equivalent to Salary Grade IV. Thus, Public Social Workers should not be given positions lower than Salary Grade 11.*

*Social workers are not just implementing programs of the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the Local Social Welfare and Development Office – social workers also **play a vital role even in indirect practice such as but not limited to policy development, research, monitoring and evaluation, standards setting, capacity building, promoting GAD in local and national governance, forming plans to build disaster resilience, inspiring out-of-school youth to dream, addressing grievances of overseas Filipino workers, and assisting senior citizens claim benefits, and even in the academe and hospital settings.***

1.2 On the role of social workers under the direct practice, include the case management functions/roles of social workers in handling various types of clientele groups like rape victims, child offenders and etc.

- 1.3 The comparison of annual income or average monthly salaries of social workers from private and public settings must be at the entry level positions to prevent confusion.

At present, Registered Social Workers (RSWs) in government settings receive higher compensation than in private companies.

Based on a study, public sector employees in the Philippines earn 12% more than their private sector counterparts on average across all sectors.

Reference: <https://bit.ly/3QcyIEH>

- 1.4 On additional income, in DSWD, there are 31,620 RSWs although 46% or 14,533 are not entitled to receive any compensation aside from their monthly salaries due to the status of their employment. It is necessary that all RSWs, regardless of job status, should benefit from the Magna Carta.

## 2. SECTION 1. Section 3(c) of Republic Act No. 9433

- 2.1 To revise Item (c) 'Public Social Worker' which will be read as follows:

***"Public Social Workers - refers to Registered Social Workers licensed by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), regardless of position title and job status, working in the Government, including National Government Agencies (NGAs), State Universities and Colleges, and Local Government Units (LGUs)."***

- 2.2 To include a definition for 'Social Work Practice', which will be read as follows:

***"Social Work Practice – refers to professional approaches critical to the effective performance of the preventive, rehabilitative, and developmental functions of the social work profession. The different social work practices are as follows:***

***a. Direct Practice*** is when a social worker works directly with an individual, family, or group of people through the use of basic social work methods such as social work practice with individuals and families, groups and organizations and communities;

***b. Indirect Social Work Practice or Macro Practice Social Work*** is when the social worker is involved in activities that consist of facilitating change through programs and policies. The social worker's functions are administration and management, policy and program development, research, and capacity building. This type of practice requires the use of specific knowledge and skills in social work philosophy, and functions, and

*has the primary focus on the helping process in determining outcomes for the population being served; and*

*c. **Generalist Social Work Practice** refers to social work practitioners who seek to enhance the well-being of client systems of all sizes including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a variety of settings, acknowledging the interconnectivity and interdependence of these systems. Generalist social workers promote social justice with an emphasis on an appreciation for diversity, cultural responsiveness, elimination of systems of oppression, and realization of human rights and social, economic, and political justice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.*

### 3. **SEC. 2. Section of the same Act**

On **SEC. 4. Coverage:** to change “government service” to “**government setting.**”

We are pleased to inform the Committee that job order (JO) and contracts of service (CoS) are not recognized as government employees by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

Section 4 of the **DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 5**, Series of 2022 or the “*Guidelines in Determining when a Government Personnel may be considered as Public Social Worker,*” states that Registered Social Workers who are on a contract of service, job order or contract of consultancy, or those whom the government has no employer-employee relationship are not considered Public Social Workers affirming **Joint Circular No. 1**, Series of 2017 or the “*Rules and Regulations Governing Contract of Service and Job Order Workers in the Government,*” which was jointly issued by the CSC, Commission on Audit (COA), and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

However, the proposed amendments to the Magna Carta for Public Social Workers **should cover all RSWs in the government setting in NGAs, SUCs, and LGUs.**

In this connection, may we also recommend to the Committee to coordinate with the CSC, COA, and DBM to better determine whether or not JO and CoS workers can be covered by the legislative measure.

### 4. **SEC. 3. Section 12 of the same Act**

#### **On SEC. 12. Compensation**

4.1 In addition to the provision setting the minimum salary of an entry-level junior officer public social worker, consider including another one on the adjustment of the corresponding salaries of those who occupy higher

positions. This is to avoid creating a wide salary gap between entry-level and higher-level Public Social Workers.

4.2 To include strict 100% compliance of employers from NGAs, SUCs, and LGUs on the equitable compensation of RSWs.

## 5. General Comments

To include the following provisions:

### 5.1 Hazard Pay and Subsistence Allowance

Hazard Pay should be provided to all Registered Social Workers who have to dispense their services outside of their usual workplace, regardless of the nature of activity conducted during travel/s.

5.2 **Compensation/Benefits to public social workers who are dealing with mental health concerns** as a result of their exposure to vicarious trauma.

5.3 Local Social Welfare and Development Office (LSWDO) must be strictly headed by a RSW.

5.4 LSWDO Head must strictly be an RSW and is holding a plantilla position must not be removed from his/her position should there be a change in the management/ administration.

5.5 The DSWD, as the primary government institution mandated to render social work, should endeavor to populate its ranks with RSWs.

5.6 Regular capacity building activities for RSWs.

5.7 Prioritization of RSWs in DSWD vacancies especially for programs requiring case management. e.g. 4Ps, Centers and Residential Care Facilities (CRCF), Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS), among others.

5.8 For the newly graduated Social Workers, the 1,000-hour immersion during internship must be considered as job experience provided that they have secured a merit of certification from the company/ agency that is equivalent to a very satisfactory rating.

5.9 To include a provision on the identification of PSWs. It is recommended that the established mechanism of the DSWD, as stipulated under Memorandum Circular No. 05, series of 2022, be observed. It may be noted that the DBM – in virtue of the DBM-DSWD Joint Circular No. 1, series of 2018 – transferred to the DSWD the authority to determine who would be covered under PSWs.

For reference, the links to the mentioned Circulars are as follows:

1. DBM-DSWD JC No. 1, series of 2018: <https://bit.ly/3bMY3WM>
2. DSWD MC No. 5, s. 2022: <https://bit.ly/3BP7Whc>

- 5.10 For the DBM to create plantilla positions for Social Workers as a majority fall under the COS/JO category.

***“The amount necessary for the initial implementation of the amendments shall be taken from current appropriations and thereafter, funds needed in subsequent years shall be included in the General Appropriations Act. This is to provide specific funding sources for the amounts necessary to implement the modified salary rates.”***


- 5.11 To include a Section for **“Appropriations”**, which will be read as:

- 5.12 To include a Section for the crafting of the **“Implementing Rules and Regulations”**, for purposes of clarity.

This is being submitted for the Committee’s consideration.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

  
**ERWIN T. TULFO**  
Secretary  
Date: 14 SEP 2022

**Cf: Rep. Jose Francisco “Kiko” B. Benitez, Ph.D.**  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Negros Occidental