

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session



Senate
Office of the Secretary

19 DEC -9 P 1 55

SENATE

S. B. NO. 1218

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

AN ACT INTEGRATING LABOR EDUCATION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Today, Filipinos remain vulnerable to countless issues that hound the labor sector—from high unemployment and underemployment, to problems concerning fair wages, job security, safe workplaces, social protection, and right to organization.

Accessibility and availability of quality job opportunities in the domestic market has been a persistent problem in the country,¹ prompting most of the 2.3 million Filipinos to settle with overseas employment (mostly involving elementary and assembly work) despite exposure to a wide range of health and social risks.²

For those who have acquired work locally, still a number of problems such as non-regular forms of employment continue to undermine workers' welfare and rights. According to the 2016 Integrated Survey of Labor and Employment (ISLE) of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), around half (43.2%) of private sector employment in the country are in precarious or non-regular work (e.g., casual workers, contractual and seasonal workers, and agency-hired workers). In total, including public sector employment, approximately 7 million Filipino workers are in end-of-contract (ENDO) or labor-only contracting (LOC) arrangements,³ representing around 30.7% of wage and salary employees the country that same year.

¹ The country's unemployment rate was at 6.6% in 2017, the highest among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. From ASEAN Secretariat, ASEANstats database. Accessed from <https://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ASEAN-Key-Figures-2018.pdf>

² 2019, April 30. Total Number of OFWs Estimated at 2.3 Million (Results from the 2018 Survey on Overseas Filipinos). Available at: <https://psa.gov.ph/content/total-number-ofws-estimated-23-million-results-2018-survey-overseas-filipinos> (date last accessed: November 27, 2019).

³ 2017, October 31. 2015/2016 Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment – Part 1 (Modules on Employment; Occupational Shortages and Surpluses; and Training of Workers) Available at: <https://psa.gov.ph/content/20152016-integrated-survey-labor-and-employment-part-i-modules-employment-occupational> (date last accessed: November 27, 2019).

In 2017, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)'s Bureau of Local and Employment (BLE) reported that over half of the establishments they inspected failed to comply with general labor standards.⁴ Unfortunately, Filipinos' knowledge of their labor rights and access to legal aid or assistance remain inadequate, forcing some of them to compromise in the incidence of labor rights violations.⁵

In light of these problems, it is clear that the government has to strive to make every Filipino worker aware of his or her rights. This can be done by building the capacity of future members of the labor sector by mandating the integration of labor education in higher education, wherein 3 to 4 million students are enrolled annually. This bill seeks to enhance the knowledge of future "*Manggagawang Pinoy*," with relevant career guidance information, knowledge about the labor market, and most especially background on labor rights and policies.

In recent years, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), under its Labor and Employment Education Service, has been conducting Labor Education for Graduating Students (LEGS) seminar series at various universities where they discuss basic labor laws and distribute employment guides or handbooks to jobseekers. The move to integrate labor education in higher education recognizes the merit of such initiative.

Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA

⁴ 2017, June 25. Over 5,000 firms nationwide violated labor laws - DOLE. Available at: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2017/06/25/over-5000-firms-nationwide-violated-labor-laws-dole/> (date last accessed: November 27, 2019).

⁵ 2019 Philippine Workers' and Trade Union Report on the SDGs. Available at: https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/190506_workers_group_feedback_-_pnvr_on_sdgs_-_final.pdf (date last accessed: November 27, 2019).

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S. B. NO. 1218

Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

**AN ACT INTEGRATING LABOR EDUCATION
IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "Labor Education Act."
2

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State shall afford protection to labor, promote
4 full employment, ensure equal work opportunities regardless of sex, race or creed,
5 and regulate the relations between workers and employers. The State shall assure
6 the rights of workers to self-organization, collective bargaining, security of tenure,
7 and just and humane conditions of work.
8

9 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms** – As used in this Act, the following terms are defined
10 as follows:
11

- 12 (a) *Commission* refers to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
13
14 (b) *Higher Education Curriculum* refers to the general education curriculum
15 designed for students taking up courses in higher education institutions (HEIs)
16 leading to a degree;
17
18 (c) *Labor Education* refers to the teaching of theories, concepts, and issues
19 concerning labor, such as, but not limited to labor rights, dignity, economic
20 welfare, and political participation; and
21
22 (d) *General Education* refers to the portion of the curriculum that is common to all
23 undergraduate students regardless of their major.
24

SEC. 4. Integration of Labor Education in Higher Education Curriculum. – All public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) are mandated to:

- (a) Integrate Labor Education in the general education (GE) subject entitled “The Contemporary World,” which covers globalization and its impact on individuals, communities and nations, challenges and responses. Such subject may be taken at any given year level, and may be taught in English or Filipino.

The Labor Education component of the said GE subject should cover the teaching of the following:

- (1) Labor rights and workers’ welfare, as contained in labor laws and regulations;
- (2) Role and contribution of labor to the national economy;
- (3) Basic income taxation;
- (4) Minimum labor standards on wage, overtime pay, night shift differential, holiday pay, leaves, among others;
- (5) National and global labor situation and challenges;
- (6) Labor organization and political participation; and
- (7) Other topics related to labor and employment.

- (b) As far as practicable, hold a Labor Empowerment and Career Guidance conference which shall be attended by all graduating students.

Provided, that in case the Commission makes an amendment to the list of GE courses in HEIs that effectively affects the availability or content of the GE subject “The Contemporary World,” the Commission shall identify a new GE subject that shall integrate Labor Education in the design of such subject; *Provided*, however, that nothing herein shall limit the HEI from offering labor education as an elective subject.

SEC. 5. Implementing Rules and Guidelines. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall formulate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 6. Separability Clause. – Any portion or provisions of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions and provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions or provisions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SEC. 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or any parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act herewith are hereby revoked, repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national papers of general circulation or in the Official Gazette.

Approved,