


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



23 JUL 20 P 2 :38

SENATE
S. No. 2335

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator MARK A. VILLAR

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY INSURANCE COVERAGE AND BENEFITS FOR
JOURNALISTS, EMPLOYEES OF MEDIA ENTITIES ON FIELD ASSIGNMENTS
AND FREELANCE JOURNALISTS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Journalists play an invaluable role in every society. They are responsible for providing current and relevant information 24-7. Due to the nature of their profession, they are considered as one of the most vulnerable sector.

It is during the most dangerous situations like typhoons, floods, war and conflicts, and especially during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic that the bravery and passion of our journalists has been emphasized. Thus, the need to provide the necessary support to ensure that journalists are properly compensated and insured corresponding to the hazard of their profession.

This bill will provide additional insurance coverage such as disability and death benefits, and reimbursement of medical costs for journalists and employees of media entities on field assignments. For freelances journalists, a special program will be created under the SSS and GSIS.

Immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


MARK A. VILLAR

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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 “*Journalist Protection Act*”.

2 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Principles.* – The State recognizes the invaluable role of
3 the free press in the protection and promotion of democracy, good citizenship, civic
4 mindedness, and good governance. Towards this end, the State shall provide the
5 necessary support to ensure that the journalists are properly compensated and insured
6 as they practice their profession.

7 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall
8 mean:

9 a. *Editorial and/or News Department* refers to editors-in-chief, news,
10 editors, columnists, deskmen, reporters, correspondents, and
11 photographers in the case of the print media; and news editors,
12 newscasters, commentators/announcers, field reporters, field
13 correspondents, and cameramen in the case of the broadcast media;

- 1 b. *Freelance journalist* one who pursues journalism and writes for any
2 publication without being regularly employed by such publication,
3 television or radio, wire, wireless broadcasting and online services;
- 4 c. *Front-line media persons* refers to those directly involved in data-
5 gathering from the field, and news reporting whether in print, on
6 television or on radio, such as, but not limited to, print reporters,
7 cameramen, photojournalists, radio reporter and television reporters;
- 8 d. *Journalism* the gathering, writing, editing, processing and dissemination
9 of news and production or publishing of newspapers and other such
10 publications such as magazines and pamphlets and other processes
11 through wire, wireless, broadcasting, and online services;
- 12 e. *Journalist* shall mean any member of the Editorial and/or News
13 Department including front-line media persons;
- 14 f. *Media entities* refers to all companies in the print and broadcast media
15 (radio, television and newspapers) that are involved in the dissemination
16 news and information for public consumption and are duly accredited by
17 and duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
18 and by any reputable association of media persons such as, but not
19 limited to, the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), Philippine Press
20 Institute (PPI), Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippine
21 (FOCAP), Photojournalists' Center of the Philippines (PCP), People
22 Alternative Media Network (Altermidya), National Press Club (NPC),
23 National Union of Journalists of the Philippine (NUJP) and Kapisananan
24 ng mga Broadcaster ng Pilipinas (KBP).

25 Sec. 4. *Coverage.* – This Act shall apply to all permanent, temporary,
26 contractual, and casual journalists employees or engaged to work by all existing media
27 entities in the Philippines, as well as freelance journalists plying their trade in war-
28 torn, disease-stricken, or otherwise perilous areas.

29 Sec. 5. *Mandatory Additional Insurance Benefits for Journalists, and Employees*
30 *Media Entities on Field Assignments.* – In addition to the present insurance benefits
31 provided to journalists and employees of media entities on field assignments by the

1 Social Security System (SSS) as mandated under Republic Act No. 8282, otherwise
2 known as the Social Security Law, and by the Government Service Insurance System
3 (GSIS) under R.A. No. 8291, there shall be an additional insurance coverage to be
4 provided by media entities to journalists and their employees on field assignments and
5 front-line media persons which shall give the following minimum benefits:

- 6 1. Disability Benefits – Three Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos (P350,000) for
7 all mass media practitioners who shall suffer total or partial disability,
8 whether permanent or temporary, as a result of any injury sustained
9 during performance of duty;
- 10 2. Death benefits – Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (P300,000) for all mass
11 media practitioners and employees on field assignment who shall perish
12 in the line of duty; and
- 13 3. Reimbursement of actual medical costs – Up to Two Hundred Thousands
14 Pesos (P200,000) for all mass media practitioners and employees on
15 field assignments who shall require medical assistance for injuries
16 sustained while in the performance of duty.

17 The media entity shall have the option of selecting the insurance company and
18 shall be responsible for paying the insurance premiums for their journalists and
19 employees.

20 *Sec. 6. Insurance for Freelance Journalists.* – The SSS and GSIS shall create a
21 special insurance program for freelance journalists that shall include, among others, a
22 coverage of risks incurred while working in war zones, conflict-stricken areas, and
23 calamity-affected places.

24 *Sec. 7. Prohibited Acts.* – The following acts shall be prohibited:

- 25 a. Refusal or failure by a media entity to provide additional insurance
26 coverage referred to in Section 5 of this Act;
- 27 b. Refusal by an insurance company to enroll journalists, employees of
28 mass media entities on field assignment and freelance journalists on
29 account of the nature of their work; and

1 c. Non-compliance with the rules and regulations that the GSIS, SSS, and
2 PIA shall adopt for the implementation of this Act.

3 Sec. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The GSIS, SSS, PIA, in
4 consultation with the NPC, NUJP, KBP, and other duly registered media associations,
5 shall promulgate and issue the rules and regulations necessary to strictly implement
6 the provisions of this Act.

7 Sec. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any section or provision of this Act shall be
8 declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not affected
9 thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

10 Sec. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, or rules and regulations
11 which are inconsistent or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended
12 or repealed accordingly.

13 Sec. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
14 publication in two (2) newspaper of general circulation.

· *Approved,*