

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

8 MAY 27 2015

SENATE

RECEIVED BY



Senate Bill No. 2332

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR PANGILINAN

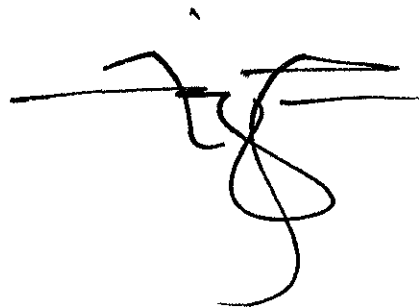
EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has a land area of approximately 30 million hectares of which 12.3 million hectares is devoted to production of agricultural crops. Agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors contribute 18.3 percent of GDP in the fourth quarter of 2007 and 37 percent of total employment in 2006.

Those employed in the agriculture sector are the farmers and the agricultural development workers (agriculturists, veterinarians, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists, veterinarians, and other agricultural technicians). They provide the necessary assistance and professional services to the farmers and fisher folks in managing the farms for increased farm profitability and productivity, making them the key players in this sector. These agricultural development workers are produced by agri-based academic institutions in the country, and their technical and professional expertise are certified by the Professional Regulation Commission and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

At present however, agricultural development workers are confronted with weak mechanism for career development and inadequate support.

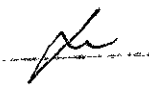
Hence, this legislation.



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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A MAGNA CARTA OF AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT WORKERS**

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

ARTICLE I

TITLE OF THE ACT, DEFINITION OF TERMS AND COVERAGE

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Magna Carta of
Agricultural Development Workers"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy -It is hereby declared a policy of the State to
accelerate the development and modernization of Philippine agriculture and improve
the economic and social well-being of agricultural development workers as well as
their working conditions and employment status. The State shall likewise develop
their skills, knowledge, orientation and capabilities so that they will become more
responsive and effective in providing the necessary services for countryside
development and the modernization of the Philippine Agriculture.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. -

- a) Agricultural Development Workers - shall mean all persons who are engaged in agricultural development activities and all persons employed in the Department of Agriculture including its bureaus and attached agencies, Local Government Units (LGUs), State Colleges and Universities and concerned government and private institutions, and shall include agriculturists, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists, veterinarians, agricultural technicians, agricultural employees, administrative and support personnel employed regardless of their employment status;
- b) Agriculturist - shall refer to a person who is a graduate of a four year course in agriculture or any related course registered and licensed with the Professional Regulation Commission who performs any of the

specialized activities such as agronomy, horticulture, animal husbandry, entomology, plant pathology, plant breeding, agricultural economics, agricultural extension and marketing;

- c) Agricultural Engineer - shall to a person registered with the Professional Regulation Commission performing engineering activities in agriculture, particularly on areas of farm power and machinery, irrigation and drainage, soil and water conservation, agricultural buildings and structures, agricultural processing and post harvest facilities;
- d) Fishery Technologists- shall refer to a person who is a graduate of a four-year course in fisheries and registered and licensed with the Professional Regulation Commission performing activities on fisheries and aquaculture, and fishery production and processing;
- e) Veterinarian- shall refer to a person registered with the Professional Regulation Commission performing professional activities on veterinary services such as disease prevention, control and animal health;
- f) Agricultural Technician- shall refer to a trained or skilled agricultural worker who is not necessary a college graduate and certified by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority performing job such as plant nursery propagator, farm mechanic and agricultural machinery operator and other related skilled job in agricultural production, processing and marketing;
- g) Agricultural Extension. Worker -shall refer to an agriculturist, agricultural engineer, fishery technologist and veterinarian who helps farmers and fishermen in the promotion of agricultural and fisheries development plans, programs and projects through the use of extension the theologies, concepts and principles;
- h) Agricultural Employee – is a person who is a graduate of Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Fisheries, Veterinary Medicine or any other agriculture-related course from any recognized college or university and is holder of an appropriate civil service but not a licensed professional under the Professional Regulation Commission who is employed in the government, non-government organization or private institution who performs activities on agriculture development.
- i) CSC - refers to the Civil Service Commission;
- j) DOLE - refers to the Department of Labor and Employment;
- k) DA - refers to the Department of Agriculture;
- l) LGU - refers to the Local Government Unit;
- m) PRC- refers to the Professional Regulation Commission;

- n) PRBs- refers to the Professional Regulatory Boards of Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Fisheries and Veterinary Medicine under the Professional Regulation Commission;
- o) SCUs- State Colleges and Universities

SEC. 4. Coverage-This act shall cover all Agricultural Development Workers of the government, non-government organizations and private institutions and shall include agriculturists, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists, veterinarians, agricultural technicians, agricultural employees, farm workers, administrative and support personnel employed regardless of their employment status.

ARTICLE II EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

SEC. 5. Employment Assistance- The State hereby ensure and guarantee the employment opportunities of agricultural development workers which are being produced in academic institutions and are certified, registered and licensed to perform specialized works by the PRC and TESDA. In line with this, the DOLE together with academic institutions, PRC, TESDA, DA and DTI shall undertake employment promotion of agricultural development workers in the domestic and foreign market and adopt and implement a National Employment Program for Agricultural Development Workers.

SEC. 6. Personnel Required- All offices, firms and establishments either government or private, and farmers organizations and cooperatives engaged in the production, processing, handling and marketing of agriculture and fisheries products and likewise implementing projects related to irrigation, farm mechanization, postharvest facilities and agricultural infrastructures shall employ the required number and/or engage the services of agriculturists, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists and veterinarians to perform professional services based on the standards and guidelines to be promulgated by the PRBs;

Provided, That there shall be no understaffing and/or overloading of agricultural development workers. The ratio of staff to clientele shall be such as to reasonably effect a sustained quality of agricultural service at all times without overworking the agricultural development workers and over-extending their services. Only qualified professional shall occupy the agriculturist, agricultural engineer, fishery technologist and veterinarian in all government instrumentalities, non-government organization and private firms and establishments;

Provided Furthermore, That the government shall allocate the necessary funds for the hiring of additional agricultural development worker in cases of over-loading of personnel in specific areas of assignment of concerned government offices.

SEC. 7. Recruitment and Qualifications. - The selection and appointment of agricultural development workers shall be in accordance with the merit and fitness

principle: *Provided, That* he/she has the appropriate civil service eligibilities and/or professional license, educational qualification, skills and experiences.

SEC. 8.- Professionalization of Government Agricultural Services . - The State shall support the professionalization of agricultural services of the government by ensuring the appropriate position titles, just compensation and benefits of the agricultural development workers relative to the implementation of the government's agricultural programs. For this purpose, the DA together with CSC, DBM, DILG and PRBs and in coordination with the recognized national associations of agricultural development workers shall review the existing functions, responsibilities, position titles, qualifications and allocations of the agricultural development workers employed at the Department of Agriculture, local government units and concerned government agencies, and to reallocate, reclassify and/or match them with appropriate position titles and compensation. *Provided, that* the following benchmark position titles of agricultural development workers with corresponding salary grades shall be used.

Position	Salary Grade
Agricultural Technician I	6
Agriculturist I	11
Agricultural Engineer I	12
Fishery Technologist I	11
Veterinarian I	13
City Agricultural Engineer	25
City Veterinarian	25
City Agriculturist	25
City Fishery Technologist	25
Farm Worker 1	2
Municipal Agriculturist	24
Municipal Agricultural Engineer	24
Municipal Fishery Technologist	24
Municipal Veterinarian	24
Provincial Agriculturist	26
Provincial Agricultural Engineer	26
Provincial Fishery Officer	26
Provincial Veterinarian	26

SEC. 9. Mandatory Positions of Agricultural Development Workers in the Local Government Units. - The creation of the following positions are hereby made mandatory in addition to the prescribed position under the Local Government Code of 1991 :

- Provincial Agricultural Engineer
- Provincial Fishery Technologist
- City Agricultural Engineer

City Veterinarian

City Agriculturist

Municipal Agriculturist

Sec. 10. *Qualifications, Powers, and Duties of the Agriculturist* - No person shall be appointed agriculturist unless he is a citizen of the Philippines, a resident of the local government unit concerned, of good moral character, a holder of a college degree in agriculture from a recognized college or university, and a registered and licensed agriculturist. He must have practiced his profession in agriculture for at least five (5) years in the case of the provincial or city agriculturist, and three (3) years in the case of the municipal agriculturist.

The position of an agriculturist shall be mandatory for the provincial, city and municipal government, except in highly urbanized cities where it shall be optional.

Sec. 11. *Qualifications, Powers, and Duties of the Veterinarian* - No person shall be appointed veterinarian unless he is a citizen of the Philippines, a resident of the local government unit concerned, of good moral character and a licensed doctor of veterinary medicine. He must have practiced his profession for at least three years in the case of provincial or city veterinarian and at least one (1) year in the case of municipal veterinarian,

The appointment of a veterinarian officer is mandatory for the provincial, municipal and city governments.

Sec.12. *Qualifications, Powers, and Duties of the Agricultural Engineer* – (a) No person shall be appointed agricultural engineer unless he is a citizen of the Philippines, of good moral character and a registered and licensed agricultural engineer. He must have practiced his profession for at least five (5) years in the case of the provincial or city agricultural engineer, and three (3) years in the case of the municipal agricultural engineer.

The position of an agricultural engineer shall be mandatory for the provincial, city and municipal government.

(b) The agricultural engineer shall take charge of the office for agricultural engineering services and shall:

- (1) Formulate measures for approval of the Sangunian and provide technical assistance and support to the Governor or Mayor as the case maybe in carrying out said measures to ensure the delivery of basic services and provision of adequate facilities relative to irrigation, soil and water conservation and utilization, farm mechanization, post harvest facilities, agricultural and fishery infrastructures, and agricultural engineering research and extension;

- (2) Develop plans and strategies and upon approval thereof by the governor or mayor, as the case may be, implement the same, particularly those which have to do with programs and projects on irrigation, soil and water conservation and utilization, farm mechanization, post harvest facilities, agricultural and fishery infrastructures and agricultural engineering research and extension which the Governor or Mayor is empowered to implement and which the Sangunian is empowered to provide under the Local Government Code;
- (3) In addition to the foregoing duties and functions, the agricultural engineer shall:
 - (i) Provide agricultural engineering services to the Local Government Units concerned which include engineering survey, preparation and evaluation of plans, designs, technical specifications and feasibility studies and management of irrigation, small water impounding projects, farm machinery, slaughterhouses, post harvest facilities and agricultural and fishery infrastructure projects;
 - (ii) Administer, supervise, coordinate and control the construction, maintenance and improvement of irrigation, post harvest facilities, slaughterhouse, farm-to-market roads and other agricultural and fishery infrastructure projects of the LGUs;
 - (iii) Undertake the registration, enforcement of the Philippine Agricultural Engineering Standards and other regulatory activities on agri-fishery machinery and facilities in coordination and collaboration with concerned national government agencies;
 - (iv) Coordinate with concerned national government agencies with regards to the implementation of national government programs and projects on irrigation, farm mechanization, post harvest facilities, farm-to-market roads and agricultural and fishery infrastructure
- (4) Be in the frontline of the delivery of basic agricultural engineering.
- (5) Provide training and extension activities to farmers and fishers particularly in the installation, operation and maintenance of their irrigation, post harvest facilities, agricultural and fishery machinery projects in coordination with the agriculture and fishery extension workers
- (6) Undertake and or coordinate the pilot testing and commercialization of matures agricultural and fishery engineering technologies
- (7) Recommend to the sangunian and advise the governor or mayor, as the case maybe, on all other matters related to agriculture and fishery engineering which will improve the livelihood and living conditions of the inhabitants;

- (8) In case of Provincial Agricultural Engineer, exercise technical supervision over-all agricultural engineering offices of component cities and municipalities; and
- (c) Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as maybe prescribed by law or ordinance.
- (d) The Department of Agriculture Regional Field Units through the Regional Agricultural Engineering Division shall exercise technical supervision over-all agricultural engineering offices of the Provincial and City Governments;

Sec. 13. Qualifications, Powers, and Duties of the Fishery Technologist – (a) No person shall be appointed fishery technologist unless he is a citizen of the Philippines, a resident of the local government unit concerned, of good moral character and a registered and licensed fishery technologist. He must have practiced his profession for at least five(5) years in the case of the provincial or city fishery technologist, and three (3) years in the case of the municipal fishery technologist.

The position of an fishery technologist shall be mandatory for the provincial government and optional for the city and municipal government.

- (b) The fishery officer shall take charge of the office for fisheries services and shall:
 - (1) Formulate measures for the approval of the sangunian and provide technical assistance and support to the governor or mayor, as the case maybe in carrying out said measures to ensure the delivery of basic services and provision of adequate facilities relative to fisheries services as provided for under Section 17 of this Code
 - (2) Develop plans and strategies and upon approval thereof by the governor or mayor, as the case may be, implement the same, particularly those which have to do with fisheries programs and projects which the governor or mayor is empowered to implement and which the sangunian is empowered to provide under this Code;
 - (3) In addition to the foregoing duties and functions, the fishery officer shall:
 - (i) Ensure that maximum assistance and access to resources in the production, processing and marketing of fisheries products are extended to fishermen and local entrepreneurs.
 - (ii) Conduct or cause to be conducted location-specific fisheries researches and assist in making available the appropriate technology arising out of and disseminating information on basic research on fisheries;
 - (iii) Assist the governor or mayor, as the case maybe, in the establishment and extension services of demonstration farms for aquaculture and marine products;

- (iv) Enforce rules and regulations relating to fisheries;
 - (v) Coordinate with government agencies and non- governmental organizations which promote fisheries productivity through appropriate technology compatible with environmental integrity.
- (4) Be in the frontline of the delivery of basic fishery services;
- (5) Recommend to the sangunian and advise the governor or mayor, as the case maybe, on all other matters related to fisheries which will improve the livelihood and living conditions of the inhabitants;
- (6) In case of Provincial Fishery Technologist, exercise technical supervision over-all fishery offices of component cities and municipalities; and
- (c) Exercise such other powers and perform such other duties and functions as maybe prescribed by law or ordinance”.

Provided, That in the case of fourth (4th) class LGUs, financial subsidy shall be provided by the national government for the personnel services needed in the hiring of the above mentioned mandatory position: *Provided, further, That* the funding requirement shall be incorporated in the annual appropriations of the Department of Agriculture.

SEC. 14. Performance Evaluation and Merit Promotion. – The Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the PRBs, CSC, DOLE and the recognized national associations of agricultural development workers shall prepare a uniform career and personnel development plan applicable to all agricultural development workers. Such career and personnel development plan shall include provisions on merit promotion, performance evaluation, in-service training grants, job rotation and incentives awards system.

SEC. 15. Transfer of Geographical Reassignment of Agricultural Officers and Employees. – No transfer or geographical reassignment shall be made or effected without a written notice to the agricultural development worker concerned stating therein the reason for such: *Provided, That* said written notice shall be made thirty (30) days prior to the date of transfer or reassignment: *Provided further, That* if the employee concerned disagrees with the order of transfer or reassignment, he/she may appeal said order with the Civil Service Commission or the Department of Labor and Employment, as the case may be: *Provided, further, That* pending appeal, such transfer or reassignment shall be held in abeyance: *Provided, furthermore, That* no transfer or reassignment whatsoever shall be made three (3) months prior to any local or national elections: *Provided, finally, That* the necessary expenses of the transfer and/or reassignment of the agricultural worker or employee and his/her immediate family shall be paid by the Government,

SEC. 16. Security of Tenure. - An agricultural development workers holding a permanent position in the government shall not be terminated except for cause:

Provided, That in the event the agricultural development worker is found to be unjustly dismissed by the Civil Service Commission, he/she shall be entitled to reinstatement without loss of seniority rights and back wages with twenty per centum (20%) interest to be computed from the time compensation is withheld up to the reinstatement. However, if the agricultural development worker does not desire to be reinstated, he/she shall be entitled to back wages and separation pay with twenty per centum interest.

SEC. 17. Code of Conduct -All agriculturists, agricultural engineers, fishery technologists and veterinarians must be guided by the Code of Ethics as adopted by the PRBs. The Secretary of Agriculture in consultation with the Civil Service Commission, Department of Labor and Employment and the concerned stakeholders shall adopt a Code of Ethics of other Agricultural Development Workers not covered by the PRC.

SEC. 18. Normal Hours of Work. - The normal hours of work of an agricultural development worker shall not exceed eight (8) hours a day or forty (40) hours a week. Hours of work shall include: a) the time the agricultural workers is required to be on active duty or to be at a prescribed workplace; b) the time which an agricultural worker is permitted to work; c) the time which an agricultural worker is required to work in a place other than the prescribed workplace.

SEC. 19. Overtime Work. - Where the exigencies of the service so require, any agricultural development worker, whether in Government or non- government service, may be required to render service beyond the normal eight (8) hours a day, inclusive of Saturday and Sunday and non-working holidays. In such cases, the agricultural development worker shall be given additional compensation in accordance with existing laws on the matter.

SEC. 20. Married Agricultural Development Worker. -Whenever possible, the proper authorities shall take steps to enable married couples both of whom are public agricultural development workers, to be employed or assigned in the same municipality.

ARTICLE III RIGHTS, BENEFITS AND REWARDS SYSTEM

SEC. 21. Freedom from interference or Coercion. - It shall be unlawful for any person to commit any of the following acts of interference or coercion.

- a) to require as a condition of employment that the agricultural development worker shall not join an organization or union;
- b) to discriminate in order to encourage or discourage membership in any agricultural development workers organization or union;
- c) to prevent an agricultural development worker from carrying out his /her duties and functions in his/her organization or union or to penalize him/her for any lawful action performed in that capacity;

- d) to harass or intimidate an agricultural development worker or prevent him/her from performing duties and functions; and
- e) to perform acts that will diminish the independence and freedom of the union or organization to direct its own affairs.

SEC. 22. *Discrimination Prohibited.* - An agricultural development worker shall not be discriminated by reason of creed, sex, political belief, civil status, and ethnic grouping in the exercise of his/her profession.

SEC. 23. *Safeguards in Administrative Proceedings.* - In every administrative proceeding, an Agricultural Worker shall have:

- a) the right to be informed of the charges;
- b) the right to full access to evidence against him/her;
- c) the right to defend himself/herself through counsel of his/her choice;
- d) the right to be given adequate time to prepare his/her case, which shall in no case exceed twenty (20) days;
- e) the right to appeal to designated authorities;
- f) the right to cross-examine witnesses and to processes for the production of witnesses;
- g) the right to reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in his/her defense in case of exoneration or dismissal of the charges ;and
- h) *such other rights provided by other national agencies and local government units to their respective officers and employees to ensure fairness and impartially in prosecution.*

SEC. 24. *Right to Join Organizations.* - Agricultural development workers shall have the right to freely join organizations or unions for purposes not contrary to law, in order to protect their mutual interest and to seek redress of grievances through peaceful concerted activities. The various national organizations of agricultural development workers shall be consulted in the formulation of national educational policies and professional standards, and in the formulation of national policies and programs on agriculture of the government; *Provided, That* the government shall ensure that the agricultural development workers organizations are represented in the national and local Agricultural and Fishery Councils, local development councils and other policy making and consultative bodies of the government.

SEC. 25. *Criteria for Incentives and Rewards System.* - The reward and incentive system for agricultural development workers provided under this Act, which

will encourage them to stay in the service, promote their productivity and reward them for extraordinary performance shall be governed by the following criteria:

- a) *Honorarium* - form of remuneration for services rendered beyond the established workload of agricultural development workers whose broad and superior knowledge and expertise contribute to agricultural productivity and innovativeness;
- b) Incentive pay - form of remuneration given to individuals whose services in management, administration, policy making and support contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of the agricultural and fisheries programs of the government;
- c) Performance Bonus - form of remuneration given to agricultural development workers for performance that exceeds established targets; and
- d) Other incentives that the Department of Agricultural and Local Government may establish.

SEC. 26. *Other Compensation and Benefits.* - All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to the following additional compensation and benefits:

- a) Representation Allowance and Traveling Allowance – All Provincial/City/Municipal Agriculturist, Veterinarians, Agricultural Engineers, and Fisheries Officers shall be entitled to Representation Allowance and Travelling Allowance (RATA) equivalent to the Department Head of the LGUs;
- b) Hazard Allowance - All agricultural development workers assigned in difficult areas, strife-torn or embattled areas, distressed or isolated stations, animal/plant/fisheries breeding station, plant nurseries, plantations and demonstration farms, laboratories especially those handling x-rays, radioisotopes, chemicals, etc., sea-borne patrols, construction and installation of agricultural infrastructure projects, and other areas declared under a state of calamity or emergency which exposes them to great danger, occupational risks or perils of life shall be compensated with hazard allowance equivalent to at least twenty per centum (20%) of the monthly basic salary;
- c) Subsistence Allowance - All agricultural development workers who are required to render services in the communities, institutions, animal and plant breeding nurseries, plantations and demonstration farms and other barrier programs and projects of the Department of Agriculture in order to make their services available at all times, shall be entitled to full daily subsistence allowance of three (3) meals, which shall be computed in accordance with the prevailing circumstances;

- d) Longevity Pay - A longevity pay equivalent to five per centum (5%) of the monthly basic pay shall be paid to an agricultural worker for every (3) years of continuous, efficient and meritorious services rendered;
- e) Clothing Allowance - All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to a clothing allowance in accordance with approved laws and regulations or as mandated by law;
- f) Housing -All agricultural workers who are in tour of duty and those who, because of unavoidable circumstances, are forced to stay in the institution or community with living quarters shall be entitled to such quarters for free: Provided, That if such living quarters are not available, the workers shall receive housing allowances: Provided, further, That said allowance shall be reviewed periodically and adjusted for inflation;
- g) Compensation for injuries - Agricultural development workers shall be protected against work-related injuries in accordance with the Labor Code or the Civil Code as the case may be;
- h) On-Call Pay - In cases of "On-Call" status, the agricultural development worker shall be entitled to an "On-Call" pay equivalent to fifty per centum (50%) of his/her regular wage. "On-Call" status refers to a condition when an agricultural officer or employee is called upon to respond to an urgent or immediate need or relief work during emergencies such that the agricultural worker cannot utilize 1 his/her time for personal needs: *Provided*. That no agricultural worker shall be placed in an "On-Call" status beyond seven (7) days; and
- i) *Motor and Vehicle Loan* - All agricultural development workers shall be entitled to avail of the motor and vehicle loan of the Department of Agriculture. The government shall provide adequate budgetary support for this purpose.

ARTICLE IV HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

SEC. 27. Training Program. – The DA together with the DOLE, PRC, CHED and DILG shall formulate and implement a comprehensive training programs for the agricultural development workers as part of the Continuing Professional Development Program and Human Resource Development Program of the LGUs; *Provided, That* adequate budgetary support shall be provided by the government;

SEC. 28. Scholarship Program. – The Agricultural Development Workers and students on agriculture, agricultural engineering, fishery, veterinary medicine shall have full access and priority allocation on the scholarship program of the government.

SEC. 29. *Capability Assessment.* - The Government and non- government agencies shall conduct human resource development and management studies in the following areas:

- a) Types and amount of facilities and resources to render quality agricultural service to the clientele;
- b) Venue and opportunities for the agricultural development workers to grow and develop their potentials and develop a sense of self-worth and dignity in their work;
- c) Mechanisms for democratic consultation;
- d) Ways and means of giving rank-and-file agricultural development workers viable opportunities for education, personal growth and development; and
- e) Staffing patterns and standards of welfare for agricultural development workers welfare to ensure that they receive quality care.

ARTICLE V ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

SEC. 30. *Rules and Regulations.* - The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture together with the DOLE, CSC, DILG and PRBs and in consultation with the national organizations of agricultural development workers shall formulate and prepare necessary rules and regulations in implementing the provisions of this Magna Carta.

SEC. 31. *Monitoring of Implementation.* - The Secretary of Agriculture shall create a Monitoring Committee which shall monitor the implementation of the provisions of this Act. The committee shall be composed of representatives of the DA, DILG, CSC, PRBs and the recognized national associations of agricultural development workers: *Provided, further,* That the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit semi-annual reports on the status of the implementation of this Act to the Committee on Agriculture and Food of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

SEC. 32. *Penal Provisions.* - Any person who shall willfully interfere with, restrain or coerce any agricultural development worker in the exercise of his/her rights or shall violate any of the provisions of this Act shall upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not less than Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) but not more than Forty Thousand Pesos (P40,000.00) or imprisonment of not more than one (1) year, or both, at the discretion of the court. If the offender is a public official, the court, in addition to the penalties provided in the preceding paragraph, shall impose the additional penalty of disqualification from office of such offending public official.

SEC. 33. *Funding.* - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and every year thereafter.

SEC. 34. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions thereof affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 35. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act and Sections 482 and 489 of the Local Government Code are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 36. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen **(15)** days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation

Approved,