

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )

'04 JUN 30 P10:02

SENATE

S.B. No. 958

RECEIVED BY: *[Signature]*

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

*"Money is what fuelled the industrial society. But in the informational society,  
the fuel, the power, is knowledge."  
J.K. Galbraith*

The media has proven itself to be a potent tool on nation building. Not only does it serve as a link between our people in this archipelagic country; it also serves as a vital source of information, both good and bad, to our people, thereby making it a mold of societal values and ideals.

As such, great importance must be given not only to the nature of information that media broadcast to the public, but more so to the source of this information – the media practitioners. After all, media practitioners serve as a gate keepers in the information highway, determining the nature of information that is communicated to the people.

This bill seeks to provide welfare benefits such as a group health insurance and disability insurance to free-lance media practitioners, the communication sector most in need of assistance, by augmenting the present functions of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), stated in Executive Order 100, to include such benefits.

It is hoped that such a measure would encourage free-lance media practitioners to be strong advocates of human development, poverty eradication and rural development; discourage wrong practices such as a skewed, biased and sensational reporting. With the passage of this bill, they will now enjoy some amount of security; encourage them to engage in development-oriented or development support communication activities; and significantly expand and enrich PIA's services to communication professionals.

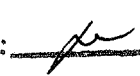
In safeguarding the people's right to accurate and reliable information, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

*[Signature]*  
JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA  
Senator

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AN ACT

STRENGTHENING THE PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY (PIA),  
AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 100 ALSO  
KNOWN AS "CREATING THE PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY" BY  
PROVIDING AN ADDITIONAL FUNCTION, ESTABLISHING A NATIONWIDE  
WELFARE FUND AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Section 3 of Executive Order No. 100 is hereby amended to read as  
follows:

"Section 3. Functions.

1. x x x
2. x x x
3. x x x
4. x x x
5. x x x
6. x x x
7. PLAN AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONWIDE WELFARE PROGRAM FOR  
MEDIA PRACTITIONERS;
- [7] 8. Support the development and expansion of indigenous media and  
information/communication technology;
- [8] 9. Perform whatever tasks as may be assigned by the President."

SECTION 2. A new section 8 is hereby inserted to read as follows, while the subsequent portions of the same Executive Order are numbered accordingly:

Section 8. **WELFARE FUND.**

THERE IS HEREBY ESTABLISHED A NATIONWIDE WELFARE FUND, HEREIN REFERRED TO AS A FUND, TO BE ADMINISTERED AND MANAGED BY THE PIA. THE AMOUNT OF TEN MILLION PESOS (P10,000,000.00) IS HEREBY APPROPRIATED CHARGEABLE TO THE CURRENT FUNDS AVAILABLE IN THE NATIONAL TREASURY. THEREAFTER, SUCH AMOUNT AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THIS PURPOSE SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET OF THE PIA IN THE GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT. THE SELECTION OF QUALIFIED BENEFICIARIES SHALL BE DONE IN COOPERATION WITH DULY ORGANIZED MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS. THE PIA SHALL PROMULGATE THE NECESSARY GUIDELINESS FOR THE UTILIZATION AND DISBURSEMENT OF THE FUND WHICH SHALL INCLUDE ASSISTANCE IN FORMS OF, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, MEDICAL ALLOWANCE, HAZARD PAY, GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE, GROUP LIFE INSURANCE, DISCOUNT ON TUITION FEES, DISCOUNT ON PURCHASE OF REFERENCE MATERIALS, FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE, AND SEED MONEY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MEDIA COOPERATIVES.

SECTION 3. **Separability Clause.** If any of this Act shall be held to be unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 4. **Repealing Clause.** All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations that are contrary to the provision of this Act are hereby repealed, amended and modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. **Effectivity Clause.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in English or Filipino in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.