

SENATE
S.B. No. 482

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INTRODUCED BY **SENATOR VICENTE C. SOTTO III**

RECEIVED

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to create the Rural Employment Assistance Program for the benefit of qualified head of family or single adult member of poor households in the rural areas and appropriating funds therefor.

This proposed measure is patterned after the National Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 which was enacted by the Parliament of India. Under the National Employment Guarantee Act of India, every household whose adult member volunteered to do unskilled manual work is guaranteed employment of not less than one hundred (100) days in every year. Under that same law, if the adult member is not provided with employment within fifteen (15) days from receipt of his application for employment, the adult member shall be entitled to a daily unemployment allowance.

The Rural Employment Assistance Program, however, is aimed at providing temporary employment to qualified heads of family or single adult members of poor households who volunteer to do unskilled manual work in rural areas where they reside. The Rural Employment Assistance Program is similar to the Cash for Work Program, one of the sustainable livelihood programs of the DSWD. Under this bill, the program will be implemented by

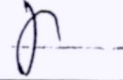
the DSWD in coordination with the local government units (LGUs) for a period of five years. The DSWD will take charge of evaluating the qualified head of family or single adult member of poor households can be employed. The qualified head of family or single adult member of poor households is entitled to a wage rate of not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the prevailing minimum wage set by the National Wages and Productivity Commission.

Suffice it to say, this Bill is envisioned to arrest the growing unemployment rate in the country which is the highest in the ASEAN region. But above anything, it is designed to make our rural poor productive in order for them to uplift their lives and their families as well as to spur economic growth in their communities.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is highly recommended.


VICENTE C. SOTTO III
Senator

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

*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 “*Rural*
2 *Employment Assistance Program Act.*”
- 3 SECTION. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is the declared policy of the State
4 to promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity
5 and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through
6 policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a
7 rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all. Towards this
8 end, the State shall provide employment assistance to a qualified head of
9 family or single adult member of poor households in rural areas identified by
10 the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR)
11 of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).
- 12 SECTION. 3. **Rural Employment Assistance Program.** – There is hereby
13 created a Rural Employment Assistance Program (REAP), which shall
14 provide temporary employment to every qualified head of a family or single
15 adult member of a poor family in rural areas who volunteers to do unskilled
16 labor for a minimum of forty-five (45) days but not more than ninety (90)
17 days in a calendar year.

1 SECTION. 4. **Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act:

2 (a) Poor refers to individuals and families whose income fall below the
3 poverty threshold as defined by the government and/or cannot
4 afford in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic
5 needs of food, health, education, housing and other essential
6 amenities of life, or those who have been identified as poor by the
7 NHTS-PR;

8 (b) *Rural area* refers to any barangay with at least fifty percent (50%)
9 land devoted to agriculture, timberland, forest and/or pasture land
10 as determined by the Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the
11 concerned local government unit (LGU);

12 (c) *Unskilled labor* refers to a segment of a workforce associated with
13 a limited skill set or minimal economic value for the work
14 performed. It is generally characterized by a lower educational
15 attainment, such as a high school diploma, General Equivalency
16 Diploma (GED) or lack thereof, and typically results in lower
17 wages.

18 Section 5. **Qualifications for Availment of Employment Assistance.** –
19 The DSWD, in close coordination with the LGUs and other concerned
20 government agencies, shall conduct an assessment of all poor individuals
21 and families in rural areas who signify interest in undertaking work as
22 unskilled labor to determine eligibility in availing of the employment
23 assistance program. It shall take the lead in the implementation of the REAP
24 along project identification, implementation and monitoring of the works
25 and activities.

26 Employment activities for this purpose shall be designed to mobilize
27 eligible individuals and families to finish a project in a given period. These
28 projects may include the following:

- 1 (a) Development, rebuilding/rehabilitation of agri-based livelihood
2 assets destroyed or lost due to natural disasters such as desilting
3 of irrigation canals, development of paddy dikes, and rehabilitation
4 of water impounding dams;
- 5 (b) Development or rehabilitation of common service facilities, which
6 are being shared and used by poor families as production or
7 consolidation centers like postharvest facilities, and public
8 markets;
- 9 (c) Development or rehabilitation of physical assets to open up access
10 to areas necessary to transport rural products such as
11 construction of farm to market roads and bridges; and
- 12 (d) Protection of productive assets through mitigation measures such
13 as mangrove planting and rehabilitation, tree planting and similar
14 activities.

15 SECTION 6. **Rate of Assistance.** – Every person qualified under this
16 Program shall be entitled to receive compensation for each day of work
17 employment assistance equal to the applicable minimum wage set by the
18 concerned Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB).

19 SECTION 7. **Appropriations.** – The Secretary of Social Welfare and
20 Development shall include in the DSWD's programs the implementation of
21 this Act, the initial funding of which shall be charged against the current
22 year's appropriations of the DSWD. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its
23 continued implementation shall be included in the annual General
24 Appropriations Act.

25 In addition, the DSWD may accept donations, contributions or
26 grants from various sources for the implementation of the REAP.

27 SECTION 8. **Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90)
28 days after the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Social Welfare and

1 Development shall, in Consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and
2 Local Government, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective
3 implementation of this Act.

4 SEC. 9. **Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act is declared
5 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected
6 hereby shall remain in full force and effect.

7 SECTION 10. **Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
8 its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general
9 circulation.

Approved,