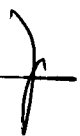


SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'16 JUL 20 P3:58

SENATE
S.B. No. 684

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by: Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR RURAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF**

Explanatory Note

It is our directive to ensure that as the Philippine economy grows and thrives, all Filipinos grow and thrive together. One of our mandates is to promote inclusive growth and spread wealth and opportunity across the country.

As such, we need to take a look at our rural communities and provide opportunities to those along the countryside and within our islands, beginning with our least fortunate countrymen.

Considering that almost 80% of Filipinos living in poverty reside in our rural areas¹, we are in urgent need of measures to combat poverty and unemployment beyond our cities and urban hubs in the short and long term.

The Rural Employment Assistance Program (REAP) Act is one such policy for the short term, which aims to provide heads of poor families in rural areas fair wages for temporary unskilled work.


This bill not only addresses the issue of unemployment in rural areas, it also involves our less fortunate citizens in nation building as we provide other measures that will help them pursue permanent employment.

The REAP Act mandates the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to hire unemployed Filipinos to maintain, build, and rehabilitate shared, public facilities and livelihood assets within their community.

Let us bring opportunities, wealth, and capacity to the Philippine islands, especially in the countryside. Let every Filipino reap the fruits of our positive progress and development.

¹ <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/country/home/tags/philippines>

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV



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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 the "*Rural Employment*
2 *Assistance (REAP) Act.*"

3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the declared policy of the State to promote a
4 just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the
5 nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social
6 services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of
7 life for all. Towards this end, the State shall provide employment assistance to a qualified
8 head of family or single adult member of poor households in rural areas identified by the
9 National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) of the Department
10 of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

11 **SEC. 3. Rural Employment Assistance Program.** – The DSWD shall implement the
12 Rural Employment Assistance Program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, in
13 coordination with local government units. The Program shall provide temporary
14 employment to every qualified head of family or single adult member of poor families in
15 rural areas who volunteer/s to do unskilled manual work for a minimum of forty-five (45)
16 days but not more than ninety (90) days in every calendar year.

17 Rural areas refer to barangays that have population size of less than two thousand
18 five hundred (2,500). Barangays which do not have an establishment with twenty-five (25)
19 or more employees, or five (5) or more establishments with a minimum of ten (10)
20 employees, or five (5) or more facilities within the two kilometer radius from the barangay
21 hall, are also classified as rural areas.

22 **SEC. 4. Assessment to Determine Qualification for Availment of Employment**
23 **Assistance.** – The DSWD, in close coordination with the local government units and other
24 concerned government agencies, shall conduct an assessment of all poor individuals and

1 families in rural areas who signified interest to do unskilled labor to determine eligibility in
2 availing of the employment assistance program.

3 For the purpose of this act, the poor shall refer to individuals and families whose
4 income fall below the poverty threshold as defined by the government and/or cannot afford
5 in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic needs of food, health, education,
6 housing and other essential amenities of life or those who have been identified as poor by
7 the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR).

8 **SEC. 5. Rate of Assistance.** – Every qualified head of family or single adult member of
9 a poor family in the rural areas who qualified under the Program shall be entitled to receive
10 for each day of work an employment assistance equal to the applicable minimum wage set
11 by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board in the region. They shall also be
12 entitled to the payment of mandatory social security dues such as Philhealth, PAG-IBIG, and
13 Social Security System (SSS).

14 **SEC. 6. Types of Works and Activities.** – The DSWD, in coordination with the local
15 government units and other concerned government agencies, shall take the lead in the
16 implementation of the rural employment assistance program along project identification,
17 implementation and monitoring of the works and activities. The works and activities for this
18 purpose are classified as activities that will mobilize eligible poor individuals and families to
19 finish a project in a given period. These projects may include, but are not limited to, the
20 following:

21 a. Development, re-building/rehabilitation of agri-based livelihood assets
22 destroyed or lost due to natural disasters (e.g. desilting of irrigation canals, development of
23 paddy dikes, rehabilitation of water impounding, among others)

24 b. Rehabilitation and or development of common service facilities, which are
25 being shared and used by poor families as production or consolidation centers/units (e.g.
26 post-harvest facilities, public markets etc.)

27 c. Development or rehabilitation of physical assets to open up access to natural
28 assets where the former is necessary to bring out the products of poor families to the
29 market (e.g. farm to market road, slope protection, bridges, among others)

30 d. Protection of productive assets through mitigation measures such as
31 mangrove planting/rehabilitation, tree planting and the likes.

32 **SEC. 7. Appropriations.**- The amount necessary for the implementation of the
33 rural employment assistance program shall be included in the budget of the DSWD in the
34 annual general appropriations act.

35 The DSWD may also get funds, donations and other forms of financial support
36 from foreign and local persons, institutions and governments for the implementation of
37 rural employment assistance program.

38 **SEC. 8. Employment Assistance and Skills Training Fund (EASTF).** There is hereby
39 created an Employment Assistance and Skills Training Fund (EASTF) that shall be
40 administered by the DSWD. The EASTF shall be exclusively for the benefit of the qualified

1 head of family or single adult member of poor family in the rural areas who availed of the
2 Program.

3 The EASTF shall be used to pay the wages and skills training programs of qualified
4 head/s of families or single adult member/s of the poor families in rural areas who availed
5 of the Program.

6 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days after the
7 approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Social Welfare and Development shall, in
8 Consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, issue the Necessary
9 rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

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

12 *Approved,*