Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 997

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Introduced by Honorable Representatives

ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women’s Party);
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE, EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT, and FERDINAND R. GAITE (Bayan Muna);
FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers); and SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Kabataan)

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RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ISSUES RELATED TO WORK-FROM-HOME (WFH)
ARRANGEMENT FOR BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is greatly affecting the global economy and changing the way industries
and enterprises conduct business towards less on-site operations and more towards remote or work-from-
home arrangements;

WHEREAS, the various existing government guidelines on the prevention and control of COVID-19 pandemic
has directed business operations to shift towards a skeletal workforce on-site and set-up work from home
arrangements for great majority of employees where applicable;

WHEREAS, companies in the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry have shifted towards WFH
arrangement, as call centers are typically densely occupied and viral transmission is very likely;

WHEREAS, the Information Technology Business Process Management (IT-BPM) industry, which is
considered as an economic growth driver employing about 1.3 million Filipinos, is among the biggest industries
whose conduct of business is shifting towards work from home as call centres proved to hotspots for COVID-19 spread as experienced in other countries like in South Korea and Senegal;

WHEREAS, internet service in the Philippines has been considered as the slowest in Asia Pacific (2017) and is currently considered as a huge factor for business continuity especially in industries like IT-BPM whose work are mostly being shifted towards WFH arrangements;

WHEREAS, WFH does not figure in the long-term plans of some of the BPO firms in the country, particularly Paris-based Teleperformance, due to unreliable internet connections and unstable electricity supplies;

WHEREAS, the shift to WFH, while desirable for employees during this pandemic, also comes with a slew of challenges to decent work and labour rights;

WHEREAS, according to the BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) among the new challenges faced by WFH employees include lack of logistical assistance such as delivery of equipment, longer working hours for workers to compensate for ‘low productivity’, unpaid wages due to poor internet connections, unjust sanctions to employees due to technical problems, and passing on of internet and utility expenses by companies to workers;

WHEREAS, a survey conducted by BIEN also revealed the following findings about the issues faced by WFH employees in the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry:

- Half (74 of 146 respondents) are working from home.
- 1 out of 5 (20 percent) of WFH did not receive computers or laptops from their companies.
- 3 out every 4 (77 percent) WFH employees had to shoulder internet costs and majority (54 percent) said that they receive no internet allowance from their companies.
- 4 out of every 5 (82 percent) WFH employees used their own internet connection or paid for their own internet installation.
- Most of WFH (84 percent) of WFH employees does not receive electricity allowance or subsidy from their companies.
- 3 out of every 5 WFH employees are having trouble meeting their productivity targets due to poor internet connection.
2 in every 5 WFH employees said that they had to meet certain conditionalities in order to receive the internet or electricity allowances such as:
  o Pro-rated internet allowance based on the number of days worked
  o Must reach a minimum hours of work per week (i.e. 40 hours)

About 2 in every 5 of WFH employees (38 percent) experienced reduction in their income due to poor internet service.

Only 15 percent or (11 of the 74) said that they receive additional allowances for working at home.

WHEREAS, decent work standards, protection of labour rights and sustainability of jobs need to be at the heart of our country's resiliency program to combat the pandemic and its economic consequences;

WHEREAS, the flexibility that WFH enables can be optimized for the benefit of the economy and business without compromising the rights and welfare of employees;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House Committee on Labor conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the issues related to work-from-home arrangements for business continuity in light of the COVID19 pandemic.

Adopted,

ARLENE D. BROSAS
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