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## HOUSE PASSES BILL ALLOWING CONTRACTUALS WITH DOLE APPROVAL

The House of Representatives on Monday passed on third reading a proposed law that would legalize contractual labor only if allowed by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and regularize a contractual employee who had rendered six months of service, regardless of whether his job was classified as necessary.

House Bill No. 6908 also seeks to provide benefits being given regular employees to contractual workers, too.

A worker on probation and who had rendered at least a month of service and would be terminated ahead of the six-month probation period



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would be entitled to termination pay equivalent to a half-month salary per month of service.

The bill's proponents see

this as a deterrent to the practice of terminating probationary workers before the six-month probation period expires to prevent regularization.

The leftist Makabayan bloc in the House cast seven votes against the bill, saying it fell short of their expectation—to completely outlaw contractual labor.

Rep. Ariel Casilao, of the party-list group Anakpawis, said the bill would just "institutionalize" job contracting and "prone to circumvention and abuse."

"It seems that while we prohibit labor-only contracting, we are legislating legiti-

mate job contracting," said Rep. Carlos Zarate of the party-list group Bayan Muna, a member of the Makabayan bloc.

The bill, however, was also being opposed by Employers Confederation of the Philippines as it would be "detrimental to the economy and job creation."

A labor coalition, Nagkaisa, said employers have no reason to fear the bill unless they were engaged in labor-only contracting.

"Employers who do not abuse workers have nothing to fear," the group said in a statement.

—REPORTS FROM VINCE F. NONATO AND JULIE M. AURELIO INQ

\* CONTRACTUALIZATION