



**G-Watch**  
Citizen Action for Accountability



Making the Elections an  
Accountability Platform

# FactCheck 2022

## Presidential Candidates

### Social Protection

**Social protection** refers to policies and programs that aim to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks, and enhance the social status of the marginalized. This includes efforts to protect and promote livelihood and employment, guard against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improve people's capacity to manage risks. [1]

Social protection has four components:

- (a) Labor market programs - enhance employment opportunities and protect workers' rights
- (b) Social insurance – seek to mitigate income risks by pooling resources and spreading risks across time and classes (e.g., micro-insurance, agricultural insurance, social support funds)
- (c) Social welfare – seek to support basic requirements of the poor (usually direct assistance in the form of cash or in-kind transfers, social services)
- (d) Social safety nets – comprise of stopgap or urgent measures to address effects of economic shocks, disasters, and calamities of specific vulnerable groups (emergency assistance, price subsidies, food programs)[2]

# Track Record



**Leody de Guzman's** extensive background as a leader of various labor welfare organizations in the past few years (the latest as chair of Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino) makes him the strongest advocate for labor market programs for social protection. While he has not specifically focused on other aspects of social protection, he has commented on related legislation, such as Sen. Leila de Lima's Magna Carta of the Poor (RA 9211), which he criticized in 2019 as a redundant measure for being a "mere codification of what is already supposedly being implemented or should be by agencies..." and a "mere reiteration of the administration's innate duty to advance the interests of the poor." [3]



Manila mayor **Isko Moreno** has implemented several key housing projects in the capital as part of his social protection program, among them the Basecommunity, Binondominium, and Tondominium housing projects. He considers housing as a significant accomplishment: "Kapag sinabi ko pong pabahay, hindi 'yan drawing, nakatayo na po. Madaling magkama-kamada ng mga pangako. Mas mahirap ang gumawa ng pala-palapag na murang pabahay." [5] Moreno has also established a COVID-19 Food Security program, a monthly subsidy for select families in Manila. Previously, he served as an undersecretary (for Luzon Affairs) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. [6]



**Sen. Panfilo Lacson** appears not to have explicitly advocated, drafted, or implemented measures for social protection as a government official. In 2019, however, he called for an audit of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), saying there is a need to "inquire into the proper use of the 4P's program including its accomplishments in accordance with its defined objective, the accounting of the monies so far disbursed and other relevant issues surrounding the program." [4]



Senator and boxer **Manny Pacquiao's** track record in social protection also focuses on housing. Pacquiao is one of the principal authors of the law creating the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development or the DHSUD (RA 11201), approved in 2019, which consolidated two government agencies into one agency responsible for management of housing, human settlement, and urban development. In 2021, he filed a bill seeking to amend RA 11201, via SB 2463 or the Free Public Housing Act, to further address the need of the homeless and review the achievements of RA 11201.



**Bongbong Marcos'** track record in social protection appears to be limited to introducing resolutions to conduct inquiries in aid of legislation in 2013 and 2014 (when he was a senator) on the implementation of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act (RA 9994) and the Magna Carta of Disabled Persons (RA 7277), respectively.



Vice president **Leni Robredo**, by virtue of her office, has launched several social safety net programs for social protection while vice president. To respond to COVID-19, she has launched "Swab Cab" (free mobile testing) and "Bayanihan E-Konsulta" (free medical advice and assistance), which, among other programs, aim to fill in the gaps in terms of supporting medical frontliners and communities. Her office has provided a gamut of services: free personal protective equipment, shuttle services, and dormitories for frontliners; relief packs and assistance; community marts; distance learning support for students; and promotion of mass testing and vaccination. [7] Her centerpiece social welfare program however is Angat Buhay, which focuses on food security and nutrition, women empowerment, education, healthcare, rural development, and housing. [8] President Rodrigo Duterte also previously appointed Robredo as the chair of the then Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), providing low-cost housing to 46,000 families and setting up a P1-billion worth of Urban Development Assistance Fund as incentive to local government units. [9] As a former legislator in the House of Representatives, she principally authored HB 6439 or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Act of 2015, instituting a nationwide conditional cash transfer (CCT) program.

# Platform & Plans

At the outset, not all candidates have drafted official platforms of government as of writing. **De Guzman, Lacson, Moreno, and Robredo** have published official platforms in their respective websites or social media pages; **Marcos** and **Pacquiao** have not, even though they have stated their plans through various media interviews.

## COVID-19 Response



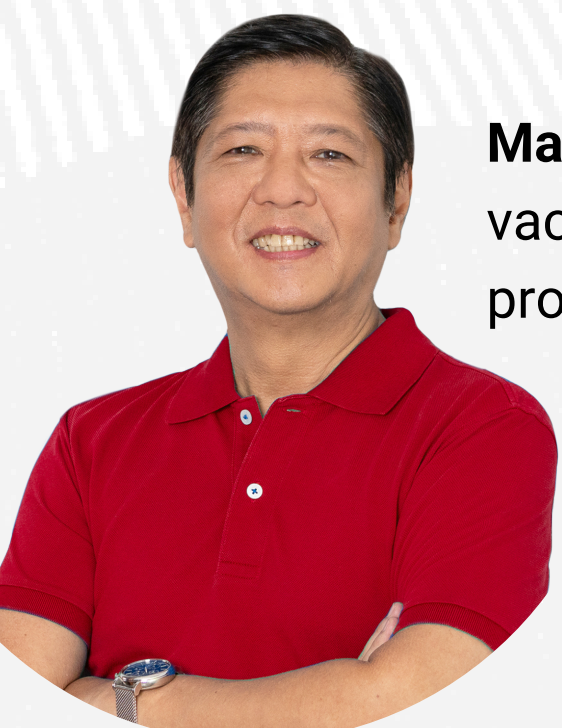
**De Guzman's** Plan of Action with vice-presidential aspirant Walden Bello seeks to implement a pro-people, medically-informed, and demilitarized COVID response. Aside from providing ayuda (financial aid), vaccines, and protection to citizens, his plan is to implement a paid leave and compensation for lost income for those who get COVID-19 or are required to quarantine. He also plans to provide for increased wages and benefits for all health workers. [10] The last point is also in **Pacquiao's** "22 Rounds Priority Agenda" (which appears to be unpublished and yet to be officially consolidated), where he plans to push for Php 50,000 minimum wage per month for public and private nurses, and across-the-board salary standardization for all workers. [11]



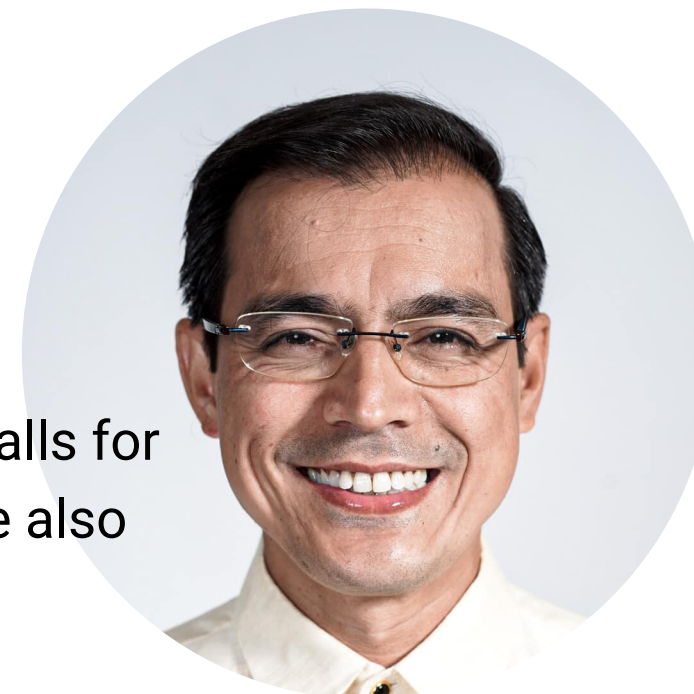
**Lacson** stated in interviews that he seeks to boost free vaccination, testing, and treatment, including the procurement of newly-developed medicines against COVID-19. [12] Noticeably, Lacson's statements on providing ayuda are always accompanied by a caveat: that providing assistance should always be linked to employment opportunities. [13]



**Robredo's** "Kalayaan Sa COVID" packages her platform as a comprehensive, long-term COVID-19 response. The first aspect, "Kalayaan sa Gutom," provides for a Php216 billion budget for the distribution of emergency assistance/ayuda, and efficiency in its distribution. It also includes proposals to expand existing benefits to healthcare workers, including free and regular testing, paid COVID sick leave aside from regular sick leave, medical insurance, and allowance for food and transport. Robredo also states the need to set Occupational Safety and Hazards standards to protect workers, especially from the effects of COVID-19. Healthcare workers should also be regularized and exempted from the Personnel Salary Cap. [16]



**Marcos** refers to a "Jab-to-Jobs" program that will encourage vaccination to get people back to work. The details of the program are unclear and are not articulated further. [14]



**Moreno's** Bilis Kilos 10 Point Agenda, among others, calls for continuous ayuda during the pandemic. The details are also not explained further. [15]

# Platform & Plans

## Free or socialized housing

**De Guzman, Moreno, Pacquiao, and Robredo** explicitly included free or socialized housing in their platforms, with Moreno's, Pacquiao's, and Robredo's plans backed and influenced by their track records in this sector. **Lacson** and **Marcos** have not stated any plans on housing as of writing.



Creating more housing is the first in **Moreno's** Bilis Kilos 10 Point Agenda. [17] He stated that he will allot 1.3% of the annual gross domestic product (GDP) to build one million calamity-proof houses in six years, especially in locations near cities and hubs of employment. [18]

This is also emphasized by **Pacquiao**, who proposed a "massive program to build sustainable housing communities to provide decent and sturdy shelters for the country's 1.9 million informal settlers, the 6.7 million families who are still renting and those who have been displaced by calamities and armed conflict." [19]



Meanwhile, **Robredo**, in a covenant with the Leni Urban Poor Council, committed to allot an annual Php 50-billion budget for socialized housing and give urban poor organizations a seat on the table to craft reforms for the sector. [20]

"Guarantee free decent housing for the homeless" is also part of **De Guzman's** "Bagong Pulitika, Bagong Ekonomiya" platform. [21]



# Platform & Plans

## Labor or social welfare

**De Guzman** and **Robredo**, so far, have published and articulated the most detailed plans on labor and social welfare. Upholding labor rights is De Guzman's main platform (his slogan is "Manggagawa naman!" ("Labor first!")), as supported by years of labor/union activism. In a similar vein, Robredo's platform for social welfare is backed by her strong track record as vice president (among other posts in government) and her experience as an alternative lawyer.



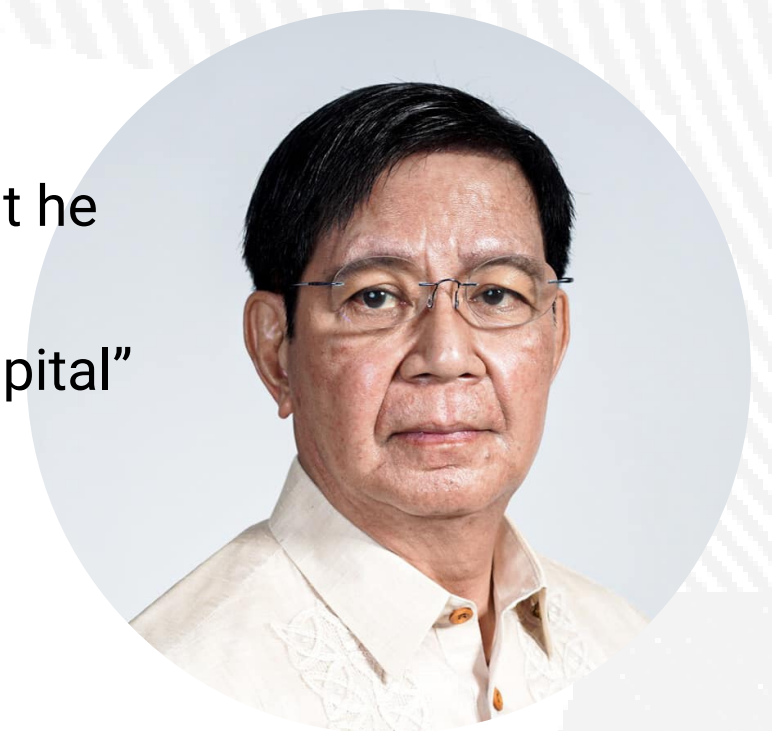
On labor market and other social welfare programs, **De Guzman** casts a wide net and proposes the following: to uphold the principle of workers' control; absolutely ban contractualization in all its forms; unemployment benefits for displaced workers to cover basic living expenses; guarantee that all workers receive Php750 minimum daily wage across the country, and to provide P2,000 monthly food subsidy and P3,000 monthly health subsidy for all. [22] He also seeks to promote universal transformative social protection as a human right and as a core indicator of national progress and social development, and raise social expenditures to constitute the largest share of the national budget. [23]



For her part, to shield against unemployment, **Robredo** proposes to provide three-months' income worth 80% of one's salary via the creation of a National Unemployment Insurance Program to consolidate and strengthen the Social Security System (SSS) and the Government Service Insurance Program (GSIS). She also includes in her platform the creation of a Public Employment Program to give jobs to 1.8 million unemployed Filipinos. [24]



Notably, with regard to labor welfare, **Moreno** has stated that contractualization is the least of his problems; what he wants, instead, is a way to stimulate government and businesses so that they can sustain jobs." [25] **Lacson** has stated that employment deals are the cornerstone of his social welfare agenda, and plans to "invest in human capital" and "reinvent" the 4Ps "with the overarching principle that every Filipino should bridge the poverty line with a sustainable livelihood or employment opportunities." [26]



**Pacquiao** stated that an "employment program" is part of his agenda, but this has not been threshed out yet. [27]




**Marcos** has not articulated any plan on labor and social welfare as of writing, aside from the "Jabs-to-Jobs" program mentioned above.




# Platform & Plans

## Help for micro, small, and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs)


All presidential candidates expressed concern and recognized the role of MSMEs in national development, and have included in their platforms and plans various stimulus and loan packages for this sector.



**Lacson** stated that start-ups may boost recovery through stop-gap measures like comprehensive and targeted fiscal stimulus packages, “lower-interest-bigger loans” programs from state-run financial institutions, and/or employee-retention incentives to motivate businesses to reopen. [28] **Pacquiao** proposed “interest-free” loans for MSMEs and the creation of one-stop shops and online portals to ensure “corrupt-free” and “hassle-free” processing of all business permits and loan applications. [29]



Meanwhile, **Marcos** has proposed that MSMEs be given an allocation in the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA), [30] as well as tax holidays and amnesties for those stricken by the pandemic. [31] **Moreno** also stated his intent to help MSMEs via local governments’ share from national revenue collection, and via low-interest loans. [32]



**Robredo** proposes a stimulus package not less than Php100 billion for MSMEs. [33] **De Guzman** proposes a Php125 billion stimulus, along with a wealth tax-funded recovery plan that includes a public jobs generation program, which will also provide a fixed wage subsidy for one million workers employed in distressed MSMEs. De Guzman also plans to institute a People’s Social Welfare Fund (PSWF) to finance local industrialization through aggressively investing in MSMEs where importation is highest, financed with \$50 billion from the Central Bank’s Gross International Reserves (GIR).

# Endnotes

- [1] National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Social Development Committee Resolution No. 1, Series of 2007, "Adopting a Philippine Definition of Social Protection," p. 2, at <https://pdpb.dswd.gov.ph/download/sdc-resolution-no-1-series-of-2007-defn-of-sp/?wpdmdl=2344&refresh=61fa7d1be7cbf1643805979>
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- [3] [http://legacy.senate.gov.ph/press\\_release/2019/0602\\_delima1.asp](http://legacy.senate.gov.ph/press_release/2019/0602_delima1.asp)
- [4] <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1067799>
- [5] <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/list-housing-projects-manila-isko-moreno/>
- [6] <https://www.facebook.com/CNNPhilippines/photos/breaking-manila-mayor-isko-moreno-files-his-certificate-of-candidacy-for-preside/3267110230195520/>
- [7] <https://ovp.gov.ph/content/biography.html>
- [8] <https://ovp.gov.ph/content/biography.html>
- [9] <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/robredo-2022-pact-urban-poor-annual-fund-housing-in-city-resettlement/>
- [10] <https://twitter.com/LabanNgMasa/status/1451793901753298947>
- [11] <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/30/22/more-jobs-will-lower-ph-crime-rate-pacquiao-says>
- [12] <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1913547/manila/local-news/presidential-aspirants-lay-plans-of-their-government>
- [13] <https://pinglacson.net/article/lacson-details-future-proof-plans-for-the-philippines>
- [14] <https://philstarlife.com/news-and-views/952613-bongbong-marcos-jr-boy-abunda?page=6>
- [15] <https://tayosiisko.com/bilis-kilos>
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- [18] <https://rmn.ph/tao-muna-mayor-isko-inilatag-ang-kanyang-10-point-bilis-kilos-agenda/>
- [19] <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/01/30/news/national/pacquiao-eyes-mega-prison-for-corrupt-officials/1831077>
- [20] <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/robredo-2022-pact-urban-poor-annual-fund-housing-in-city-resettlement>
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- [31] <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/818774/marcos-jr-wants-tax-breaks-for-msmes-stricken-by-pandemic/story>
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- [33] <https://lenirobredo.com/kalayaan-sa-covid>
- [34] <https://dailyguardian.com.ph/ka-leody-pushes-for-p125b-for-msme-recovery/>

## About MEAP FactCheck

G-Watch views the upcoming polls in 2022 as an extremely important terrain that has to be engaged, and that would complement other accountability efforts that are being undertaken before, after and beyond elections. In this light, G-Watch is undertaking a citizenship education initiative that aims to Make Elections an Accountability Platform (MEAP). The first round of MEAP focused on the conduct citizenship education sessions and the convening of multi-stakeholder dialogues.

The 2nd phase of MEAP is taking on the issue of the use of information to make elections an accountability platform. In February, G-Watch's annual awareness-raising campaign *Ako, Ikaw, Tayo May Pananagutan* took on the issue of fake news and disinformation. Hundreds participated in varied activities in 10 G-Watch local sites all over the country.

The other critical component of the 2nd phase of MEAP are activities to check on the candidates' track record and platform on critical issues and agenda: the conduct of Local Candidates Forum targeting local candidates in G-Watch sites all over the country and the production and release of FactCheck Briefs covering key presidential candidates.

The MEAP FactCheck Briefs review the position, platform and track record of key presidential candidates on issues and agenda G-Watch deemed important and critical. Position refers to the candidates' pronouncements about the agenda that can be found in printed materials like news, statements or online. Platform refers to the candidates' plans in tackling the agenda as stated in their official platform. Track record refers to the direct action taken by the candidates in advancing/ realizing the agenda. We determine whether the candidates have taken direct action in terms of bills filed, laws passed, decisions made, programs/ projects personally/ directly championed as stated in official or reliable/ verifiable records. List of references are provided in every Fact-Check Briefs.

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## Make the 2022 Elections an Accountability Platform!

### Statement of Government Watch (G-Watch) on the Upcoming May Polls

In exactly two months from now, Filipinos will once again go to the polls to elect the country's next President, along with the Vice President, 12 senators, 316 members of the Lower House, as well as 16,055 local officials. While every election is important, the upcoming poll is both unique and extremely crucial due to the ongoing pandemic, and the continuing threats to democracy and to our people's very survival.

The dismal performance of the national government in handling the COVID-19 crisis is going to be the backdrop of the 2022 elections. It has to be. The 2022 elections will also be critical in reaffirming many democratic values that has been under threat for the past years, such as inviolability of human rights, the rule of law, and the principle that a public office is public trust since all power emanates from the people.

The 2022 polls, in other words, has to be turned into an accountability process, where candidates have to be made answerable for their performance or lack thereof.

We call on voters to elect candidates that will restore checks and balances in government, strengthen accountability institutions, uphold merit-based public management, and support independent civil society monitoring and advocacy.

At the same time, G-Watch offers the following agenda for the next administration:

- Ensure access to relevant, useful and clear information.
- Pass the Freedom of Information Law.
- Bolster transparency mechanisms and efforts.
- Ensure that feedback, complaint and grievance redress mechanisms properly work so that the concerns of citizens can be adequately addressed.
- Enhance the capacity of accountability institutions, mechanisms and programs inside government.
- Ensure that the country's legal framework remains supportive, facilitative and enabling of progressive civil society, including independent citizen accountability efforts.

We also call on the Philippine development community to start rebooting, retooling and re-energizing civil society-government engagement to one that synergizes interdependent power which checks abuses at the top and uplifts the most marginalized.

If all these are done, then we can turn elections to what it should be—as a way to allow even the most ordinary of citizens to speak truth to power and change the course of the country's history.

*\* Adopted during the 2022 G-Watch National Meeting & Learning Exchange on March 4-8 in Pasig and Baguio Cities. G-Watch is an independent action research organization embedded in constituencies of civic and advocacy-oriented organizations all over the Philippines that aims to contribute in democratic deepening through the scaling of accountability and citizen empowerment. G-Watch has local sites and partner civil society organizations and government allies in Pasig City, Quezon City, Naga, Puerto Princesa, Cebu, Bohol, Tacloban, Dumaguete, Bacolod, Southern Leyte, Lanao del Sur, Samal Island, and Agusan del Sur.*