

# GMA signs law revising gov't workers pay

President Arroyo has signed Joint Resolution No. 4 Series of 2009 or the Salary Standardization Law-3, which will raise the salaries of all public servants by 50 percent this July.

Before leaving for Japan for a four-day official visit, the President made the ceremonial signing before members of Congress at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City.

The SSL-3 is the third salary adjustment implemented by the government. The first was in 1989 and the second in 1994.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said the new adjustments in the pay and position scale of public servants would make government service more competitive with the private sector.

"Though talent would follow the market that would pay for it, we cling to the hope that the new SSL will stop or at least delay the migration of government-trained professionals to the private sector," Andaya said.

"To stop this hemorrhage, we could have prescribed higher pay for all, but the rule in wage-setting is that it should be tempered at the level that your employers can afford," he added.

Andaya pointed out that the SSL-3 would cost the government P125.6 billion for its 1.141 million employees.

The SSL-3 will be implemented in four tranches from this year to 2012.

The first installment would be in the amount of P18.4 billion which is already

allocated in this year's national budget.

"The idea behind the staggered payment is to let revenues grow alongside expenses. As more money goes into public coffers, more will be put inside pay envelopes. In short, the pay hike will be commensurate with the hike in the tax effort," Andaya explained.

He noted that the public school teachers would be one of the groups that would benefit the most from the salary adjustment.

At more than 522,000, teachers account for almost half of the government workforce.

The teachers would end up getting a basic salary of somewhere between P18,000 to P19,500 or a 50 percent increase when fully given.

Deputy presidential spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo said the pay increase would encourage more talents to join the government service. — **Marvin Sy, Rudy Santos**