Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

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HOUSE BILL NO. 7464

Introduced by: **REP. RAUL V. DEL MAR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Existing laws have laid down the policy of protecting nurses and improving the nursing profession.

Section 2, Article II of Republic Act No. 9173, otherwise known as the "Philippine Nursing Act of 2002", declares that "it is the policy of the State to assume responsibility for the protection and improvement of the nursing profession by instituting measures that will result in relevant nursing education, humane working conditions, better career prospects and a dignified existence for our nurses." The State also guarantees the delivery of quality basic health services through an adequate nursing personnel system throughout the country.

Value of nurses' work

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the invaluable role of medical personnel, especially nurses, in promoting the health and welfare of the people. Filipino nurses have been renowned for their selfless dedication, compassion, and diligence in the performance of their duties. Despite the hazards, our nurses have bravely responded to the call of duty.

This has been graphically shown in the general performance of nurses, along with other health personnel, in the current coronavirus pandemic. It has taken a tragedy of global proportion to underscore the value of nurses and the lack of reciprocal concern of the state for them.

Poor working conditions and lack of career development opportunities for nurses have remained inadequately addressed to by the Government.

Compelling need

While the Philippines has excelled in producing a great number of competent nurses, it has lagged behind, compared to other countries of comparative economic development to ours, in providing advanced nursing education programs. Thus, preventing our nurses from taking better career opportunities here and abroad.

There is compelling need to enhance working conditions and benefits to nurses, to further protect and promote their welfare -- and reduce the outflow of our nurses from our land where they are needed to improve our health care system. According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), almost 19,000 nurses leave the country each year for jobs abroad, where they get higher pay and better working conditions.

Health-care system

By introducing better programs for our nurses, we can elevate our status to be recognized as a producer of leaders, experts, and authorities in the field of nursing. We can further ensure adequate nursing personnel in all private and public hospitals. Epidemic or none, our health-care system needs to be expanded and strengthened and we need competent and highly motivated nurses and other medical personnel for that.

The passage of the bill is earnestly sought.

RAUL V. DEL MAR

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HOUSE BILL NO. 7464

Introduced by: **REP. RAUL V. DEL MAR**

AN ACT
AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT 9173, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PHILIPPINE NURSING ACT OF 2002, PROVIDING FOR AN ADVANCED NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Tile.* –The Act shall be known as the "Advanced Nursing Act of 2020."

SEC. 2. Section 31 of Republic Act No. 9173, otherwise as the Philippine Nursing Act of 2002, is hereby amended to read as follows:

> SEC. 31. *Comprehensive Nursing Specialty and Learning and Development Programs.*–Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Board -- in coordination with the accredited professional organization, recognized specialty organizations and the Department of Health -- is mandated to formulate and develop a comprehensive nursing specialty program that aims to upgrade the level of skill and competence of specialty nurse clinicians in the country, such as but not

limited to the areas of critical care, oncology, renal and such other areas as may be determined by the Board.

The beneficiaries of this program are obliged to serve in any Philippine hospital for a period of at least two (2) years of continuous service.

THE BOARD IS ALSO MANDATED TO DEVELOP ANNUAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR NURSES TO ENSURE CONTINUITY OF ACQUISITION OF NEEDED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND TO KEEP ABREAST WITH THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NURSING FIELD. BENEFICIARIES OF THIS PROGRAM ARE OBLIGED TO SERVE THE HOSPITAL FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST SIX (6) MONTHS OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE FROM CONCLUSION OF THE PROGRAM."

SEC. 3. Section 33 is hereby amended to read:

SEC. 33. *Funding for the Comprehensive Nursing Specialty AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.* –The annual financial requirements needed to train at least ten percent (10%) of the nursing staff of the participating government hospital shall be chargeable against income of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, which shall equally share in the costs and shall be released to the Department of Health subject to accounting and auditing procedures: *Provided,* That the Department of Health shall set the criteria for the qualified staff to avail themselves of the program..

THE EXPENSES FOR THE CONDUCT OF ANNUAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS SHALL ALSO BE CHARGEABLE AGAINST INCOME OF THE PHILIPPINE CHARITY

SWEEPSTAKES OFFICE AND THE PHILIPPINE AMUSEMENT AND GAMING CORPORATION, WHICH SHALL EQUALLY SHARE IN THE COSTS AND SHALL BE RELEASED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SUBJECT TO ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING PROCEDURES. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IS ALSO MANDATED TO SET GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMS.

SEC. 4. Section 34 is amended to read:

SEC. *Incentives and Benefits.* -The Board of Nursing in coordination with the Department of Health and other concerned government agencies, association of hospitals and accredited professional organization shall establish an incentive and benefit system in the form of FREE HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE, free hospital care for nurses and their dependents, scholarship grants, STUDY GRANTS, and other non-cash benefits. The government and private hospitals are hereby mandated to maintain the standard nurse-patient ratio set by the Department of health. *PROVIDED,* NO NURSE SHALL BE REQUIRED TO WORK FOR MORE THAN EIGHT (8) HOURS. *PROVIDED FURTHER,* ANY OVERTIME SERVICE SHALL BE WITH CONSENT OF THE NURSE.

SEC. 5. ***Implementing Guidelines.*** – Within thirty (30) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Board and the Professional Regulatory Commission, and other government agencies shall formulate such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. The implementing rules and regulations shall be published in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions unaffected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations and other executive issuances, which are not consistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or amended.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.