

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2255**



Introduced by
REPRESENTATIVE FRANZ S. PUMAREN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education is an important socioeconomic driver that allows people to break the cycle of poverty. It empowers people to fight against inequalities in society and allows them to live a more sustainable life. One of our great heroes, Jose Rizal, strongly believed in the power of education in transforming not just the individual but the society in general, when he wrote in his article in *La Solidaridad* that “[w]ithout education and liberty, which are the soil and sun of man, no reform is possible, no measure can give the result desired.”

The passage of crucial education-related laws such as *Republic Act No. 10533* or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act” and *Republic Act No. 10931* or the “Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act” is a testament to the State’s commitment to providing quality education to the people. By extension, the State must also pave way for all degree holders, especially indigents, who would want to take their respective professional licensure examinations to become teachers, doctors, nurses, accountants, architects, engineers, and lawyers, among others. To allow this, fees that come with professional examinations must be removed to grant all future degree holders coming from low-income households the ability to take the professional examination in their field of choice.

Given the foregoing, the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.


FRANZ S. PUMAREN
3rd District, Quezon City

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS
TO QUALIFIED INDIGENTS

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Free Professional Examinations Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is declared the policy of the State to promote full employment and to provide equal opportunities for employment for all.

Corollary to this is the concomitant responsibility of the State to ensure that there are no inroads that may effectively hinder the professional growth of the citizens. Furthermore, it is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will free the people from poverty through policies and programs that provide adequate social services, and improve the quality of life for all. In this regard, efforts should be initiated so as we may afford the poor access to mechanisms that may expand opportunities for better employment.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As provided for in this Act:

- a. "Professional Examinations" shall refer to the licensure examination conducted by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) leading to the issuance of a professional license. It shall also include examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) leading to eligibility for employment to the government as a civil service professional or sub-professionals and the Bar Examinations conducted by the Supreme Court of the Philippines.
- b. "Qualified Indigents" refers to a person who has no visible means of income or support, or whose income may not be sufficient for the subsistence or basic needs of his family, as may be determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SECTION 4. *Requirements for Availment.* – For purposes of availing of the benefits of this Act, an examinee shall secure a certification as a qualified indigent from the DSWD. Such certification shall be presented to the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), the Civil Service Commission (CSC) or the Supreme Court of the Philippines, as the case may be, in lieu of the payment of examination fees.

No other fee shall be charged against the qualified indigent for purposes of the professional examination.

SECTION 5. *Limitations on Availment.* – Benefits of this Act may be availed of by a qualified indigent only once for every year.

SECTION 6. *Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign.* – The DSWD, PRC, CSC, and the Supreme Court of the Philippines, in cooperation with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), is hereby mandated to conduct an annual IEC campaign in order to inform the people of the procedures and guidelines in availing the benefits of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Reportorial Requirement.* – For purposes of determining the effectiveness and social impact of the provisions of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, SCS, and the Supreme Court of the

Philippines shall submit an annual report to both House of Congress indicating therewith the number of parties who benefited from this Act.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, other issuances, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its publications in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,