

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

19th Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **3943**



Introduced by: **HON. DORIS E. MANQUIZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Paralegals are not lawyers, but they are the individuals who can make or break a good lawyer. The legal profession is not limited only to the counsels actively handling numerous cases, but also to the paralegals who are considered legal assistants and knowledgeable in specialized aspects of the law. Paralegals often work on the documentation and address any course of action as suggested by the lawyer. Legal services by paralegals are often overlooked and not recognized in our country because of the lack of representation in the national governing body of professionals. Unlike in other countries like the UK, US, Japan, and South Korea to name a few, wherein the paralegal profession is regulated through an examination rendered by a competent authority distinguishing them from other professionals. Paralegals are essential to the administration of legal matters and to ensure the speedy disposition of justice in the country.

This bill seeks to establish and set the baseline for the paralegal profession through the creation of a Regulatory Board for Paralegals, as well as set in place a Licensure Examination that would be overseen by the Board to ensure the security of this profession.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


REP. DORIS E. MANQUIZ

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3943

Introduced by Representative Doris E. Maniquiz

**AN ACT PROFESSIONALIZING PARALEGAL PRACTICE IN THE PHILIPPINES,
CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE A PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF
PARALEGALS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

ARTICLE I

TITLE, DECLARATION OF POLICY, AND OBJECTIVES

SEC. 1. Title. This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Paralegal Act."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. The State recognizes the importance of professional paralegals in nation-building and development and their importance in aid of the rule of law and the administration of justice. Hence, it shall develop and nurture a corps of professional, technically competent, efficient, and ethical paralegals through proper and effective regulation of its standards of practice, employment, education, and training, and through honest and credible national licensure examinations for paralegals as a distinct group of professionals and a crucial sector in the delivery of paralegal services.

SEC. 3. Objectives. This Act shall govern the following:

- a) National licensure examination, registration of paralegals, and issuance of certificates of registration and professional identification cards;
- b) Supervision, control, and regulation of paralegal practice;

- c) Integration of paralegals under one national organization;
- d) Development of professional competence of paralegals; and
- e) Protection of the public against the unauthorized and unscrupulous practice of law by persons claiming to be paralegals or who have not otherwise been qualified and licensed as paralegals under this Act.

ARTICLE II

DEFINITION OF TERMS, AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE

SEC. 4 Definition of terms. As used in this Act:

- a) *Attorney* or interchangeably, *lawyer*, refers to a person who has obtained the necessary academic degree in the study of law and has successfully passed the bar examination, has been duly admitted as a member of the bar by the Supreme Court of the Philippines, and who is in good and regular standing, and therefore, with all the qualifications to practice law anywhere in the Philippines.
- b) *Paralegal* refers to a person, qualified by education, training, or work experience, who has been licensed as a professional paralegal under the provisions herein, who works independently or contracts with, is employed, or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, trade unions, and labor organizations, or any other entity in the private sector, to perform specifically substantive paralegal work or render paralegal services as defined herein. A professional paralegal may be an assistant, associate, specialist, or officer, depending on the type of license issued by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).
- c) *Paralegal consultant* refers to a paralegal with a specific specialization such as in alternative dispute resolution, real estate, corporate law, and litigation. intellectual property, immigration, insurance, and other key areas.
- d) *Paralegal services* refer, in general, to the rendition of substantive paralegal work by a professional paralegal as defined and authorized by this Act and under such related laws, rules, and regulations, whether as an independent licensed paralegal

1 or in representation or as an agent of a lawyer, law office, corporation, government
2 agency, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, trade unions,
3 and labor organizations, or any private sector entity in the delivery of paralegal
4 services or as an essential tool and important aid in the administration of justice.
5 Such services include those enumerated in Section 5 hereof.

6 e) *Practice of law* or interchangeably, *Law practice*, refers to the rendition of legal
7 services by a lawyer or attorney requiring the knowledge and the application of
8 legal principles and techniques to serve the interest of another, usually a client,
9 with his consent. It is not limited to appearing in court, or advising and assisting in
10 the conduct of litigation, but embraces the preparation of pleadings, and other
11 papers incident to actions and special proceedings, conveyancing, the preparation
12 of legal instruments of all kinds, and the giving of all legal advice to clients. It
13 embraces all advice to clients and all actions taken for them in matters connected
14 with the law.

15 f) *Paralegal Practice* or interchangeably, *Practice of Paralegal Profession*, refers to
16 the paralegal services rendered by a professional paralegal under this Act either
17 independently or under the supervision of a lawyer or as a representative of the
18 lawyer, law office, corporation, government agency, non-government organization,
19 trade unions, and labor organizations, or any private sector entity in the delivery of
20 paralegal services or as an essential tool and important aid in the practice of law
21 or the administration of justice.

22 **SEC. 5. Scope of the Practice of Paralegal Service.** A paralegal service shall deal
23 with the performance of the functions of paralegals, which shall include the following,

- 24 a) Preparation and review of legal documents such as affidavits, motions, and
25 contracts;
26 b) Legal research;
27 c) Development and review of organizational policies, procedures, programs, and
28 other legal matters;
29 d) Providing immediate legal intervention in emergencies such as during instances of
30 warrantless arrests, warrantless searches and seizures, extrajudicial detentions of

alleged crime suspects, environmental law violations such as illegal logging and illegal poaching, human trafficking, violent crimes and domestic relations, human rights violations, and other similar analogous instances

e) Coordination with courts, administrative tribunals, and government agencies;

f) Legal support to the public, lawyers, clients, and stakeholders;

g) Case planning, development, and management;

h) Interviewing clients; and/ or otherwise performing useful, preliminary, or contributory work before the client refers the case to a lawyer;

i) **Fact-finding gathering, and retrieving information;**

j) Custodianship, archival, and retrieval of evidence;

k) Drafting and analyzing legal forms, papers, deeds, and documents;

l) Collecting, compiling, and utilizing technical information to make an independent decision and recommendation to the supervising attorney; and

m) Representing clients in appropriate labor cases subject to mandatory mediation and arbitration before the Department of Labor and Employment, and such other administrative tribunals in which the representation by a professional paralegal is allowed and not otherwise prescribed by any statute, court procedure, or administrative rule or regulation.

SEC. 7. Qualification of the Chairperson and Members of the Board. The Chairperson and Members of the Board, at the time of their appointment, shall possess the following qualifications:

- a) Must be a natural-born citizen and a resident of the Philippines;
- b) Must be of good reputation and moral character;
- c) A holder of a bachelor's degree related to paralegal services and the paralegal profession, including a degree in Juris Doctor (JD);
- d) Must be a paralegal as defined in Section 4 hereof, subject only to the provisions of Sec. 15 of this Act;
- e) Neither a member of the faculty of a university, college, school, or institution conferring the academic degree on legal studies, legal management, paralegal studies, or any similar analogous academic degrees or with direct or indirect pecuniary interests in any institution or association where review classes or lectures in preparation for the licensure examination being offered; and
- f) Must not be an incumbent officer of the AIPO of paralegals; and
- g) Must not have been convicted by final judgment by a competent court of a crime or criminal offense involving moral turpitude.

SEC. 8. Tenure of office for the Chairperson. The Chairperson and the Members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three (3) years from the date of their appointment or until their successors shall have been qualified and appointed: *Provided*, That the members of the first appointed Board shall hold office for the following terms: one (1) member as Chairperson, to serve for three (3) years; two (2) members, to serve for two (2) years; and (2) members, to serve for one (1) year. The Chairperson and Members of the Board may be reappointed for a second term but in no case shall they serve continuously for more than six (6) years. Any vacancy in the Board shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term of the member who vacated the position. On the constitution of the first board, the Chairperson and the Members of the Board shall automatically be registered and issued certificates of registration and professional identification cards. Each member of the Board shall take a proper oath of office before the assumption of duty.

1 **SEC. 9. Meetings of the Board.** The Board shall have a regular meeting once a
2 month. Special meetings may also be held upon the call of the Chairperson or by request
3 of three (3) of its members. Reasonable notice of all meetings shall be given in the manner
4 prescribed by the rules of the Board.

5 **SEC. 10. Compensation and allowances of the Chairperson and Members of the**
6 **Board.** The Chairperson and the Members of the Board shall receive compensation and
7 allowances comparable to the compensation and allowances received by the chairperson
8 and the members of existing professional regulatory boards under the PRC, as provided
9 for in the General Appropriations Act.

10 **SEC. 11. Powers, Functions, and Duties of the Board.** The Board shall exercise
11 executive, administrative, rule-making, and quasi-judicial powers in carrying out the
12 provisions of this Act. It shall be vested with the following specific powers, functions,
13 duties, and responsibilities:

- 14 a) Provide comprehensive policy guidelines for the promotion, training,
15 professionalization, and development of paralegals and paralegal services as an
16 essential and complementary part of the legal profession and an important sector
17 of the legal service industry;
- 18 b) Conduct licensure examinations for the practice of the paralegal profession and
19 prescribe the appropriate syllabi of the subjects for examination;
- 20 c) The issue, suspend, revoke or reinstate, after due notice and hearing, certificates
21 of registration or professional identification cards for the practice of the paralegal
22 profession;
- 23 d) Maintain a comprehensive and updated register of professional paralegals;
- 24 e) Monitor the conditions affecting the rendition of paralegal services and thus, the
25 practice of the paralegal profession and adopt such measures as may be proper
26 for the enhancement of the profession and the maintenance of high professional,
27 technical, and ethical standards in the practice of the paralegal profession;
- 28 f) Adopt a national Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities to be strictly
29 observed by all licensed professional paralegals;

- 1 g) Hear or investigate any violation of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations,
2 and the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities for paralegals and issue
3 *subpoena and subpoena duces tecum* to secure the appearance of witnesses and
4 the production of documents in connection therewith;
- 5 h) Safeguard and protect legitimate and licensed professional paralegals and, in
6 coordination with the AIPO of paralegals, monitor all forms of advertisements,
7 announcements, signboards, billboards, pamphlets, brochures, and others of
8 similar nature concerning the rendition of professional paralegal services, where
9 necessary, exercise its quasi-judicial and administrative ;
- 10 i) Prepare, adopt, issue, or amend the syllabi or terms of specification of subjects for
11 the paralegal licensure examination consistent with the policies and standards set
12 by CHED in consultation with the University of the Philippines, Law Center, and
13 the Legal Education Board (LEB);
- 14 j) Promulgate, administer, and enforce rules and regulations necessary to carry out
15 the provisions of this Act;
- 16 k) Supervise and regulate the registration, licensure, and practice of paralegals in the
17 Philippines;
- 18 l) Assess and fix the rate of reasonable regulatory fees;
- 19 m) Administer oaths, and issue certificates of registration and the professional
20 identification card to persons admitted to the practice of the profession of
21 paralegal;
- 22 n) Adopt an official seal of the Board;
- 23 o) Evaluate periodically the status of paralegal education, training, and profession,
24 and recommend and adopt measures to upgrade and maintain its high standard;
- 25 p) Evaluate and approve applications for licensure examination;
- 26 q) Prescribe guidelines and criteria for the Continuing Professional Development
27 (CPD) education program for paralegals in consultation with the AIPO of
28 paralegals;
- 29 r) Screen, issue, and monitor permits to organizations of professional paralegals in
30 the conduct of seminars and accredit such seminars under the CPD education

1 program, as well as the instructors or lecturers therein, to upgrade the quality and
2 knowledge of the profession;

3 s) Monitor and supervise the activities of AIPO and other associations of real estate
4 service practitioners;

5 t) Conduct inspection and monitoring of establishments where paralegal is practiced,
6 and of higher educational institutions where paralegal courses are being offered,
7 in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), to ascertain
8 that professional standards are complied with;

9 u) Ensure, in coordination with the CHED, and in consultation with the UPLC and LEB
10 that all institutions offering law, legal management, and paralegal studies comply
11 with prescribed standards for curriculum, faculty, and facilities;

12 v) Adopt a program for the full computerization of the licensure examination for
13 paralegals;

14 w) The issue, reinstate, suspend, or revoke the certificate of registration and
15 professional identification card or grant or cancel a temporary/special permit;

16 x) Issue certificates of recognition for advanced studies, research, and
17 accomplishment that contribute to the enrichment of the profession;

18 y) Adopt policies and set the standards for all types of paralegals;

19 z) To discharge other powers and duties as the Board may deem necessary for the
20 paralegals and paralegal education in the Philippines.

21 As may be required and necessary, the policies, resolutions and rules, and regulations
22 issued or promulgated by the Board shall be subject to the required consultations with
23 stakeholders, particularly the University of the Philippines Law Center on the matter of
24 design, formulation, and conduct of the certificate course, training programs and other
25 learning strategies and platforms to professionalize the paralegal practice and the corps
26 of professional paralegals. Additionally, said policies, resolutions, rules, and regulations
27 shall be subject to the review and approval of the PRC. *However*, the Board's decisions,
28 resolutions, or orders which are not interlocutory, rendered in an administrative case, shall
29 be subject to review by the PRC only on appeal.

SEC 12. Removal or Suspension of the Chairperson or Members of the Board.

The Chairperson or any Member of the Board may be suspended or removed upon due notice and hearing by the President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the PRC, for neglect of duty; abuse of power; oppression; incompetence; unprofessional, unethical, immoral or dishonorable conduct; commission or toleration of irregularities in the conduct of examination or tampering of the grades therein, or for any final judgment or conviction of any criminal offense involving moral turpitude. The rights of the Chairperson and Members to be heard, to defend themselves, and to be assisted by counsel shall be respected in the proper administrative investigation to be conducted for the purpose.

SEC. 13. Supervision of the Board, Custodian of the Records, Secretary, and Support Services. The Board shall be under the general supervision and administrative

Support Services. The Board shall be under the general supervision and administrative control of the PRC. All records of the Board, including applications for examination, examination papers and results, minutes of deliberations, and administrative, and other investigative cases involving paralegals, shall be kept by the PRC. The PRC shall designate the secretary of the Board and shall provide the secretariat and other support services to implement the provisions of this Act subject to the usual government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

SEC 14. Annual Report. The Board shall, at the close of each calendar year, submit an annual report to the PRC, giving a detailed account of its proceedings and accomplishments during the year and recommending measures to be adopted with the end-in-view of upgrading and improving the conditions affecting paralegal practice in the Philippines.

ARTICLE IV

LICENSURE EXAMINATION AND REGISTRATION

SEC. 15. Licensure Examination. The applicants for registration, except those specifically allowed under Sections 8 and 22 of this Act, shall be required to undergo a written licensure examination to be given by the Board in such places and dates the PRC may designate subject to compliance with the requirements prescribed by the PRC.

SEC.16. Qualifications for Examination. The applicants for licensure examination must meet the following qualification at the time of filing of application:

- a) A citizen and resident of the Philippines;
- b) A holder of a relevant Bachelor's degree from a state university, recognized and duly accredited by the Commission on Higher Education, and degree leading in Legal or Paralegal Studies, Legal Management, or any such undergraduate degree preparatory to taking the Juris Doctor (JD) degree, or otherwise having completed at least seventy-two (72) academic credit units for a JD degree;
- c) With at least ten (10) cumulative years of experience as a paralegal retained or under contract by a lawyer, law office, or a relevant government or private sector employment, contract, or consultancy; and
- d) Of the good moral character, and must not have been convicted by final judgment by a competent court of any crime or criminal offense involving moral turpitude.

All applications for examination shall be filed with the Board which shall assess and approve said applications and issue to the qualified examinees the corresponding permits to take such examination.

SEC. 17. Scope of Examination. The licensure examination shall include the following subjects:

- a) Philippine Constitution;
- b) Administrative Law and Local Government Code;
- c) Philippine Judiciary and the Judicial System;
- d) Judicial and Legal Ethics, and Code of Professional Responsibility for Judges, Lawyers, and Paralegals;
- e) Persons and Family Relations, including gender issues, women and children's rights;
- f) Basics of Law on Obligation, and Civil and Commercial Contracts;
- g) Taxation and other commercials/mercantile laws;
- h) Labor law and labor relations;
- i) Pleadings, Civil Procedures, and Trial Practice; and
- j) Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure

1 **SEC. 18. Rating in the Examination.** To pass the licensure examination, a candidate
2 must obtain a passing rating of seventy-five percent (75%) in each subject given during
3 the examination: *Provided, However,* That an examinee who obtains a passing rating in
4 the majority of the subjects but obtains a rating in the other subjects below seventy-five
5 percent (75%) but not lower than sixty percent (60%), shall be allowed to take one
6 removal examination on the subjects where the passing rating was not obtained:
7 *Provided, finally,* That should the examinee fail to obtain a passing rating in the removal
8 examination, the examinee shall be considered as having failed the entire licensure
9 examination.

10 **SEC. 19. Report of Results of Examination.** The Board shall report to the PRC the
11 results of the examination and the ratings of the examinees within ten (10) days after the
12 examination.

13 **SEC. 20. Oath of Profession.** All successful examinees qualified for registration and
14 all qualified applicants for registration without examination shall be required to take an
15 oath of the profession before any PRC officer, Member of the Board, or any government
16 official authorized to administer oaths, before entering into paralegal practice in the
17 Philippines.

18 **SEC. 21. Issuance of Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification**
19 **Card.** The PRC, on the recommendation of the Board, shall issue a certificate of
20 registration and professional identification card to each person who passed the licensure
21 examination for paralegals and to those who are registered without examination under
22 this Act and shall enter the name of the registered professional in the Roster of
23 Paralegals. The certificate of registration shall bear the signature of the Chairperson of
24 the PRC and the Chairperson and Members of the Board, stamped with official seals of
25 the Board and PRC indicating that the person named therein is entitled to the practice
26 profession shall remain in full force and effect until suspended or revoked in accordance
27 with this Act. A professional Identification card bearing the name and signature of the
28 registrant, registration number, date of issuance, and expiry date, duly signed by the
29 Chairperson of the PRC, shall likewise be issued to every registrant who has paid the
30 prescribed fee.

SEC. 22. Registration Without Examination. Upon application and payment of the required fees, the following shall be registered and shall be issued by the Board and the PRC a Certificate of Registration and a Professional Identification Card without taking the prescribed examination.

- a) Those who, on the date of the effectivity of this Act, has been issued a certificate of completion of the Paralegal Training Program offered by the University of the Philippines Law Center and been a member of good standing of the Paralegal Training Program Alumni Association, Inc., for at least (two) 2 years;
- b) Those who, on the date of the effectivity of this Act, have been issued a certificate of completion of the OPLAN Jail Decongestion Project spearheaded by the National Committee on Legal Aid (NCLA) of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) and have been providing paralegal services for NCLA -assisted inmates for at least (2) years;
- c) Those who, on the date of the effectivity of this Act, has been issued a certificate of completion of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) paralegal program and have been BJMP paralegal officers for at least two (2) years; and
- d) Those who, on the date of the effectivity of this Act, are civil servants or public officers holding permanent appointments, with experience in performing or providing paralegal services to the public for at least two (2) years; and
- e) Those who, on the date of the effectivity of this Act, are employees of or under contract or otherwise retained in private enterprises or companies, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, trade unions, and labor organizations as paralegals or otherwise tasked to render and provide paralegal services to their clients and stakeholder for at least two (2) years, as duly certified by the employer. Those so exempt under the aforementioned categories shall file their application within two (2) years from the effectivity of the implementing rules and regulations: *Provided*, That the renewal of the professional identification card is subject to the provisions of Section 21 hereof.

SEC. 23. Refusal to Issue Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card. The Board shall not register any successful examinee nor any

1 applicant for registration without examination if one has been convicted by a court of
2 competent jurisdiction of any criminal offense involving moral turpitude or has been found
3 guilty of immoral and dishonorable conduct after investigation of the Board, or has been
4 declared to be unsound mind. The reason for the refusal shall be outlined in writing.

5 **SEC. 24. Revocation and Suspension of Certification of Registration and**
6 **Professional Identification Card or Cancellation of Temporary/Special Permit.** The
7 Board has the power, after due notice and hearing, to revoke or suspend the certificate
8 of registration or cancel a temporary or special permit of any paralegal on any ground
9 stated under Section 23 of this Act, or for any of the following: unprofessional or
10 dishonorable conduct in paralegal practice; fraud; deceit or falsification in obtaining a
11 certificate of registration, professional identification card, or temporary or special permit;
12 abatement of illegal practice by allowing illegal use of one's certificate of registration, or
13 professional identification card, or temporary or special permit; the practice of profession
14 during the period of suspension; or any violation of this Act, its Implementing Rules and
15 Regulations the Code Ethics or the Code of Technical Standards for paralegals, or Board
16 policies. The respondent may appeal the Board's decision, and order resolution to the
17 PRC within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof.

18 **SEC. 25. Reissuance of Revoked Certificate of Registration and Replacement of**
19 **Lost Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card.** The Board after
20 two (2) years from the date of revocation of the certificate of registration may reissue a
21 certificate upon proper application. A new certificate of registration and professional
22 identification card, or temporary or special permit, which has been lost, destroyed, or
23 mutilated, may be reissued after payment of the required fee prescribed by the PRC.

24 **SEC. 26. Roster of Paralegals.** The Board, in coordination with the AIPO of
25 paralegals, shall maintain an up-to-date, complete, and properly organized Roster
26 containing the following data:

- 27 a) Alphabetical list by surname of paralegals with their addresses and license
28 numbers;
- 29 b) The list of licensees, numerically arranged by license numbers; and
- 30 c) Such other lists which the Board may deem necessary.

1 The copies of the Roster, which shall be provided to the National Library, the Civil
2 Service Commission, and the AIPO of paralegals, shall be kept as a permanent record.

3 **ARTICLE IV**

4 **PARALEGAL PRACTICE**

5 **SEC. 27. Prohibitions and Limitations in the Paralegal Practice.** No person
6 shall practice or offer to practice paralegal in the Philippines or offer oneself as a
7 paralegal, or use the title, word, letter, figure, or any sign tending to convey the impression
8 that one is a paralegal or advertise or indicate in any manner whatsoever as qualified to
9 perform the work a paralegal unless the person satisfactorily passed the licensure
10 examination given by the Board, except as otherwise provided in this Act, and is a holder
11 of a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional license or a valid temporary
12 special permit duly issued by the Board and the PRC

13 **SEC. 28. Other Prohibited Acts.** No person shall:

- 14 a) Represent oneself as a paralegal during the time that the professional license is
15 not valid, the certificate of registration has been suspended or revoked, or the
16 temporary special permit is canceled;
- 17 b) Allow another person to use one's certificate of registration or professional license
18 or temporary special permit as a paralegal to enable the person to engage in the
19 practice of paralegal;
- 20 c) Use the certificate of registration or professional license or special temporary
21 permit of another paralegal.

22 **SEC. 29. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program.** The CPD
23 guidelines shall be prescribed and promulgated by the PRC upon consultation with the
24 Board, which shall consult the AIPO of paralegals, affiliated associations of paralegals,
25 and other concerned sectors. The Board shall create a CPD Council that shall be
26 composed of a Chairperson coming from the Board, a member from the AIPO of
27 paralegal, and a member from the academe.

SEC. 30. Integration of Paralegals. All paralegals shall be integrated into one (1) national organization, which shall be recognized by the Board and by the PRC as the only accredited integrated professional organizations (AIPO) of paralegals. A paralegal duly registered with the Board shall automatically become a member of the AIPO of paralegals, and shall receive the benefits and privileges and privileges thereto, upon payment of the required fees and dues. Membership in the AIPO shall not be a bar to membership in other associations of paralegals.

SEC. 31. Indication of License and Professional Tax Receipt. A paralegal shall be required to indicate the registration/professional number and date of issuance, the duration of validity, including the Professional Tax Receipt number on the documents one signs, or issues in connection with the practice of the profession.

ARTICLE V

PENAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 32. Penal Provisions. Any violation of this Act, including violations of implementing Rules and Regulations, shall be meted the penalty of a fine of not less than Fifty thousand pesos (Php. 50,000.00) but not more than Five hundred thousand pesos (Php. 500,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than four (4) years, or both, such fine and imprisonment upon the discretion of the court. In case the violation is committed by an unlicensed paralegal, the penalty shall be double the aforesaid fine and imprisonment.

In case the violation is committed by a partnership, corporation, association, or any other juridical person, the partner, president, director, or manager who has committed or consented to or knowingly tolerated such violation shall be held directly liable and responsible for the acts as a principal or a co-principal with the other participants if any.

SEC. 33. Appropriations. The Chairperson of the PRC shall immediately include in the PRC's programs the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and thereafter.

SEC. 34. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within (6) months after the effectivity of this Act, the Board shall in consultation with the CHED, LEB, and the U.P. Law Center, and subject only to the approval of the PRC, shall promulgate, adopt, and issue the implementing rules and regulations of this Act, including the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility for Paralegals. Such implementing rules and regulations and Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility shall be effective fifteen (15) days following their publication in the Official Gazette or newspaper of general circulation.

Sec. 35. Transitory Provision. All incumbent paralegals in both the public and private sector not otherwise certified as paralegals by virtue of this Act shall be given six (6) years of temporary certificates from the time the Board is organized within to qualify as required of this Act in the Roster.

Sec. 36. Separability Clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, or part of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

Sec. 37. Repealing Clause. All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative orders, proclamations, charters, rules or regulations, and parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of his Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec. 38. Effectivity Provision. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,