

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a cursive 'D' and 'R'.

CRISPIN DIEGO "PING" D. REMULLA



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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **9954**

Introduced by Representative Crispin Diego “Ping” D. Remulla

AN ACT EXEMPTING QUALIFIED INDIGENT FILIPINOS FROM PAYMENT OF PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION FEES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

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

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** It is the declared policy of the State to promote full
4 employment and to provide equal opportunities for employment for all. It is likewise the policy
5 of the state to promote a just and dynamic social order that will free the people from poverty
6 through policies and programs that provide adequate social services and improve the quality of
7 life. In this regard, efforts should be initiated to ease the financial burden of aspiring
8 professionals in the payment of professional and examination fees.

9 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** As provided for in this Act;

10 a. “*Professional Examinations*” shall refer to the licensure examinations administered
11 by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) and other certifying bodies of
12 the government as a prerequisite to the issuance of a license to engage in a

profession. This shall include the examinations administered by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to determine eligibility for employment in government service.

- b. “*Qualified Indigent*” refers to a person who has no visible means of income or support, or whose income is insufficient for the subsistence or basic needs of his or her family, as may be determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SEC. 4. *Requirements for Availment.* For purposes of availing of the benefits of this Act, an examinee shall secure a certification from the DSWD that said examinee is a qualified indigent. Such certification shall be presented to the certifying body in lieu of the payment of examination fees. Provided, that a first-time applicant may be entitled to a waiver of 100% of the examination fees; Provided, further, that in the event the examinee needs to retake the professional examination, he or she shall only be entitled to assistance equivalent to 50% for the examination fee for the second take, and no other subsidy shall be given for succeeding retakes.

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

SEC. 5. *Limitations on Availment.* Benefits of this Act may be availed of only once per year by a qualified indigent. Moreover, examinees who are already receiving similar benefits under other laws and programs of the government shall not be entitled to the benefits provided under these provisions. However, nothing contained herein shall diminish or decrease the benefits received by beneficiaries under pertinent laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC. 6. *Memorandum of Agreement.* The DSWD shall enter into an appropriate memorandum of agreement and coordinate with the certifying bodies for the proper implementation of this Act.

1 **SEC. 7. *Interpretation in Favor of the Applicant.*** In all cases, any ambiguity in the
2 interpretation of the provisions of this Act shall be in favor of the applicant. No agency shall
3 issue unduly restrictive regulations which will render the benefits provided under this Act
4 nugatory.

5 **SEC. 8. *Reportorial Requirement.*** For purposes of determining the effectiveness of
6 this Act, an Inter-Agency Committee (Committee) is hereby created with the Secretary of the
7 DSWD as the Chairperson and the heads of the PRC, CSC, and other relevant agencies, the
8 participation of which is deemed necessary by the Committee. The Committee shall submit an
9 annual report to the appropriate committees of both Houses of Congress on the status of the
10 implementation of this Act. The Committee shall closely monitor the compliance of the
11 concerned government agencies and may recommend to the proper authorities the filing of an
12 administrative complaint against any person who refuses to comply with the provisions of this
13 Act.

14 **SEC. 9. *Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign.*** The
15 Committee, in cooperation with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), is mandated to
16 conduct an annual IEC campaign to inform potential beneficiaries of the procedures and
17 guidelines in availing of the benefits of this Act. As far as practicable, the information
18 campaigns shall be made available in print, television, radio broadcast, and online platforms.

19 **SEC. 10. *Appropriations.*** An amount necessary for the initial implementation of this
20 Act shall be charged against the respective budgetary allocations of the concerned government
21 agencies, subject to the usual budgeting, accounting, and auditing rules and regulations.
22 Thereafter, an amount necessary for the proper implementation of this Act shall be included in
23 the annual General Appropriations Act.

24 **SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).*** Within ninety (90) days from
25 the date of effectivity of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, CSC, and the Supreme Court shall

1 formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper and effective implementation of
2 the provisions of this Act.

3 **SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional
4 or invalid, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and
5 effect.

6 **SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.*** Any law, decree, ordinance, or administrative circular
7 inconsistent with any provision of this Act is hereby amended, repealed or modified
8 accordingly.

9 **SEC. 14. *Effectivity Clause.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
10 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,