

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11098

Introduced by Representative Joseph Gilbert F. Violago



EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution enshrines that the State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all (Article II, Section 9).

Poverty is a harsh reality that most of our countrymen face on a daily basis. It is the poor students who bear the brunt of lack of financial resources, especially in pursuing their education. However, the toil does not end after graduation. Many graduates, who also do not have the means to review for the exams, still lack the financial capacity to pay for their professional examination fees – thus, adding another barrier for personal and professional growth.

For this reason, to alleviate the situation of our graduates, this proposed measure seeks to exempt qualified indigent applicants from the payment of professional examination fees. It is sought that through this measure, many will be encouraged to take their required exams and turn their aspirations into reality.

A similar version of the bill was filed in the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress by Rep. Enrico A. Pineda and Rep. Michael L. Romero, and the present proponent acknowledges the hard work and wisdom of his predecessors.

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

JOSEPH GILBERT F. VIOLAGO

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**AN ACT**  
**EXEMPTING QUALIFIED INDIGENT APPLICANTS FROM THE**  
**PAYMENT OF PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION FEES, AND FOR OTHER**  
**PURPOSES**

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

**SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Free Professional Examinations for Indigents Act of 2024”.

**SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare. The State shall afford full protection to labor and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. Towards this end, the State shall enact measures to ensure that aspiring professionals are shielded from the financial burden of licensure examination fees.

**SECTION 3. *Requirements for Availment.*** – For purposes of availing the benefits of this Act, an examinee shall secure a certification from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) that he/she is a qualified indigent. Such certification shall be presented to the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and Civil Service Commission (CSC), in lieu of the payment of examination fees; *Provided*, That a first time applicant may be entitled to one hundred percent (100%) of the examination fees; *Provided, further*, That in the event that the examinee needs to retake the professional examination, he/she shall only be entitled to assistance equivalent to fifty percent (50%) of the examination fee for the second take, and no other subsidy shall be given for further retake.

**SECTION 4. *Interpretation in Favor of the Indigent Applicant.*** – In all cases, any ambiguity in the interpretation of the provisions of this Act shall be in favor of the applicant. No agency shall issue unduly restrictive regulations which will render nugatory the benefits provided under this Act. such shall constitute an administrative offense punishable under the Administrative Code and other pertinent laws.

**SECTION 5. *Information Dissemination Campaign.*** – The DSWD, PRC, and CSC, in coordination with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), shall conduct regular information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns in order to inform potential beneficiaries of the procedures and guidelines in availing the benefits of this Act.

**SECTION 6. *Non-Duplication of Benefits.*** – Examinees who are already receiving similar benefits under other laws and programs of the government shall not be entitled to the benefits of this Act. However, nothing herein shall diminish or decrease the benefits received by the beneficiaries under pertinent laws, rules and regulations.

**SECTION 7. *Exceptions.*** – The waiver of fees under this Act shall not include those collected in connection with an application to take other examinations, such as specialization examinations administered by professional organizations, and the fees relating to the application for a driver's license.

**SECTION 8. *Non-Authority to Charge Fees.*** – This Act shall not be construed as an implied authority for government agencies to impose or collect charges and fees in the discharge of their functions with regard to the administration of professional examinations, if no such authority is already granted under their respective charters or other relevant laws.

**SECTION 9. *Appropriations.*** – An amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the respective budgetary allocations of the concerned government agencies, subject to the usual budgeting, accounting and auditing rules and regulations. Thereafter, an amount necessary for the proper implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, and CSC, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

**SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.*** — If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.*** — All laws, decrees, executive orders, memorandum orders, memorandum circulars, administrative orders, ordinances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 13. *Effectivity.*** — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*