

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2767



Introduced by Representative

BRIAN POE, PhD, MNSA

**AN ACT INCREASING ACCESS TO SKILLED TRADES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL OR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION, STRENGTHENING
TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EMPLOYABILITY, AND PROMOTING BLUE-COLLAR
DIGNITY**

In the Philippines, thousands of senior high school (SHS), high school (HS), and technical-vocational (Tech-Voc) graduates are ready and able to contribute meaningfully to the workforce. Yet many of them are denied opportunities for decent employment due to persistent diploma bias — the unwarranted requirement of a college degree for jobs that do not actually need one. This has led to widespread underemployment and undervaluation of skilled trades, despite their critical role in nation-building and economic growth.

At the same time, key industries such as construction, manufacturing, energy, transport, and digital infrastructure are experiencing growing demand for skilled workers. However, this demand is often unmet due to a mismatch between employer requirements and the available labor pool. The prevailing societal mindset that equates success solely with college degrees continues to discourage many from pursuing technical or trade-related paths — paths that are not only viable but urgently needed in today's labor market.

This proposed measure seeks to address these challenges by establishing a rights-based and opportunity-driven framework that enhances access to skilled trades and technical careers. It affirms that blue-collar work is dignified, valuable, and deserving of equal respect and support.

The bill prohibits the imposition of unnecessary college diploma requirements for jobs where SHS, HS, or Tech-Voc credentials are sufficient, and instead promotes competency-based assessments through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). It mandates the standardization and updating of skills certifications and encourages employers to offer structured on-the-job training, upskilling, and apprenticeship pathways that lead to career growth.

Moreover, the measure provides tax and training incentives for employers who hire qualified Tech-Voc and SHS graduates, and supports curriculum alignment across DepEd, TESDA, CHED, and industry partners to match the evolving needs of the labor market. Public-private partnerships are likewise strengthened to modernize training content and improve employment outcomes.

Recognizing the need to shift public perception, the bill also mandates a nationwide awareness campaign to elevate the image of skilled trades and challenge outdated stigmas against non-college pathways. Through annual reporting on hiring trends and skills gaps, the government will ensure that policies remain responsive and inclusive.

Ultimately, this Act envisions a labor force where no Filipino is held back by paper qualifications alone — where skills, hard work, and practical knowledge are valued as much as academic credentials. It is a measure aimed at equity, dignity, and economic empowerment for workers across all backgrounds.

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


HON. BRIAN POE, PhD, MNSA
Representative
FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-List

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Skilled Trades Access and Recognition Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote inclusive and sustainable employment by recognizing the competencies of Senior High School (SHS), High School (HS), and Technical-Vocational (Tech-Voc) graduates. The State shall eliminate discrimination based on college diploma requirements for blue-collar work and create opportunities for decent employment, continuous upskilling, and dignified careers in skilled trades.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act:

(a) Skilled Trades refer to occupations requiring specialized training and hands-on skills such as welding, masonry, carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, automotive servicing, and similar technical fields.

(b) Diploma Bias refers to the discriminatory practice of requiring a college degree for jobs that do not inherently require one, particularly in blue-collar or trade-related roles.

(c) Tech-Voc Graduates are individuals certified by TESDA or other recognized training institutions for completing technical-vocational education or short-term skills programs.

(d) Blue-Collar Roles refer to jobs primarily involving manual labor or technical skills typically found in industries such as construction, manufacturing, repair, logistics, and maintenance.

SEC. 4. Prohibition of Diploma Discrimination. – Public and private employers shall not impose college diploma requirements for hiring into blue-collar positions where SHS, HS, or Tech-Voc credentials and certifications are deemed sufficient. Instead, competency-based assessments and skills recognition shall be prioritized.

SEC. 5. Skills Certification and Standardization. – TESDA shall standardize and continuously update its certification and assessment mechanisms to align with industry standards. This includes issuing National Certificates (NC I, II, III) as proof of competence for employment and apprenticeship eligibility.

SEC. 6. Workplace Upskilling and On-the-Job Training. – Employers are encouraged to implement structured on-the-job training (OJT) and upskilling programs for employees hired under this Act, in partnership with TESDA and other accredited training providers.

SEC. 7. Apprenticeship Pathways. – A national system of apprenticeships shall be expanded, allowing SHS, HS, and Tech-Voc graduates to enter structured workplace-based learning programs that lead to regular employment, higher pay grades, and career advancement.

SEC. 8. Incentives to Employers. – Employers hiring certified Tech-Voc or SHS graduates shall be entitled to:

- (a) Tax deductions on training expenses;
- (b) Priority access to government training subsidies;
- (c) Recognition through national awards or certifications under DOLE or DTI programs.

SEC. 9. Curriculum Alignment to Labor Demand. – DepEd, in collaboration with TESDA, CHED, and industry partners, shall periodically review and update SHS and Tech-Voc curricula to align with evolving labor market demands, particularly in high-growth sectors such as construction, energy, transportation, and digital services.

SEC. 10. Industry-Academe Partnerships. – The government shall support formal partnerships between industries, TESDA, and educational institutions to modernize training content, develop real-world projects, and enhance employability outcomes.

SEC. 11. Public Awareness and Mindset-Shifting Campaign. – A nationwide public information campaign shall be launched to:

- (a) Promote the dignity and economic potential of blue-collar professions;
- (b) Correct misconceptions about non-college education paths;
- (c) Highlight success stories and economic impact of skilled trades.

SEC. 12. Job-Matching and Reporting. – DOLE, in coordination with TESDA and DepEd, shall produce annual job-matching and employment reports, analyzing hiring trends, skills gaps, and employment outcomes for SHS, HS, and Tech-Voc graduates. These shall guide policy improvements and funding allocations.

SEC. 13. Appropriations. – The initial funding necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the existing budgets of DOLE, TESDA, DepEd, and DTI. Subsequent funding shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

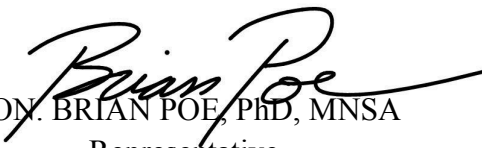
SEC. 14. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOLE, TESDA, DepEd, and DTI shall promulgate the necessary Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to operationalize the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 15. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 16. Repealing Clause. – All laws, rules, regulations, or issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 17. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,


HON. BRIAN POE, PhD, MNSA
Representative
FPJ Panday Bayanihan Party-List