

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3741



Introduced by Rep. Anna York P. Bondoc

**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A PHILIPPINE PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSIONALIZATION ACT,
REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10029, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE PSYCHOLOGY ACT OF 2009", AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Psychology Act of 2009 (RA 10029) played a pivotal role in advancing the psychology practice in the Philippines, especially in the delivery of psychological services. **After the 8th licensure examination in August 2023, there are 2,030 licensed psychologist (RPsy) and 31,433 licensed psychometricians (RPM) in the country.** However, several issues gaps in the implementation of the law have emerged since its passing.

First, the COVID-19 pandemic and other local and global crisis brought to the surface a prevalence of mental health challenges among Filipinos and highlighted the limited number of psychology professionals to address these issues. In 2021, the Department of Health (DOH) estimates that there are at least 3.6 million Filipinos with mental health issues.² In the 2018 report of UNICEF, 10% to 15% of Filipino children aged 5 to 15 are affected by mental health problems.³

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) 2022 report, 16.8% of Filipino students aged 13 to 17 have attempted suicide.⁴ Likewise, WHO estimates that low-

¹ PRC Professional Registry Division

² At least 3.6 million Filipinos battling mental health issues amid pandemic: DOH; 2021. Available from: <https://news.absbn.com/spotlight/05/19/21/at-least-36-million-filipinos-battling-mental-health-issues-amid-pandemic-doh>

and lower- middle-income countries, less than 25% of people depression receive formal mental health care and minimally-adequate treatment for depression.⁵ Assuming all of the registered psychologist (RPsy) are providing mental health services, this is still only 0.69 psychologist for every 100,000 Filipinos.

In light of this, WHO underscores the urgent need to transform mental health care by moving away from custodial care in psychiatric hospitals to mental health services that are integrated in general health care, community mental health services, and services beyond the health sector.⁶ The enactment of the Philippine Mental Health Act of 2018 (RA 11036) embodies the country's recognition of the importance of providing mental health services in health facilities, communities, educational facilities and workplaces.⁷ The 8-Point Agenda of the DOH ⁸, as well as the Philippine Council for Mental Health's (PCMH) Strategy Map for 2023-2028, likewise back up the thrust of providing universal and integrated mental health care and support.

The proposed amendments to RA 10029 (attached herewith) aim to align with these national goals, guidelines, and standards. While licensed psychologists work in specialized settings, there is also a need to ensure mental health service providers in non-specialized settings. Graduates of a bachelor's degree in psychology possess valuable skills to fill these needs but are underutilized because of limits in how the current law defines the function to that of psychometricians. To address this, we mainly propose expanding the functions of psychology professionals referred to as "psychometricians" in RA 10029, with appropriate regulations, in order to maximize their contributions to mental health. We further propose replacing the term "psychometricians" with "registered associate psychologists" to reflect their expanded functions.

Additionally, we advocate for the acknowledgement of a more inclusive definition of the functions of registered psychologists, recognizing non-clinical practitioners' vital contributions in research, teaching, and consultancy services, among other areas of practice. These recommended changes in definitions and terminologies are also in keeping with the International Declaration of Core Competencies in Professional Psychology by the International Project on Competence in Psychology (IPCP).

Furthermore, we aim to inch closer to becoming at par with global standards in the practice of psychology while still in compliance with the guidelines set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). In light of this, we propose increasing the required internship / practicum hours for both the registered associate psychologists and registered psychologists, and changing some of the licensure examination subjects to more adequately measure competencies relevant to actual practice.

In sum, it is imperative that RA 10029 be updated to be complementary with the provisions and goals of the Philippine Mental Health Act of 2018 (RA 11036), other local legislations, international standards, and the national thrust towards a more integrated and comprehensive approach to mental health care in the Philippines. The proposed amendments to RA 10029 seek to enhance the practice of psychology and improve the effectiveness of psychology services in the country while balancing regulatory control.

³ Situation Analysis of Children in the Philippines: A Summary Report [Internet]. UNICEF Philippines; 2018. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/556/file>.

⁴ Global school-based student survey: Philippines 2015 fact sheet. World Health Organization. 2015. Available from: https://www.who.int/ncds/surveillance/gshs/PIH2015_fact_sheet.pdf.

⁵ World Health Organization. Depression. Available from: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/depression>

⁶ World mental health report: Transforming mental health for all; 2022. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240049338>

⁷ Republic Act No. 11036; 2018. Available from: https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2018/ra_11036_2018.html

⁸ Herbosa bares 8-point agenda, pushes for 'humanistic' approach to public health; 2023. Available from: <https://news.absbn.com/news/06/19/23/new-health-chief-herbosa-bares-8-point-agenda-of-doh>

Amending the law will allow the Psychology profession to better serve the Filipino people by ensuring that the practice of psychology remains relevant, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs of our country.

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


ANNA YORK P. BONDOC, M.D.

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

ARTICLE I

TITLE

SECTION 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "*Philippine Psychology Professionalization Act*."

ARTICLE II

STATEMENT OF POLICY

SEC. 2. Statement of Policy. The State recognizes that psychologists have an important role in nation-building and development. It also acknowledges the diverse specializations of psychologists and the distinct functions specific to the varied specializations, including those that do not involve the professional practice of psychology or the delivery of psychological services. It further acknowledges the need to protect the public by preventing unqualified individuals from engaging in psychological practice or offering psychological services. Hence, it shall nurture competent, upright, and diligent registered professional psychologists whose standards of practice and service shall be excellent and globally competitive through the administration of inviolable, effective, and credible licensure examinations and the imposition and promotion of regulatory measures, programs, and activities that enhance their professional growth and well-being.

ARTICLE III

DEFINITION OF TERMS

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

a) *Practice of Psychology* refers to the delivery of psychological services that involve the application of psychological principles and procedures to describe, understand, and influence the behavior of individuals or groups to assist in the attainment of optimal human growth and functioning. The delivery of psychological services includes:

- 1) **Psychological Assessment.** A systematic process that uses a

combination of techniques and methods, such as tests, inventories, interviews, and observations, to evaluate various psychological and behavioral characteristics, such as traits and capabilities of an individual or group of individuals; and

2) **Psychological Interventions.** A deliberate and structured process with an expected outcome based on psychological theories or models to facilitate psychological changes in an individual, group, community, organization, or system. These psychological services may be provided through telecommunication technologies: *Provided*, that service providers comply with all legal requirements and ethical standards and regulations when providing telepsychology services to patients across jurisdictional and international borders.

b) *Psychology* refers to the scientific study of human behavior. It involves applying scientific methods to inquire into the biological, cognitive, affective, developmental, personality, social, cultural, and individual dimension of human behavior.

c) *Psychologist* refers to a person with postgraduate training in psychology who engages in teaching, research, and professional practice of psychology. A psychologist may or may not be a registered psychologist.

d) *Registered Psychologist* refers to a natural person duly registered and holds a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card as a professional registered psychologist issued by the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) pursuant to this Act to deliver the following psychological services:

1) Psychological assessment for diagnosis, providing mental health status clearance, developing psychological interventions, aiding in decision-making for court cases, hiring and promotion, and licensing of firearms, among others;

2) Psychological interventions such as psychological counseling, psychotherapy, psychosocial support, psychological coaching, psychological debriefing, group therapy, and all other psychological interventions for clinical populations involving the application of psychological principles to improve the psychological functioning of individuals, families, groups, and organizations. This includes the development, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the psychological programs for individuals or groups;

3) Supervision of the practices mentioned above;

4) Teaching of subjects covered in the licensure examination for registered psychologists, as well as equivalent course titles: *Provided*, That they have met the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requirements;

5) All services and activities that registered psychology associates can do; and

6) All psychological services and functions that mental health associates or professionals can do.

e) *Registered Psychology Associate* refers to a natural person who holds a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card as a registered psychology associate issued by the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychologists and the PRC pursuant to this Act. As such, they shall be authorized to do any of the following:

1) Psychological screening for risk assessment and behavioral assessment;

2) Psychological evaluation of non-clinical populations for hiring, school admission, and among others;

3) Intake interviews for non-clinical populations;

- 4) Needs assessment for groups, organizations, or communities;
- 5) Psychosocial support for which they have the appropriate training, not requiring graduate or specialist training;
- 6) Training, learning, and development programs for which they have the appropriate training;
- 7) Psychoeducation for mental health literacy;
- 8) Provision of human resource management services in organizations and communities;
- 9) Development, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of wellness programs for organizations and communities;
- 10) Teaching of subjects covered in the licensure examination for registered psychology associates, as well as equivalent course titles: *Provided*, That they have met the CHED requirements;
- 11) Assistance for the registered psychologist in psychological assessment and interventions for clinical populations; and
- 12) All psychological services and functions that mental health associates or professionals can perform for non-clinical populations except counseling and psychotherapy.

f) *Clinical populations* refer to individuals who exhibit psychological symptoms, cognitive impairments, neurologic conditions, traumatic stress reactions, significant distress and impaired functioning, and chronic problem behaviors that require specialized assessment and interventions by a registered psychologist.

ARTICLE IV

PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY

SEC. 4. Creation and Composition of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology. There is hereby created a Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology, hereinafter called the Board, a collegial body under the administrative control and supervision of the PRC, which shall be composed of a Chairperson and four (4) members appointed by the President of the Philippines from a list of three (3) nominees for each position. The accredited integrated professional organization (AIPO) of psychologists shall submit nominees to the PRC. The Board shall be organized not later than sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 5. Qualifications of the Chairperson and Members of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology. The chairperson and members of the Board shall, at the time of their appointment, possess the following qualifications:

- a) A natural-born citizen and resident of the Philippines;
- b) At least thirty-five (35) years of age;
- c) Of good moral character;
- d) A holder of a doctorate in psychology conferred by a university, college, or school in the Philippines or abroad duly recognized or accredited by the CHED;
- e) Have at least ten (10) years of practice in psychology in a duly recognized institution, clinic, or center, as well as at least five (5) years of teaching experience in the field of psychology;
- f) A registered psychologist, without the requirement of separate registration as registered psychology associate, except in the case of the first members of the Board who shall automatically be conferred a valid certificate of registration and a valid professional identification card as a Registered

Psychologist and Registered Psychology Associate upon appointment of the Board;

- g) Neither an officer, trustee, nor member of the faculty of any university, college, institute, or school where a regular course in psychology is offered or taught or review classes conducted and shall not have any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any such institution;
- h) Not an officer nor hold any position other than being a member of the AIPO of psychologists; and
- i) Shall not have been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude.

SEC. 6. Term of Office. The chairperson and the members of the Board shall have a term of five (5) years or until their successors shall have been appointed and duly qualified. In its first year of implementation, two (2) members shall serve for five (5) years, one of which shall be designated as the chairperson; two (2) members shall serve for three (3) years, and one (1) other member shall serve for one (1) year, which shall be specified in their respective appointments.

Each member of the Board may be reappointed for one (1) full term of five (5) years only.

The member serving the last year of their term shall automatically become the chairperson of the Board and shall not be able to succeed themselves immediately after the expiration of the term of office so that the term of one member shall be due to expire every year: *Provided, however,* That all appointments for chairperson shall be approved by the President of the Philippines: *Provided further,* That an appointment for any existing vacancy or vacancies shall be made within one month from the time the vacancy occurred and shall be for the unexpired portion of the term only.

Each member of the Board shall qualify by taking the proper oath of office before the performance of duties.

SEC. 7. Powers and Duties. The Board shall have the following powers and duties:

- a) Administer and implement the provisions of this Act and promulgate, revise, or update the rules and regulations, resolutions, and guidelines as necessary: *Provided,* That the policies, resolutions, rules and regulations issued or promulgated by the Board shall be subject to review and approval of the PRC;
- b) Supervise and monitor the registration, licensure, and practice of registered psychologists and registered psychology associates in the Philippines;
- c) Administer oaths of profession in connection with the administration of this Act;
- d) Issue, suspend, revoke, or reinstate, upon compliance with due process and requirements, the certificate of registration and professional identification card for registered psychologist and registered psychology associate;
- e) Adopt an official seal of the Board;
- f) Monitor the conditions and circumstances affecting the practice of psychology in the Philippines and adopt such measures as may be deemed lawful and proper for the enhancement and maintenance of high professional, ethical, and technical standards of the profession after thorough and extensive consultations with stakeholders, such as the AIPO and its practice divisions, CHED, higher educational institutions (HEIs), chartered and autonomous from CHED, and among others;
- g) Issue permits and exercise visitatorial powers over institutions,

- associations, corporations, and partnerships to verify that the persons practicing psychology therein are registered psychologists and registered psychology associates with valid certificates of registration and valid professional identification cards;
- h) Assist the PRC in the formulation and implementation of the guidelines on continuing professional education for registered psychologists and registered psychology associates;
 - i) Ensure that all educational institutions under CHED's purview that offer the course or program in psychology comply with the policies, standards, and requirements strictly prescribed by the CHED for such course or program, especially in the areas of administration, curriculum, faculty, library, and facilities;
 - j) Prepare, adopt, issue, and amend the syllabi for the licensure examination subjects after thorough consultations with stakeholders, such as the AIPO, CHED, and HEIs classified as autonomous by CHED and by charter. This function does not extend to any curricular matters beyond the syllabi for the licensure examination subjects;
 - k) Investigate and, when warranted, hear administrative cases involving violations of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations as hereinafter promulgated, and any applicable code of ethics or code of professional standards. For this purpose, it may issue *subpoena ad testificandum* and *subpoena duces tecum* to secure the appearances of witnesses and the production of documents in connection therewith: *Provided*, That the Board's decision, resolution, or orders rendered in administrative cases shall be subject to review only on appeal; and
 - l) Perform such other functions and duties as may be lawfully delegated, or as it may deem necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act, and going through extensive consultation with various stakeholders, such as the AIPO, CHED, other HEIs classified as autonomous by CHED and by charter.

SEC. 8. Compensation and Allowances. The chairperson and members of the Board shall receive compensation or honorarium similar to those obtained by the chairperson and members of the existing regulatory boards, subject to the prevailing government issuances and rules and regulations on the matter.

SEC. 9. Removal or Suspension of Members of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology. Any member of the Board in observance of due process and completion of the proper investigation may be suspended or removed by the President from office upon the recommendation of the PRC for causes such as gross neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, behavior unbecoming of a psychology professional, immorality, unethical, or dishonorable conduct, final conviction of any crime involving moral turpitude, any act of graft and corruption, and participation in the manipulation of or any dishonesty relative to the licensure examinations or the registration process.

SEC.10. Administrative Supervision over the Board, Custodian of its Records, Secretariat, and Support Services. The Board shall be under the administrative supervision and control of the PRC. All records of the Board, including documents relative to the licensure examinations as well as administrative and other investigative cases conducted by the Board, shall be kept in the custody of the PRC. The PRC shall designate the secretary of the Board and provide the secretariat with necessary support services to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

ARTICLE V

LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS

SEC. 11. Examinations Required. All applicants for registration to practice

psychology must pass the licensure examination for registered psychologists and registered psychology associates, which the Board shall conduct at such places and dates and subject to such requirements prescribed by the PRC.

SEC.12. Qualifications of Applicants for the Licensure Examination for Registered Psychologists. An applicant for the licensure examination for registered psychologist shall meet the following qualifications:

- a) Must be a Filipino citizen, a permanent resident, or a citizen of a foreign State, which extends reciprocity to the Philippines relative to the practice of the profession;
- b) Must be at least a master's degree holder in psychology conferred by a university, college, or school in the Philippines or abroad accredited by the CHED and has obtained sufficient credits for the subjects covered in the examinations;
- c) Must have undergone a minimum of two hundred (200) hours of supervised practicum or clinical experience pertinent to the services delineated in Section 3(d) of this Act, which shall be conducted under the supervision and guidance of a registered psychologist or another duly licensed mental health professional;
- d) Must be of good moral character; and
- e) Must not have been convicted of an offense involving moral turpitude by a court of competent jurisdiction.

SEC.13. Qualifications of Applicants for the Licensure Examination for Registered Psychology Associates. An applicant for the licensure as a registered psychology associate shall meet the following qualifications:

- a) Must be a Filipino citizen, a permanent resident, or a citizen of a foreign State which extends reciprocity to the Philippines relative to the practice of the profession;
- b) Must have at least a bachelor's degree holder in psychology conferred by a university, college, or school in the Philippines or abroad accredited by the CHED and has obtained sufficient credits for the subjects covered in the examinations;
- c) Must have undergone a minimum of fifty (50) hours to no more than one hundred (100) hours of supervised practicum or internship experience related to services enumerated in Section 3 (e) of this Act and under the auspices of a registered psychologist or other licensed mental health professional. The number of hours applies until CHED increases this number based on their guidelines and after thorough consultation with relevant stakeholders such as HEIs, autonomous or chartered HEIs, and the AIPO and its practice divisions;
- d) Must be of good moral character; and
- e) Must not have been convicted of an offense involving moral turpitude by a court of competent jurisdiction.

SEC. 14. Examination Subjects for Registered Psychologists. The licensure examination for registered psychologist shall cover the following subjects or their respective equivalent course titles:

- a) Advanced Theories of Personality
- b) Advanced Abnormal Psychology
- c) Advanced Psychological Assessment

- d) Counseling and Psychotherapy

SEC. 15. Examination Subjects for Registered Psychology Associates. The licensure examinations for registered associate psychologists shall cover the following subjects or their respective equivalent course titles:

- a) Developmental Psychology
- b) Abnormal Psychology
- c) Work and Organizational Psychology
- d) Psychological Assessment

The Board may recluster, rearrange, modify, add or exclude and prescribe subjects for registered psychologists and registered psychology associates as the need arises, but only after extensive consultation with various stakeholders such as the AIPO, CHED, and HEIs classified as autonomous by CHED and by charter.

SEC. 16. Registration Without Examination for Registered Psychologist. A person who possesses the qualifications required to take the examination for registration as a psychologist pursuant to the provisions of this Act, an application for registration and issuance of certificate of registration and professional identification card by submitting credentials satisfactory to the Board that the applicant had, on or before the first Board Licensure Examination for Psychologist and Psychometricians (BLEPP) in 2014, fulfilled the requirements under either subparagraphs a) or b) herein:

- a) Obtain a doctoral degree in psychology and had accumulated three (3) years of work experience in the practice of psychology; or
- b) Obtain master's degree in psychology and accumulated a minimum of five (5) years of work experience in the practice of psychology.

SEC. 17. Registration Without Examination for Registered Psychology Associates. A person who possesses the qualification required to take the examination for registration as a registered associate psychologist may be registered without examination: *Provided*, That an applicant files with the Board within three (3) years after the effectivity of this Act an application for registration and issuance of certificate of registration and professional identification card by submitting credentials satisfactory to the Board that the applicant had, or before the effectivity of this Act obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology and accumulated at least seven (7) years of full-time work experience in any function attributed to a registered psychology associate as defined in Art III Sec. 3 (e) of this Act.

SEC. 18. Ratings in the Examination. To qualify as having passed the licensure examination for registered psychologists and registered psychology associates, a candidate must have obtained a weighted general average of at least seventy-five percent (75%) for all subjects, with no grade lower than sixty percent (60%) in any given subject. An examinee who obtains a weighted general average of 75% or higher but obtains a rating below 60% in any given subject may retake such subjects within the next two (2) years, and upon obtaining a rating of at least 75% in each such subject, shall then be deemed to have passed the licensure examination.

SEC. 19. Report of Ratings. The Board shall submit to the PRC an official report of the ratings obtained by each examinee within ten (10) calendar days after the examination unless such period is extended for just cause.

ARTICLE VI

REGISTRATION

SEC. 20. Oath of Profession for Registered Psychologists and Registered

Psychology Associates. All successful examinees and qualified applicants for registration without examination shall be required to take an oath to uphold the profession before any member of the Board or any officer of the PRC authorized to administer oaths before entering into the practice of psychology in the Philippines.

SEC. 21. Issuance of Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card. A certificate of registration and professional identification card shall be issued to all successful examinees and registrants without examination upon compliance with all the legal requirements, including payment of fees prescribed by the PRC. The certificate of registration shall bear the signature of the Chairperson of the PRC and members of the Board, indicating that the person named therein is entitled to practice the profession with all the privileges and responsibilities appurtenant thereto. The certificate shall remain in full force and effect until suspended in accordance with this Act. A professional identification card bearing the registration number, date of issuance, and validity term of three (3) years, duly signed by the Chairperson of the PRC, shall likewise be issued to every registrant who has paid the prescribed registration fee. Upon expiration of the professional identification card, the registered psychologist and registered psychology associate may renew the same upon proof of compliance with continuing education requirements prescribed by the Board or PRC.

SEC. 22. Disclosure of Registration Information. The registered psychologist or registered psychology associate shall indicate the registration and professional identification card number, date of issuance, duration of validity, and professional tax receipt number on each document signed, used, or issued in connection with the practice of the profession.

SEC. 23. Non-issuance of Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card. The Board shall not register nor issue a certificate of registration or professional identification card to any person convicted of a criminal offense involving moral turpitude, has been found guilty by a judicial or other duly constituted tribunal of immoral or dishonorable conduct, or has been medically diagnosed to be of unsound mind. In the event of non-issuance of the certificate for any reason, the Board shall furnish the applicant a written statement stating the reasons for such denial, which shall be incorporated into the records of the Board.

SEC. 24. Foreign Reciprocity. No foreigner shall be admitted to the licensure examination for registered psychologists or registered psychology associates unless they prove that the State of which they are a citizen either:

- a) Admits Filipino citizens to the practice of psychology without the need for registration and issuance of a certificate of registration and professional identification card;
- b) Allows Filipino citizens to practice psychology without restriction; or
- c) Allows Filipino citizens to practice after an examination on strict and absolute equality with nationals of said State.

SEC. 25. Practice through a Special Temporary Permit. The Board may issue, subject to the approval of the PRC and payment of appropriate fees, a special temporary permit to the following persons:

- a) Registered psychologists or registered psychology associates from foreign States are internationally acknowledged specialists or outstanding experts in psychology: *Provided*, That their services are essential and necessary either due to the lack or inadequacy of available local specialists or experts or in recognition of their potential contribution to the promotion and advancement of the practice of psychology through transfer of technology;
- b) Registered psychologists or registered psychology associates from foreign States whose services shall be free and offered exclusively to indigent patients in a particular hospital, center, or clinic; and

- c) Registered psychologists or registered psychology associates from foreign States are employed as exchange professors to teach psychology in schools, colleges, and universities offering psychology courses or programs. The special temporary permit shall detail its conditions, which include an effectivity period of not more than one (1) year, subject to renewal, and the specific place of practice, such as a clinic, hospital, center, school, college, or university offering psychology. The Board shall prescribe rules and regulations on the implementation of this particular section, subject to the approval of the PRC.

SEC. 26. Suspension or Revocation of Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card or Cancellation of a Special or Temporary Permit.

The Board shall have the power, after notice and hearing, to suspend or revoke the certificate of registration and professional identification card or to cancel the special temporary permit granted under this Act on any ground provided in Section 34 of this Act or any of the instances hereunder:

- a) Procurement of a certificate of registration or professional identification card and special temporary permit by fraud or deceit;
- b) Allowing an unqualified person to advertise or to practice the profession by using one's certificate of registration or professional identification card and special temporary permit;
- c) Violating or conspiring to violate any of the provisions of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations, the code of ethics or code of professional standards promulgated hereinafter by the Board;
- d) Manifest physical or mental incompetence to render psychological services with reasonable skill and safety to the clients or patients;
- e) Professional misconduct or negligence in the performance of duties as a registered psychologist or a registered psychology associate; and
- f) Engaging in the practice of the profession during the period of the suspension.

SEC. 27. Reinstatement. A registered psychologist or registered psychology associate whose certificate of registration has been revoked may apply to the Board for reinstatement at any time after two (2) years from the date of revocation of said certificate. The application shall be in writing and conform to the Board's requirements. No certificate of registration, professional identification card, or special temporary permit shall be reinstated unless the Board is satisfied that a good cause exists to warrant such reinstatement. Issuance of a new certificate of registration, professional identification card, and special temporary permit in lieu of the one lost, destroyed, or mutilated shall be subject to applicable rules prescribed by the PRC.

SEC. 28. Appeal from Judgement. The decision of the Board shall *ipso facto* become final fifteen (15) days from receipt of the decision by the respondent unless an appeal has been filed with the PRC within the same period. The PRC's decision on appeal may be further appealed before the Court of Appeals within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof.

SEC. 29. Rights of the Respondent. The respondent, a registered psychologist or registered psychology associate, shall have the right to be represented by counsel at all stages of the proceedings and to the speedy disposition of their case. They shall have the right to confront witnesses against them and other rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

ARTICLE VII

PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSIONALS IN GOVERNMENT

SEC. 30. Creation of Plantilla Positions for Registered Psychology Associates

and Registered Psychologists. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is mandated to create the position of registered psychologists and registered psychology associates in the Index of Occupational Services, Occupational Groups, Classes, and Salary Grades under the Medicine and Health Services Occupational Group. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall determine the appropriate salary grade based on the requirements of RA No. 6758 and Joint Congress Resolution No. 4, s. 2029. The CSC and DBM shall consult with stakeholders in psychology practice, including the AIPO and its practice divisions, to understand the nature and complexity of psychological practice and to be guided in determining appropriate job descriptions, ranks and salary grades that represent fair and just compensation. Pursuant to Chapters 4 and 5 of RA 11036, otherwise known as the "Mental Health Act," the following are mandated to create plantilla positions for registered psychology associates and registered psychologists based on a thorough assessment of workload demands, service requirements, and organizational objectives:

- a) Local government units (LGU) at the city, municipal, and barangay levels;
- b) Regional, provincial, and tertiary hospitals, including private hospitals rendering service to paying patients;
- c) All public and private educational institutions, such as schools, colleges, universities, and technical schools; and
- d) All workplaces.

ARTICLE VIII

PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

SEC. 31. Rights to Privileged Communication for Registered Psychologists and Registered Psychology Associates. A registered psychologist or registered psychology associate, without the consent of the client or patient, cannot be examined on any communication or information disclosed in the course of giving psychological or mental health services to such client. The protection accorded herein shall extend to all pertinent records and be available to the secretary, clerk, or other staff of the registered psychologist or registered psychology associate. Any evidence obtained violating this provision shall be inadmissible for any purpose in any proceeding.

SEC. 32. Integration of the Profession. The profession shall hereinafter be integrated into one national organization of registered psychologists and registered psychology associates, which shall be recognized and accredited by the Board, subject to the approval of the PRC. A registered psychologist or registered psychology associate shall automatically become a member of said organization, receive the benefits and privileges, and perform all responsibilities and obligations appurtenant upon payment of the required fees and dues. Membership in the AIPO shall not be a bar to membership in any other association of registered psychologists or registered psychology associates.

SEC. 33. Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for Registered Psychologists and Registered Psychology Associates. The Board shall adopt and promulgate the Code of Ethics and Code of Practice for registered psychologists and registered psychology associates prescribed and issued by the AIPO of psychologists.

ARTICLE IX

PROHIBITED ACTS, PENALTIES, AND ENFORCEMENT OF THIS ACT

SEC. 34. Prohibited Acts.

- a) No person shall:
 - 1) Engage in the professional practice of psychology nor represent themselves as a registered psychologist or registered psychology associate without a valid certificate of registration, valid professional identification card, and a valid special temporary permit granted by the Board under this Act;

- 2) Represent oneself to be a licensed and authorized registered psychologist or registered psychology associate during the time that the certificate of registration or special temporary permit has been suspended or revoked or the professional identification card expired;
 - 3) Allow any other person to use the certificate of registration and professional identification card and special temporary permit for any purpose, regardless of whether such enables the unqualified individual to engage in the practice of psychology;
 - 4) Use, exhibit, or misrepresent as the owner of the certificate of registration or professional identification card or special temporary permit of another; and
 - 5) Give any false, inaccurate, misleading, or incomplete information to the Board to obtain a certificate of registration, professional identification card, and special temporary permit.
 - 6) No corporation, partnership, association, or entity shall operate a psychology office, center or clinic, or otherwise engage in the practice of psychology that involves clinical populations within its premises without being headed by a registered psychologist with at least three (3) years of clinical experience.
- b) A violation of any provision of this Act or its implementing rules and regulations shall be penalized accordingly.

SEC. 35. Penalties. Any person who violates any provision of this Act and its implementing rules and regulations shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than three (3) years or a fine of not less than Ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) at the discretion of the court.

SEC. 36. Injunction. The Board may initiate action to enjoin, restrain, or prosecute any individual, corporation, association, partnership, or entity engaging in the practice of psychology in violation of this Act.

SEC. 37. Enforcement. It shall be the duty of all duly constituted law enforcement agencies and officers of national, provincial, city, or municipal governments to uphold and enforce the provisions of this Act and to investigate and prosecute or cause the investigation and prosecution of any person violating the same.

ARTICLE X

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 38. Appropriations. The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 39. Transitory Provisions. (a) A Salary Grade and Item Allocation Review Committee in coordination with relevant government agencies and institutions shall be established. This committee will determine the salary grade and qualifications of the registered psychology associate and registered psychologist; (b) The current PRB shall remain as interim members no later than sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, or until a new set of members is organized; (c) Existing licenses and registrations as Registered Psychologist and Registered Psychometrician under RA 10029 shall remain in force until their respective expiration dates, at which point they may be renewed in accordance with the provisions of this Act; and (d) in all statutes, regulations, and legal documents where the term 'registered psychometrician' is used, such term shall be construed to refer to 'registered psychology associate' for the purposes of this legislation. This interpretation shall apply retroactively to all relevant contexts in which the term 'psychometrician' appears.

SEC. 40. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Subject to the approval of the PRC

and within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Board shall adopt and promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 41. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is found to be unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 42. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 43. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette and in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,