



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4688



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
INSTITUTING A NATIONAL CITIZENS SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, REPEALING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9163, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “NATIONAL SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM ACT”, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Mandatory National Citizens Service Training Program is designed to harness the collective power of the Filipino youth, recognizing their crucial role in national development and defense. The program seeks to ensure that young citizens are well-prepared to contribute actively to nation-building, while also being equipped to respond to national and local emergencies. This initiative aims to strengthen the country’s capacity to address contingencies by mobilizing the youth in times of need, complementing the efforts of national and local government agencies.

The primary goal of this bill is to engage the youth in nation-building by promoting their physical, moral, intellectual, and social well-being. It aims to instill important values such as patriotism, nationalism, and respect for human rights, while encouraging their involvement in public and civic affairs. This will help build a sense of responsibility and leadership in the younger generation.

Further, this measure also seeks to incorporate the youth into the citizens' reserve force, as outlined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. This reserve force will undergo training in areas such as national defense, law enforcement, peace and order, and disaster management. By preparing the youth for swift mobilization, the program ensures that the country can respond to emergencies effectively and with the necessary personnel.

By equipping young Filipinos with the skills to handle emergencies, both natural and man-made, this bill aims to create a more resilient and prepared generation that will contribute to the country's safety and development.

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



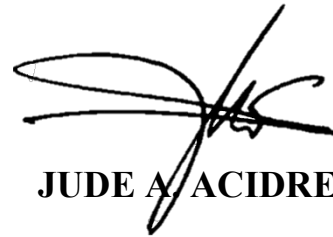
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

ARTICLE I

TITLE

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "National Citizens Service Training Program Act".

ARTICLE II

DECLARATION OF POLICY

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State:

- a) To institutionalize the vital role of the youth in nation-building, promote, propagate and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being; to inculcate in them patriotism, nationalism and respect for human rights; and to encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs;
- b) To constitute the youth into a major component of the Citizen Armed Force envisioned in the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, which shall undergo training and may be called upon to defend the State and to render personal military or civil service under conditions provided by law;
- c) To train, equip and organize the youth, within the current frameworks of national and territorial defense, law enforcement and peace and order and national disaster risk reduction and management, to prepare them for rapid mobilization at the soonest possible time in order to address national and local contingencies which may require personnel beyond the capabilities of existing national government agencies or local government units; and
- d) To capacitate the youth with the knowledge and practical skills to survive, respond, and recover individually and as part of a bigger community in times of national and local emergencies, contingencies and disasters, both natural and man-made.

ARTICLE III

DEFINITION OF TERMS

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

- a) ***Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Citizen Armed Force*** refers to the component of the AFP comprised of Citizen Soldiers or AFP Reservists trained and recruited in accordance with Republic Act No. 7077, otherwise known as the Citizen Armed Force or Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act, that serves as the base for the expansion of the AFP in the event of war, invasion or rebellion; to assist in relief and rescue during disaster or calamities; to assist in socioeconomic development; and to assist in the operation and maintenance of essential government or private utilities in the furtherance of its overall mission. It is alternately referred to as the *AFP Reserve Force*;
- b) ***AFP reservist*** refers to a graduate of the National Citizens Service Training (NCST) as established under this Act and as defined under Republic Act No. 7077. An AFP Reservist is alternately referred to as Citizen Soldier;
- c) ***Authorized organization*** refers to a legitimate juridical entity created by law, or registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) which has the competence to deliver courses of the NCST, a track record of undertaking quality programs, projects and activities for the youth which inculcate in the beneficiaries the values of patriotism, love of country, civic-mindedness, civic duty, service to others, and authorized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) or the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to deliver courses under the NCST Program;

- d) ***Cadet officer*** refers to a cadet who completed five (5) months of specialized training to be an officer with the intention of undergoing and completing the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) Program;
- e) ***Citizen-cadet*** refers to a student undergoing NCST and ROTC Training;
- f) ***Community-based NSRC Unit*** refers to the official aggrupation, organization, and operational unit of National Service Reserve Corps (NSRC) based in the *barangays*;
- g) ***Higher education*** refers to the stage of formal education, or its equivalent, requiring completion of secondary education and covering programs of study leading to bachelor and advanced degrees, including associate degrees;
- h) ***Higher education institution (HEI)*** refers to an institution of higher learning which primarily offers degree-granting programs duly recognized by the CHED and leading to the conferment of a diploma;
- i) ***National Citizens Service Training Monitoring and Oversight Committee*** refers to a multi-agency committee with private sector representatives mandated to ensure that the provisions and intent of this Act are properly implemented and adhered to. It shall ensure that there shall be no abuse of any kind in both the conduct of the trainings and the deployment of National Service Reservists and Citizen Soldiers;
- j) ***National Citizens Service Training Program*** refers to a two-year mandatory citizen service program administered and implemented by the

CHED and TESDA in accordance with this Act;

- k) ***National Service Reserve Corps*** refers to the official aggrupation and organization of National Service Reservists maintained and placed under the control and supervision of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) through the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) pursuant to Section 13 of Republic Act No. 10121, or the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010. It shall be civilian in nature and shall be a source for volunteers and conscripts in times of national or local necessity, calamities, emergencies, disasters, or armed conflict to perform non-combat duties and render services as the President or the appropriate local *sanggunian* may deem necessary;
- l) ***National Service Reservist*** refers to a graduate of the NCST Program registered under the NSRC as defined under this Act;
- m) ***Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program*** refers to a citizen service and military training program designed to produce officers for both the AFP Regular and Reserve Force;
- n) ***School-based NSRC Unit*** refers to the official aggrupation, organization and operational unit of National Service Reservists based in an HEI;
- o) ***School-based ready reserve unit*** refers to an operational unit of the AFP Citizen Armed Force based in an HEI;

- p) ***Sector or skill-based NSRC unit*** refers to the official aggrupation, organization and operational unit of the NSRC organized according to their sector, or competencies;
- q) ***Technical-vocational education and training (TVET) program or course*** refers to the education processes designed for the post-secondary and lower tertiary levels and are officially recognized as non-degree programs aimed at preparing technicians, para-professionals and other categories of middle-level workers by providing them with a broad range of general education, theoretical, scientific and technological training, and related job skills training;
- r) ***Technical-vocational institution (TVI)*** refers to a TESDA-registered or accredited learning institution offering postsecondary TVET;
- s) ***Tertiary education*** refers to the stage of education following the secondary cycle which subsumes post-secondary non-degree diploma, TVET, and higher education programs, including graduate education;
- t) ***Tertiary education institution (TEI)*** refers to a learning institution that provides post-K-12 education or training and covers both HEIs and TVIs; and;
- u) ***Undergraduate degree program*** refers to any postsecondary program, also known as baccalaureate, leading to a degree as may be authorized and recognized by the CHED.

ARTICLE IV

THE NATIONAL CITIZENS SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM

SEC. 4. *Establishment of the National Citizens Service Training Program (NCST) Program.* – There is hereby established a NCST Program, which shall be implemented by the CHED in all HEIs and by the TESDA in all TVIs, both in consultation with the Department of National Defense (DND).

SEC. 5. *Coverage of the NCST Program.* – The NCST shall be mandatory for all students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs in all public and private HEIs and at least two-year TVET programs in all TVIs in the Philippines. The NCST shall be administered to cover undergraduate and postsecondary TVET students for at least four (4) semesters or two hundred forty (240) hours over two (2) school years, unless otherwise allowed by the CHED or TESDA in accordance with the rules recommended by the NCST Technical Panel.

SEC. 6. *NCST Program Technical Panel.* – The NCST Program design, curriculum, modes and method of delivery shall be formulated, periodically reviewed and updated by a Technical Panel to be composed of representatives from the CHED, TESDA, DND, NDRRMC through the OCD, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Philippine National Police (PNP), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Youth Commission (NYC), Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA), Philippine Red Cross, one representative each from the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations (COCOPEA), and the Association of Local Colleges and Universities (ALCU), representative from the union of teachers and representative from the students, and two (2) private sector representatives who shall be recognized experts or practitioners in the

fields of citizen service training, disaster preparedness, reservist training, or related fields. The student representative and one (1) of the private sector representatives shall be appointed by the CHED Chairperson and one (1) private sector representative shall be appointed by the TESDA Director General.

The NCST Program Technical Panel shall be under the CHED. The annual funds of the Technical Panel shall be included in the annual appropriations of the CHED. The NCST Technical Panel shall formulate and recommend to the CHED the policies, standards, and guidelines to make the four (4) year ROTC program an appropriate baccalaureate degree program.

SEC. 7. *The Curriculum of the NCST Program.* – The NCST Program design and curriculum shall provide the students with practical and applicable knowledge and skills that are necessary, essential, and ideal for survival, and for attaining resilience, and to ensure the immediate availability of these skills in times of local and national emergencies and disasters, both natural and man-made. It shall instill in students the values of civic mindedness, volunteerism, and genuine service to others. It shall develop tertiary education students to be community crisis managers and leaders in times of emergencies and disasters. The curriculum of the NCST Program shall ensure that students who finish the NCST Program shall have undergone the appropriate citizen competency training which shall include civic duty inculcation, literacy training services, survival and safety techniques including first-aid administration, and community or mass emergency and disaster response and management. Except for justifiable causes and only upon the issuance of a Certificate of Exception by the CHED or TESDA, the NCST Program must be completed, as far as practicable, within the first two (2) years of all undergraduate degree programs and a two (2)-year TVET program. The NCST

shall be a requisite for graduation of covered tertiary education students.

SEC. 8. *Special NCST Program for Students under Special Circumstances.* –

There shall be no exemptions from the NCST Program. However, the CHED or TESDA, based on rules recommended by the NCST Technical Panel, shall prescribe alternative NCST Programs to address students with special needs and persons with disabilities. Filipino students enrolled in TVET Programs conducted for less than two (2) years shall be provided special seminars, as the TESDA and the appropriate government agency may prescribe.

SEC. 9. *Special Program for Foreign Nationals.* – Foreign nationals enrolled

in undergraduate degree programs or TVET courses where the NCST is required shall also undergo a Special NCST Program prescribed by the CHED or TESDA that would deepen their understanding and appreciation of the Philippines, its people, society, culture and government, and harness their potential as bridges to improve the relationship of their respective countries with the Philippines:

SEC. 10. *Venue of Training.* – The NCST Program shall be administered by

HEIs or TVIs within their campuses or facilities. Should it be determined that it is impracticable to do so, HEIs and TVIs should immediately make the same known to the CHED Regional Office or TESDA Regional Office, and recommend the designation of safe and appropriate venues for the NCST. As far as practicable, the venue shall be proximate to the campuses or facilities of the public and private HEI or TVI. Citizens Military Training Centers established in accordance with Republic Act No. 7077 may be utilized as training venues for purposes of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Prohibition on the Charging of Fees for Venues.* – All local and national government agencies and instrumentalities that are managing sites and venues designated by CHED or TESDA for the conduct of NCST activities shall not charge any fees, except for reasonable fines and penalties for violations of the rules and regulations of the areas.

SEC. 12. *Delivery of Courses by Authorized Organizations or Partner Government Agencies and Entities.* – The CHED and TESDA, subject to rules as may be recommended by the NCST Technical Panel, may allow lawfully established non-partisan organizations and government agencies to partner with HEIs and TVIs in delivering the non-military NCST courses to students. Any private organization which seeks to be recognized by the CHED or TESDA shall apply with the CHED or TESDA for such recognition and present evidence to establish its (1) track record for noteworthy values-forming programs, projects and activities with the youth and (2) capacity and competence to deliver the knowledge or skill required for the course to be delivered. Only legitimate juridical entities created by law or registered with the SEC or the CDA may apply for registration. Applying organizations must also submit appropriate security clearances from the PNP and National Bureau of Investigation. Private HEIs are allowed to implement such courses in-house without the need for partnerships with organizations. They may also partner with other HEIs and establish consortia for the delivery of training programs.

SEC. 13. *NCST Graduates as National Service Reservists and AFP Reservists.* – Upon completion of the NCST, citizen-cadets shall be deemed NCST graduates and shall be incorporated in the NSRC and the AFP Reserve Force. The HEI or TVI shall, in accordance with rules recommended by the NCST Technical Panel and approved by CHED and TESDA, issue the

National Service Reservist Serial Numbers to NCST graduates. The HEIs or TVIs shall submit the names, serial numbers, permanent and current addresses, electronic mail addresses, and mobile numbers of NCST graduates to the OCD for inclusion in the official master list of the NSRC. The OCD may submit a copy of the same list to the appropriate government agency, as required. The serial number of the NCST graduates shall be reflected in their official transcript of records to be released by the TEIs.

SEC. 14. *Completion of the Compulsory Military Training Under Republic Act No. 7077.* – All students who have completed the NCST Program shall be considered to have complied with the mandatory military registration and training under Section 14 of Republic Act No. 7077.

ARTICLE V

THE OPTIONAL RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS

SEC. 15. *Modified NCST Program.* – A modified NCST Program shall be designed by the NCST Technical Panel and approved by the CHED and DND which shall incorporate a five-(5) month cadet officer's leadership course. The optional ROTC shall be administered and implemented by the CHED and AFP pursuant to the rules and regulations prescribed by the CHED and the DND.

SEC. 16. *Curriculum of the ROTC Program.* – The curriculum of the optional ROTC Program shall be designed by the DND and CHED and administered by the AFP. It shall be primarily designed to train volunteer tertiary education students to be officers of the Regular and Reserve Force of the AFP. The curriculum shall be designed in such a way that graduates of the four (4) year ROTC Program shall be capable of immediate deployment as commissioned

officers of the AFP immediately after graduation from the ROTC even as they continue with their baccalaureate degree program. The ROTC program of instruction shall include advanced military subjects and courses, practical exercises and field exercises necessary and appropriate for an entry level officer commission in the AFP.

The DND, AFP, and CHED shall design a separate four (4) year ROTC baccalaureate degree program subject to the policies, standards, and guidelines recommended by the NCST Technical Panel and approved by the CHED.

SEC. 17. ROTC cadets as NCST instructors and cadet officers. – The ROTC cadets shall serve as cadet officers and instructors for NCST trainees. This shall be considered as part of the leadership training module of the optional ROTC Program.

SEC. 18. Acceptance into the ROTC Program. – Students who volunteer for the ROTC program in HEIs shall be governed by Section 40 of Republic Act No. 7077. The provisions of Sections 42 and 43 of Republic Act No. 7077 in terms of training, uniforms and supplies, and the scholarship incentive shall remain effective and applicable for those accepted in the ROTC Program.

SEC. 19. Organization, operation, and maintenance of ROTC Units. – The organization, operation, and maintenance for the establishment of ROTC Units shall be in accordance with Sections 41 and 42 of Republic Act No. 7077 and shall remain effective and operative unless inconsistent with this Act. The Secretary of National Defense shall, in consultation with the CHED, prescribe the organization and operational manual of ROTC units in public and private HEIs, subject to the evaluation and approval of the Department of Budget and

Management. The DND shall create or designate an office with a focal person dedicated to the supervision and administration of the optional ROTC program.

SEC. 20. *Incentives to students undergoing the ROTC Program.* – ROTC cadets are entitled to the following benefits:

- (1) Subject to other requirements prescribed by rules and regulations of the DND and other concerned government agencies, graduates of the ROTC shall, upon completion of the ROTC program, be eligible for commissioning as officers in the Reserve Force of the AFP;
- (2) Free hospitalization, medicines, and medical care in any government hospital in case of accident or injury during their training; and
- (3) Automatic grant of first level civil service eligibility for ROTC graduates.

SEC. 21. *Incentives to HEIs implementing the ROTC Program.* – The Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UNIFAST) is hereby mandated to come up with a system of incentives and financial assistance for both public and private HEIs implementing the ROTC Program.

ARTICLE VI

ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT, AND MOBILIZATION OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE RESERVE CORPS

SEC. 22. *Creation of the National Service Reserve Corps.* – There is hereby created a National Service Reserve Corps (NSRC), hereinafter referred to as National Service Reservists (NSRs), to be placed under the control and supervision of the NDRRMC through the OCD pursuant to Republic Act No.

10121, otherwise known as the “Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Management Act of 2010”. It shall be civilian in nature and shall be a source for volunteers and conscripts in times of national or local necessity, calamities, emergencies, disasters, or armed conflict to perform non-combat and non-military duties and services as the President or the appropriate local *sanggunian* may deem necessary.

SEC. 23. *Program and Mobilization.* – The NDRRMC shall, through the OCD and in consultation with the PNVSCA, local government units (LGUs), and other agencies with public service and volunteerism mandates, undertake programs and activities to provide and promote avenues and platforms for NSRs to volunteer their services even under normal or non-emergency conditions and circumstances. LGUs shall establish programs that would continuously enhance and imbibe the spirit of volunteerism among NSRs and strengthen NSRC Units within their respective territorial jurisdictions through local mobilizations, sustained participation in local events and activities, annual local awards and recognition systems for outstanding local citizen service programs and local stakeholders and other analogous programs.

SEC. 24. *Mandatory Registration and Enlistment in the NSRC.* – All graduates of the NCST shall be enlisted as NSRs in the NSRC. The NDRRMC shall, through the OCD, provide for the rules and regulations governing community, school, sector or skill-based registration of all NCST graduates.

SEC. 25. *School-based and Community-based National Reserve Corps Units.* – The NDRRMC shall, through the OCD, have the authority to organize the NSRs in school and community-based units. College students, including medical degree students in HEIs shall register with the School-based NSRC

Unit of their respective HEIs. The NSRs enrolled in graduate programs may opt to register with the School-based NSRC Unit of their HEIs or register with the Community-based NSRC Unit of the barangays where they reside or where their places of work are. All other NSRs shall register with the Community-based NSRC Units of the barangays where they reside or where their places of work are, subject to rules as the NDRRMC may prescribe.

The NDRRMC may, through the OCD, require HEIs offering baccalaureate degree programs and barangay governments to provide appropriate office space, access to facilities and personnel to assist the NDRRMC and the OCD in managing and administering School-based and Community-based NSRC Units. The NDRRMC may, through the OCD and in consultation with the DILG and the CHED, promulgate the rules and regulations governing the organization, establishment and management of community and school-based NSRC Units. Such rules and regulations shall provide for nationwide and localized mobilization of all NSRs.

SEC. 26. *Sector and Skill-Based National Reserve Corps Units.* – The NDRRMC shall, through the OCD, have the authority to organize and mobilize NSRs based on their sector, skills, or competencies. As far as practicable, NSRs shall be mobilized and deployed based on their possessed competencies and skills.

SEC. 27. *Continuous Training of NSRs.* – The NDRRMC shall, through the OCD, develop systems and promulgate the necessary rules to ensure that NSRs are regularly provided readiness enhancement trainings to maintain their state of readiness. Attendance in NSRC Readiness Enhancement Trainings shall be deemed as a form of NSRC deployment. A recognition and badge system for NSRs for the acquisition and enhancement of citizen service-relevant skills and

competencies, as may be recommended by the NCST Technical Panel, shall be adopted and implemented by the OCD.

SEC. 28. *Annual NSRC Mobilization.* – The OCD shall, in consultation with the DILG, DSWD, DND and Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices, ensure that all Community-based and School-based NSRC Units conduct at least one (1) mobilization exercise every year to ensure the readiness of NSRC Units and NSRs.

SEC. 29. *Prohibition against the mobilization of NCST Citizen-Cadets.* – Only NSRs shall be mandatorily deployed or conscripted in times of national or local necessity, calamities, emergencies, disasters, or armed conflict to perform non-combat and non-military duties and services as the President or the appropriate local *sanggunian* may so declare. No student undergoing NCST shall be required to render service as an NSR.

SEC. 30. *Benefits and privileges of NSRs.* – Deployed NSRs shall be entitled to the following benefits:

- a) Free hospitalization, medicines, and medical care in any government hospital in case of accident or injury during deployment;
- b) For those that have a cumulative deployment period of one hundred eighty (180) days, a grant of eligibility for local disaster risk reduction and management item positions, subject to rules to be issued jointly by the DILG and Civil Service Commission; and

- c) Free food, accommodations, and such other amenities necessary or essential to the performance of their mandated tasks as deployed NSRs.

SEC. 31. *Effect of NSRC or AFP Citizen Armed Force deployment on employees and students.* – Deployment of employees in accordance with the provisions of this Act shall not be a ground for dismissal or diminution of any benefit enjoyed by such employees prior to their deployment.

Deployment of students in accordance with the provisions of this Act shall not prejudice the academic standing, status, scholarship, privilege, or grant enjoyed by the students prior to and during deployment.

SEC. 32. *Awards and Recognition System for National Service Reservists.* – The NCST Monitoring and Oversight Committee shall establish a national-level system of awards and recognition for outstanding NSRs and Citizen-Cadets and Exemplary Volunteer and Service Programs under this Act. All LGUs shall adopt and implement annual local awards and recognition system for outstanding citizen service programs, reservists, cadet-citizens, cadets and other stakeholders within their respective areas of jurisdiction.

ARTICLE VII ORGANIZATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE AFP CITIZEN ARMED FORCE

SEC. 33. *Organization and Deployment of AFP Reservists.* – The DND shall provide for the rules and regulations governing the organization and deployment of AFP Reservists enlisted pursuant to this Act.

SEC. 34. *School-based Ready Reserve Units (SBRRUs).* – School-Based Ready Reserve Units (SBRRUs) may be organized by the DND, through the AFP, in public and private HEI campuses offering baccalaureate or undergraduate degree programs. The DND shall, through the AFP, promulgate the rules and regulations for the establishment, management, and operation of SBRRUs. HEIs shall provide office space, access to facilities and personnel to assist the DND and AFP in managing SBRRUs. Private HEIs shall have the authority to select from the list of eligible DND and AFP Officers, those to be subject for deployment in their institutions. Moreover, the HEIs’ personnel and discipline policies for administrators and staff shall as far as practicable apply to uniformed personnel deployed to the HEIs. Furthermore, that HEIs shall have the power after due process to request for the immediate removal of any officer assigned to it who is found to have committed any form of abuses or have engaged in corruption activities and similar offenses in the implementation of the program.

ARTICLE VIII

MONITORING, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PREVENTING ABUSES

SEC. 35. *NCST Monitoring and Oversight Committee.* – There is hereby established a NCST Monitoring and Oversight Committee which is mandated to ensure that the provisions and intent of this Act are properly implemented and adhered to, and that there shall be no abuse of any kind in both the conduct of NSTC trainings and deployment of NSRs and AFP Reservists.

SEC. 36. *Composition of the NCST Monitoring and Oversight Committee.* – The NCST Monitoring and Oversight Committee shall be composed of the following or their duly designated representatives:

- a) CHED Chairperson, as Chairperson;
- b) DND Secretary, as Vice Chairperson;
- c) TESDA Director General;
- d) DILG Secretary;
- e) DSWD Secretary;
- f) National Security Adviser;
- g) NYC Chairperson;
- h) National organization of state universities and colleges;
- i) National organization of local universities and colleges;
- j) National organization of private higher education institutions; and
- k) Two (2) representatives of relevant national organizations to be appointed by the CHED Chairperson and the TESDA Director General, respectively.

SEC. 37. Powers and Functions of the NCST Monitoring and Oversight Committee. – The NCST Monitoring and Oversight Committee shall have the following powers and functions:

- a) Review, monitor, and provide strategic guidance on the implementation of this Act;
- b) Receive and cause the immediate and expedient investigation of all complaints or reports of forms of abuses, corruption, hazing, torture, data privacy rights violation, and all forms of violation of human rights in any of the programs under the NCST and mobilization system;
- c) Conduct announced and unannounced inspections of citizen service

classes and activities, NCST and ROTC sessions and facilities, NSRC Units, SBRRUs and other Reserve Units under the AFP Citizen Armed Force;

d) Immediately inform and compel concerned agencies, organizations or personnel engaged or involved in the implementation of this Act to undertake corrective actions or measures to address any abuse, inefficiency or lapses in the implementation of this Act;

e) Receive annual reports from the DND, OCD, and AFP on the proper implementation of the NCST, ROTC, NSRC, and AFP Citizen Armed Force;

f) Establish a national-level recognition system for outstanding NSRC and AFP Reservists, Citizen-cadets and Cadets and Exemplary Volunteer and Service Programs; and

g) Deputize or delegate to agencies, organizations or individuals any of its mandated powers and functions under this Act.

SEC. 38. *NCST Monitoring and Oversight in HEIs.* – CHED shall provide guidelines for the establishment offices within the HEIs to receive and hear complaints of abuses; assist student-trainees on their needs; and promote the welfare of student-trainees under the Program.

ARTICLE IX PENAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 39. *Maximum Penalty.* – Any act of abuse, corruption, hazing, torture, data privacy rights violation, or violation of human rights committed in direct or indirect relation to the implementation of this Act, which are punished criminally or administratively by existing laws, rules or regulations, shall be prosecuted in accordance with such laws, rules or regulations: *Provided,* That the penalty to be imposed shall be the maximum penalty. The accessory penalty of permanent or temporary absolute disqualification from government service may also be imposed on government officers and employees found to have committed the acts prohibited under this Section.

SEC. 40. *Prosecution not a bar to civil action.* – Criminal or administrative prosecution shall not be a bar to any civil action for damages or any appropriate relief a victim of any act of abuse, corruption, hazing, torture, data privacy rights violation, or violation of human rights committed in direct or indirect relation to the implementation of this Act may file.

ARTICLE X MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 41. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the offices and agencies concerned. Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 42. *School Fees.* – Covered HEIs and TVIs may collect a reasonable NCST training fee of not more than fifty percent (50%) of the tuition fee per academic unit or subject. Such funds shall be used only for the implementation of the NCST. The CHED, TESDA and DND shall determine the reasonable

distribution of the fees among the HEI, TVI and DND to cover the cost of training and related expenses. Public HEIs and TVIs covered by Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, shall not collect any fee for the NCST or ROTC. The training costs shall be included in the annual appropriations of such HEIs or TVIs. In cases of students not eligible to avail of the benefits under Republic Act No. 10931, public colleges, universities, and similar learning institutions may collect a training fee of not more than fifty percent (50%) of the tuition fee per academic unit. The HEIs and TVIs not covered by Republic Act No. 10931 may collect a training fee of not more than fifty percent (50%) of the tuition fee per academic unit. Such funds shall be used only for the implementation of the NCST and ROTC programs and the maintenance of the School-based NSRC Units and School-based Ready Reserve Units, if any.

SEC 43. *Annual Reports.* – The OCD shall regularly publish an annual report containing information on the deployment and employment of NSRs, the accomplishments of the NSRC, an assessment of readiness for mobilization of NSRs, and the incidence and details of each mobilization for each year. Such report shall be submitted to the President, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Secretary of National Defense, the Secretary of Education, the CHED Chairperson, and the TESDA Director General.

SEC. 44. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED, TESDA and DND shall, in consultation with the DILG, DSWD, NYC, PASUC, COCOPEA, and ALCU, formulate and jointly promulgate rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

ARTICLE XI

TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

SEC. 45. *Transition Period of Implementation.* – To ensure efficient transition and to enable all public and private schools to adopt the necessary structural changes within their units in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the NCST and ROTC under this Act shall be administered only after the promulgation of the implementing rules and regulations: *Provided*, That the implementation of the programs shall commence within a non-extendable period of twenty-four (24) months from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 46. *Current Enrollment under Republic Act No. 9163.* – In all cases and until such time as the rules and regulations of this Act are published and have taken effect, students who are currently enrolled under the curriculum implemented by virtue of Republic Act No. 9163, otherwise known as the “National Service Training Program Act of 2001”, shall be allowed to finish the curriculum and be deemed to have satisfied the requirement for graduation after completion thereof.

SEC. 47. *Priority employment of NSRs as NSTP Personnel under Republic Act No. 9163.* – Upon the effectivity of this Act, lecturers, instructors, and other personnel implementing the NSTP program shall be prioritized for hiring into the new program established under this Act to assist in the management of the NCST in HEIs and TVIs. They may also be granted authority, subject to rules to be issued by the CHED and TESDA, to be NCST Program lecturers, instructors and implementers.

ARTICLE XII FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 48. *Repealing Clause.* – Republic Act No. 9163, otherwise known as the “National Service Training Program Act of 2001”, is hereby repealed. The relevant provisions of Republic Act No. 7077, otherwise known as the “Citizen Armed Force or Armed Forces of the Philippines Reservist Act”, which are inconsistent with the relevant provisions of this Act are hereby amended. All other laws, orders, rules, regulations and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the relevant provisions of this Act are likewise amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 49. *Separability Clause.* – Any provision of this Act that is declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not affect the validity of the other provisions hereof.

SEC. 50. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,