

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5975



Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN “LENLEN” A. ORETA III

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING JOB PLACEMENT OFFICES IN ALL PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, AND LOCAL UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, AND CREATING A NATIONAL INDUSTRY—ACADEME COUNCIL AND LOCAL INDUSTRY—ACADEME COUNCILS TO ADDRESS JOB—SKILLS MISMATCH AND PROMOTE DECENT EMPLOYMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the declared policy of the State, pursuant to the Constitution, to promote full, productive, and dignified employment for all Filipinos, with particular emphasis on empowering the youth as a vital sector in nation-building.

While significant progress has been achieved in expanding access to education, the transition from schooling to gainful employment continues to pose a persistent challenge. Many graduates face limited job opportunities or are compelled to accept positions that do not correspond to their acquired competencies, while employers simultaneously report difficulty in recruiting workers with the appropriate skills.

According to the June 2025 Labor Force Survey conducted by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), as cited by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chairperson Shirley Agrupis, there has been a 2.6-percentage-point increase in the number of unemployed college graduates from the 35.6 percent recorded in December 2024. This alarming trend underscores the pressing need for comprehensive reforms to strengthen the education-to-employment pathway.

This proposed measure seeks to address these challenges by reinforcing institutional mechanisms that align education and training with labor market requirements. It underscores the necessity of a stronger and more deliberate partnership among government, industry, and the academe to ensure that curricula are responsive to evolving workforce demands. Moreover, it highlights the importance of career guidance, skills development, and entrepreneurial readiness, equipping learners not only with technical proficiency but also with the adaptive abilities required in today’s dynamic economy.

The measure further mandates the establishment of structured systems for job placement, mentoring, and monitoring of graduate outcomes, supported by timely labor market intelligence. By institutionalizing these mechanisms, education shall not merely serve as an end in itself but as a bridge toward meaningful work and sustainable livelihoods.

This bill envisions an education-to-employment ecosystem where pathways are clear, opportunities are inclusive, and the youth are empowered to contribute productively to national progress. In so doing, the State affirms its commitment to transform learning into lasting opportunities for work, dignity, and development.

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


ANTOLIN "LENLEN" A. ORETA III
Lone District of Malabon City

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SKILLS MISMATCH AND PROMOTE DECENT EMPLOYMENT, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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

TITLE I
PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the "School—to—Employment Program (STEP) Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is the policy of the State to promote full, productive, and decent employment for all Filipinos, especially the youth. The State shall strengthen institutional mechanisms that align education and training with labor market needs, address jobs—skills mismatch, and facilitate smooth school—to—work transitions through multi—sectoral collaboration among the government, industry, and the academe.

TITLE II
JOB PLACEMENT OFFICES IN SCHOOLS

SEC. 3. *Establishment of School—Based Job Placement Offices.* — All public senior high schools, state universities and colleges (SUCs), and local universities and colleges (LUCs) shall establish and maintain a Job Placement Office (JPO) to provide employment facilitation, career guidance, and industry linkage services to students and graduates.

SEC. 4. *Composition.* — Each JPO shall be provided with the necessary career services staff to effectively carry out its mandate. The number and composition of staff shall be based on:

- (a) The student population of the school,

- (b) The diversity of tracks or programs offered, and
- (c) The scale of employer and institutional partnerships maintained.

Provided, That schools with large enrollments or complex placement needs may establish a Job Placement and Career Services Unit, headed by the JPO, and composed of designated guidance counselors, administrative support staff, and industry liaison officers, subject to available funding and guidelines of DepEd and CHED.

Each region shall have a JPO Regional Coordinator, designated by the Department of Education Regional Offices, to oversee the coordination, monitoring, and development of JPOs within the region.

SEC. 5. *Core Functions of the Job Placement Office.* — JPOs shall serve as institutional hubs for career planning, labor market information dissemination, and linkages to internship, apprenticeship, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities. Each JPO shall perform the following functions:

- (a) Facilitate career guidance and job placement services;
- (b) Forge linkages with industry partners to develop internships, apprenticeship programs, and employment pipelines;
- (c) Coordinate with the Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and other relevant agencies on employment facilitation and program alignment;
- (d) Collaborate with sector Skills Councils and industry boards to align training programs with labor market needs;
- (e) Coordinate certification and assessment for trainees and graduates aligned with industry standards;
- (f) Conduct labor market information dissemination and career coaching to guide students and reduce job search costs;
- (g) Track and report post—graduation outcomes for institutional and policy feedback;
- (h) MainÉin and update a database of employer partners, opportunities, and graduate outcomes;
- (i) Participate in planning and labor assessments led by the Local Industry Academe Council (*LIAC*);
- (j) Submit regular reports to the LIAC, DOLE, and relevant agencies.

SEC. 6. *Area—Based Labor Market Reviews.* — Each JPO shall facilitate an annual review of local labor market demand, in coordination with DOLE, PESOs, and regional industry bodies. This process shall:

- (a) Identify high—demand jobs by province or region;
- (b) Map these to existing academic and technical tracks offered by the institution;
- (c) Recommend curriculum or program enhancements to improve graduate

employability and relevance.

SEC. 7. *Employer Partnership Repository.* — Each JPO shall maintain access to a shared repository of vetted employer partners, coordinated with the Schools Division Office, TESDA, and local PESOs. The repository shall:

- (a) Document defined job roles, OJT protocols, and hiring qualifications;
- (b) Include employer feedback on graduate readiness and skills alignment;
- (c) Enable rural or under—resourced schools to connect with broader employment networks.

SEC. 8. *Embedded Soft Skills Training Modules.* — JPOs shall implement standardized employability or soft skills training as part of the pre—placement process. This training shall:

- (a) Cover workplace competencies including communication, teamwork; problem—solving, and time management;
- (b) Be informed by employer feedback and local labor market reviews;
- (c) Be delivered through self—paced digital modules, in—class sessions, or blended learning, based on institutional capacity.

SEC. 9. *Digital Career Advisory and Guidance Tools.* — JPOs shall adopt digital or AI—enabled career advisory platforms to support students in career planning, job search, and skills development. These tools will complement in—person services provided by Career Advocates and help bridge gaps in schools with limited career counseling capacity.

SEC. 10. *Optional Youth Entrepreneurship Track.* — JPOs may implement an entrepreneurship bootcamp program for students interested in self—employment or microenterprise after graduation. The program shall:

- (a) Be co—delivered with LGUs, NGOs, or accredited private partners;
- (b) Include training in business ideation, budgeting, market analysis, and cooperative development;
- (c) Facilitate referrals to MSME support services, funding programs, and incubator networks.

SEC. 11. *Learner Outcomes Tracking Platform.* — Each JPO shall maintain a digital platform for tracking learner outcomes, to be managed by the Career Advocate or designated staff. The platform shall:

- (a) Track graduate employment status, time to placement, income levels, and field—of—study alignment.
- (b) Generate automated tracer studies and analytics for reporting to DepEd, CHED, and relevant agencies;
- (c) Support curriculum refinement by identifying patterns of success and mismatch.

TITLE III

LABOR MARKET—ALIGNED CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

SEC. 12. *Senior High School Curriculum Responsiveness.* — The Department of Education

(DepEd) shall strengthen the labor market responsiveness of the senior high school curriculum by developing and implementing a job—ready curriculum that emphasizes work immersion and practical skills training.

To ensure that senior high school graduates are better prepared for employment, DepEd, in coordination with the National Industry—Academe Council (NIAC) and relevant Local Industry—Academe Councils (LIACs), shall:

- (a) Regularly review and enhance senior high school tracks and specializations based on labor market trends and graduate employability outcomes, with inputs from Job Placement Offices (JPOs) and local employer networks;
- (b) Increase the duration, relevance, and quality of work immersion programs by expanding partnerships with industry and ensuring alignment with in—demand job roles;
- (c) Provide school—based job simulation opportunities in cases where external immersion placements are limited or infeasible, especially in rural or under-resourced areas; and
- (d) Integrate foundational employability skills and digital literacy across all tracks informed by feedback from employers and labor market assessments.

SEC. 13. *Higher Education Program Responsiveness.* —SUCs, LUCs, and private HEIS shall review and have the authority to adjust their course and program offerings based on current and emerging labor market trends and opportunities, in order to address jobs—skills mismatch and enhance the employability of graduates. SUCs and LUCs may consider:

- (a) Phasing in or expanding programs aligned with high—demand occupations and priority industry sectors in the local or national labor market;
- (b) Phasing out or restructuring programs with consistently low graduate employability or relevance;
- (c) Integrating employability and digital skills into existing curricula based on employer feedback and labor market signals.

Provided, That, any adjustments shall be based on regular labor market assessments and outcome tracking data generated by the Job Placement Offices (JPOs), in coordination with the Local Industry—Academe Council (LIAC). These assessments shall include analyses of graduate employment outcomes, skills demand, and employer feedback.

TITLE IV NATIONAL INDUSTRY—ACADEME COUNCIL

SEC. 14. *Creation of the National Industry—Academe Council (NIAC).* — The National Industry—Academe Council (NIAC) is hereby institutionalized to serve as the national coordinating body for industry—academe linkage, education—employment alignment, and workforce development.

SEC. 15. *Composition of the NIAC* — The NIAC shall be made up of representatives from the government, academe, and industry, as follows;

- (a) Government representatives shall include a Commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED); a Deputy Director—General of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA); an UnderSECRETARY of the Department of

Education (DepEd); an Undersecretary of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE); an Undersecretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST); an Undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); a Commissioner of the Civil Service Commission (CSC); and a Commissioner of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

(b) Representatives of the academe shall be composed of the presidents of the federations of public and private HEIs, public and private IWIS, and accreditation bodies of higher and technical—vocational educational institutions, which shall include the following: Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges; Association of Local Colleges and Universities; Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations; Technical Vocational Schools and Associations of the Philippines; National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies; and the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines.

(c) Representatives of the industry sector shall be composed of the presidents of the following business and industry federations: Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines; Employers Confederation of the Philippines; Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Foundation, Incorporated; Information Technology and Business Process Association of the Philippines; Philippine Business for Education; Management Association of the Philippines; Philippine Business for Social Progress; and the People Management Association of the Philippines.

The NIAC shall be headed by DepEd UnderSecretary as Chairperson, and the Commissioner of CHED and Deputy Director—General of the TESDA shall be its Co—Chairpersons. The members of the Council, except for the ex officio members, shall receive per diem for every meeting attended in accordance with existing rules and regulations. The Council shall be attached to the DepEd for administrative and budgetary purposes.

The DepEd shall provide a Secretariat to the NIAC to be manned by the organic personnel of the DepEd and may be augmented by the employees from the member agencies of the Council through detail or Secondment.

SEC. 16. Powers and Functions of the NIAC. — The NIAC shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (a) Monitor labor market trends and the incidence of unemployment, underemployment, and jobs—skills mismatch
- (b) Formulate national policies and plans to improve labor market alignment;
- (c) Conduct reviews of curricula, training programs, and educational standards vis—à—vis labor market needs;
- (d) Benchmark student competencies and qualifications against national and international frameworks (e.g., PQF, ASEAN QRF);
- (e) Maintain an inventory of job specifications and skill requirements across industries;
- (f) Recommend policy measures to the President, Congress, and national government agencies;
- (g) Coordinate with agencies for data, expertise, and technical inputs;
- (h) Hold regular quarterly meetings; and

- (i) Perform such other functions as may be necessary.

TITLE V
LOCAL INDUSTRY—ACADEME COUNCILS

SEC. 17. *Establishment of Local Industry—Academe Councils (LIACs).* — A Local Industry—Academe Council (LIAC) shall be established in every province and highly urbanized city (HUC) in the country. The LIAC shall serve as the local counterpart of the NIAC and shall be responsible for aligning education and training programs with the labor market needs of the locality.

SEC. 18. *Composition of the LIACs.* — Each LIAC shall be composed of the following representatives within the province or HUC:

(a) Government:

- i. Schools Division Superintendent of the Department of Education (DepEd)
- ii. Regional or Field Officer of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
- iii. Provincial or City Director of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
- iv. Provincial or City Director of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
- v. Provincial or City Director of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
- vi. A representative of the Provincial Governor or City Mayor

(b) Academe

- vii. Representatives from State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs) within the province or HUC
- viii. Representatives from private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Technical—Vocational Institutions (WIs)

(c) Industry

- ix. Representatives from local chambers of commerce and business associations
- x. Key employers in priority or emerging sectors within the province or HUC

(d) Labor and Civil Society

- xi. Representatives from local labor groups, workers' associations, and youth or community—based organizations

The LIAC may invite additional resource persons, including representatives from public employment service offices (PESOs), relevant NGOs, and sectoral skills councils, as necessary.

Each LIAC shall be chaired by the DepEd Schools Division Superintendent. The DepEd Schools Division shall provide SECretariat support to the LIAC.

The LIAC shall meet at least once every quarter and may form technical working groups (TWGs) as needed.

SEC. 19. *Powers and Functions of the LIACs.* — The LIAC shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (a) Localize and implement NIAC policies and workforce strategies;
- (b) Monitor local labor market trends and forecast skills demand;
- (c) Align curricula and training programs with local labor market needs;
- (d) Facilitate partnerships among industry, academe, and government
- (e) Recommend policy and program adjustments to national agencies and the NIAC;
- (f) Support enterprise—based training, faculty immersion, and research collaboration;
- (g) Provide coordination and guidance to institutional JPOs, including in career guidance, labor market alignment, and employer linkages;
- (h) Submit regular reports to the NIAC on regional developments and challenges; and
- (i) Perform other tasks as may be necessary to achieve the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 20. *Organization of the LIACs.* — Each LIAC shall be chaired by the DepEd Regional Director. A Vice Chair shall be elected from among the non—government members. The DepEd Regional Office shall provide SECretariat support to send as the LIAC Secretariat.

The LIAC shall meet at least once every quarter and may form technical working groups (TWGs) as needed.

TITLE VI LABOR MARKET INTELLIGENCE AND DATA SYSTEMS

SEC. 21. *Establishment of the Philippine Labor Market Information System (Phi/LMIS).* — There is hereby established a comprehensive and integrated Philippine Labor Market Information System (PhilLMIS) to be housed within the DOLE in close coordination with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DTI, and other relevant agencies and stakeholders.

SEC. 22. *Objectives.* — PhilLMIS shall serve as the central labor market intelligence platform of the government and shall have the following objectives:

- (a) Collect, analyze, and disseminate real—time and forward—looking labor market data, including supply—demand trends, skills gaps, wage levels, employment projections, and emerging industries;
- (b) Identify critical skills shortages and surpluses across sectors and geographic areas;
- (c) Provide actionable insights for curriculum design, program offerings, and training alignment in education institutions and training centers;
- (d) Support career guidance and job matching services for jobseekers, including students and graduates;
- (e) Inform government workforce development policies, education planning, and

investment promotion strategies;

(f) Empower employers and enterprises with reliable labor data to support hiring, reskilling, and training decisions.

SEC. 23. *Data Sources.* — PhilLMIS shall integrate data from, but not limited to, the following sources:

(a) Government Agencies:

- i. PSA (e.g., Labor Force Survey, census, business and industry statistics)
- ii. DOLE (e.g., PESO data, job vacancy registries, displacement reports)
- iii. TESDA (e.g., TVET enrollment, assessments, certification results)
- iv. CHED and DepEd (e.g., enrollment and graduation data by course and track)
- v. DTI and Board of Investments (e.g., industry performance data, investment pledges)

(b) Private sector:

- i. Online job portals and employment platforms
- ii. Industry associations and employer surveys
- iii. Skills councils and private recruitment firms, with due consideration of data Privacy

(c) International Sources:

- i. Regional and global labor market outlooks, benchmarks, and skills frameworks

SEC. 24. *Key Functions.* — PhilLMIS shall perform the following functions:

- (a) Develop and enforce common data standards and protocols to ensure interoperability and accuracy across data sources;
- (b) Conduct periodic skills gap analyses and occupational forecasting to anticipate future workforce needs;
- (c) Establish a public—facing digital portal offering accessible labor market information, career guidance tools, and training program directories;
- (d) Commission and publish targeted research on critical labor issues, including informal employment, green jobs, and automation;
- (e) Operate an early warning system to flag potential job disruptions or mass layoffs by sector region.

SEC. 25. *Governance and Collaboration* — A Labor Market Intelligence Council shall be established, co—chaired by DOLE and DEPDev, with members from PSA, DepEd, CHED, TESDA, DTI, employer organizations, labor unions, and academic institutions. *This Council shall:*

- (a) Provide strategic direction and oversight to PhilLMIS

(b) Validate data frameworks and tools in consultation with stakeholders

(c) Ensure alignment with the Philippine Qualifications Framework and national development plans

SEC. 26. *Capacity Building* —DOLE and partner agencies shall allocate resources and undertake capacity—building activities to strengthen labor market data analytics and forecasting capabilities across all implementing units.

SEC. 27. *Data Privacy and Security*.— All data collection, processing, and sharing under PhilLMIS shall comply with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA No. 10173) and other applicable laws, with appropriate safeguards for personal and sensitive information.

TITLE VII

NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

SEC. 28. *Reinforcement and Promotion of the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF)*.—The Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF), as established by Executive Order No. 83, s. 2012, is hereby reinforced as the national system for classifying qualifications according to defined levels based on knowledge, skills, and values.

(a) All educational and training institutions, including those supervised by the DepEd, CHED, and TESDA, shall ensure that their programs and curricula are aligned with the relevant PQF levels and descriptors, and that learning outcomes are clearly defined in accordance with these standards.

(b) The PQF National Coordinating Council (PQF—NCC) shall be strengthened with enhanced mandates and resources to actively promote, monitor, and ensure consistent implementation of the PQF across all sectors and institutions.

(c) Mechanisms for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and recognition of non—formal and informal learning shall be standardized and streamlined across all PQF levels, allowing individuals to earn formal qualifications based on verified skills, competencies, and experience.

SEC. 29. *Establishment and Institutionalization of the Philippine Skills Framework (PSF)*.—The Philippine Skills Framework (PSF) is hereby established and institutionalized as a complementary national reference tool outlining the specific technical, transversal, and behavioral competencies required across various industries and occupations.

(a) The PSF shall be developed, maintained, and regularly updated by TESDA, in close collaboration with DOLE, DTI, CHED, DepEd, industry associations, and professional regulatory boards.

(b) The PSF shall serve the following purposes:

i. Curriculum Development - Guide the design and revision of curricula and training programs in DepEd, CHED, TESDA, and other training institutions based on industry needs;

ii. Skills Assessment and Certification - Provide the basis for competency—based assessment, credentialing, and national certifications;

iii. Career Guidance - Inform students and jobseekers about qualifications and competencies required for various career pathways;

- iv. Job Matching - Improve the accuracy of employment matching by linking job roles with verified skills.
- v. Talent Development - Enable employers to identify workforce skill gaps and design appropriate training programs;
- vi. International Benchmarking - Facilitate the alignment and mutual recognition of skills and qualifications with international partners.

SEC. 30. *Digital Integration and Interoperability.* — The PQF and PSF shall be digitally integrated to allow for seamless navigation between qualifications and their 16 corresponding skill sets. A centralized digital platform shall be developed and maintained to:

- (a) Host up-to-date information on the PQF and PSF,
- (b) Provide access to training providers, certified assessment centers, and competency standards, and
- (c) Serve as a registry of certified individuals and qualifications.

This platform shall be interoperable with the Philippine Labor Market Information 23 System (PhilLMIS) to support real-time skills tracking and planning.

SEC. 31. *Industry-Led Development of the PSF.* — Industry sector Skills Councils (SSCs) shall be formally established under TESDA and empowered to lead the development and periodic updating of the PSF for their respective sectors.

The development of the PSF shall be evidence—based and data—driven, utilizing labor market intelligence from PhilLMIS, national employment projections, and consultations with employers, workers, educators, and other stakeholders.

SEC. 32. *Promotion and Awareness*— A sustained national campaign shall be launched to promote widespread awareness and adoption of the PQF and PSF among learners, educators, guidance counselors, employers, government agencies, and the general public.

DepEd, CHED, TESDA, and DOLE shall develop coordinated strategies for integration into school guidance programs, job placement services, and public employment services.

SEC. 33. *International Recognition of Philippine Qualifications and Skills.* — The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), in coordination with DOLE, CHED, and TESDA, shall pursue bilateral and multilateral agreements to support the international recognition of Philippine qualifications and skills frameworks, particularly in countries with significant overseas Filipino worker (OFW) populations. These agreements shall be designed to:

- (a) Strengthen labor mobility and protect Filipino workers abroad;
- (b) Ensure mutual recognition of skills and certifications;
- (c) Align local qualifications with international benchmarks and standards.

TITLE VIII FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 34. *Appropriations.* —The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. Agencies and institutions may also mobilize public—private partnerships and donor support to enhance IPO, NIAC and LIAC functions.

SEC. 35. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in coordination with CHED, DOLE, TESDA, DTI, and DILG, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations (IRR).

SEC. 36. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 37. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 38. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,