

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7358



Introduced by **HON. BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN**

AN ACT
EXEMPTING QUALIFIED INDIGENT FILIPINOS FROM PAYMENT OF
PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION FEES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2023, 15.5% of Filipinos, or around 17.54 million people, had incomes below the poverty threshold.¹ Meanwhile, 4.3% of Filipinos, or 4.84 million people, were not able to meet their basic food needs. These figures underscore the need for measures that will address poverty and capacitate Filipinos to have sustainable sources of income.

Access to education and employment has shown to be effective paths out of poverty. For those hoping to secure a better-paying job, obtaining a professional license or civil service eligibility is a crucial step. However, the cost of professional examinations, ranging from P500 to P2,000, remains a barrier for indigent individuals. For families struggling to meet their daily necessities, these fees are yet another burden and hurdle towards achieving a better life.

This measure seeks to exempt indigent Filipinos from paying professional examination fees administered by the Professional Regulation Commission and the Civil Service Commission. As this bill has been approved on third reading during the 19th Congress, its passage now is timely and necessary.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

¹https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/infographics/2023%20Full%20Year%20Poverty%20Statistics_signed.pdf?width=950&height=700&iframe=true



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Representative
2nd District of Parañaque

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Free Professional Examinations Act.

SECTION. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is declared the policy of the State to promote full employment and to provide equal opportunities for employment for all. Furthermore, it is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will free the people from poverty through policies and programs that provide adequate social services, and improve the quality of life for all. In this regard, the State shall provide the poor access to mechanisms that expand opportunities for better employment.

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

- (a) *Professional Examinations* refer to the licensure examinations conducted by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) leading to the issuance of professional licenses to successful examinees. It shall also include examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) leading to eligibility for employment in the government.
- (b) *Qualified Indigents* refer to persons who have no visible means of income or support, or whose income may not be sufficient for the subsistence or basic

needs of the family, as may be determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SECTION. 4. Requirements for Availment. – For purposes of availing the benefits of this Act, an examinee shall secure Certificate of Indigency from the DSWD. Such certification shall be presented to the PRC, or the CSC, as the case may be, to be exempt from the payment of examination fees.

No other fee shall be charged against the qualified indigents for purposes of taking the professional examinations.

SECTION 5. Limitations on Availment. – Benefits of this Act may be availed of by a qualified indigent only once a year.

SECTION 6. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign. – The DSWD, PRC, and the CSC, in cooperation with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), is hereby mandated to conduct an annual IEC campaign in order to inform the people of the procedures and guidelines in availing the benefits of this Act.

SECTION 7. Reportorial Requirement. – For purposes of determining the effectiveness and social impact of the provisions of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, and the CSC shall submit an annual report to both Houses of Congress indicating therein the number of indigent examinees who benefited from this Act.

SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, and the CSC shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper and effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. Repealing Clause. – All other laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, other issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,