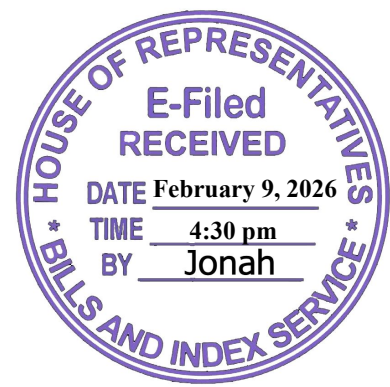


TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.*

House Bill No. 7691

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 10029, otherwise known as the Philippine Psychology Act of 2009, institutionalized the regulation and professionalization of psychology and psychometrics in the Philippines. Since its enactment more than fifteen (15) years ago, the scope, modalities, and societal relevance of psychological services have expanded significantly across health, education, social welfare, justice, workplace, and community settings. The increasing use of digital platforms, telepsychology, and cross-border service delivery further reflects a fundamental transformation in professional practice that was not fully contemplated under the existing law.

These developments have exposed material gaps in Republic Act No. 10029, particularly in the areas of supervision standards, scope of practice, facility regulation, telepractice safeguards, cross-border accountability, and enforcement. Despite regulation by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) through the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology (PRB-Psychology), persistent concerns remain regarding unauthorized psychological assessment and intervention, illegal practice, malpractice, misrepresentation, blurred professional boundaries, and scope creep among mental health professions.

The title “psychologist” remains vulnerable to unlawful use by individuals not duly registered with the PRC, thereby undermining public trust and professional accountability. This bill therefore affirms the protected status of the professional title and declares any unauthorized use or misrepresentation thereof unlawful and punishable under law. It likewise expressly prohibits the use, revival, or recognition of any “grandfathering” or analogous pathways to licensure that dispense with the requirement of a professional examination. Licensure shall remain merit-based, competency-driven, and anchored on public protection, without prejudice to the continued validity and renewal of licenses lawfully issued under Republic Act No. 10029 pursuant to the substantive requirements applicable at the time of issuance.

Moreover, the increasing provision of telepsychology and cross-border services, together with evolving international standards and the changing landscape of human experience, necessitates the establishment of clear and enforceable standards on competence, informed consent, jurisdiction, data privacy, supervision, and professional accountability. This measure seeks to ensure alignment with relevant national and international frameworks, including the Philippine Mental Health Act (Republic Act No. 11036), the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-Being Promotion Act (Republic Act No. 12080), the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173), the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF), the ASEAN Qualifications Framework (AQF), Continuing Professional Development (CPD), the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS), the Career Progression and Specialization Program (CPSP), and internationally recognized competency standards for professional psychology.

Accordingly, this bill seeks to strengthen the regulatory framework governing the practice of psychology by: (1) prioritizing public health, public welfare, and public protection; (2) clearly

defining scopes of practice and supervision among psychologists, psychometricians, and other mental health professionals; (3) establishing safeguards for telepsychology and cross-border practice; (4) strengthening bilateral and multilateral agreements, including reciprocity arrangements, to support ethical and competent international practice; (5) enhancing professional mobility while ensuring global competence; (6) strengthening investigation, complaints handling, and enforcement mechanisms, including proportionate penalties; (7) enhancing the qualifications, governance, and regulatory authority of the PRB-Psychology; (8) institutionalizing robust CPD, CATS, and CPSP systems; and (9) codifying the requirement of a Permit to Operate (PTO) for facilities providing psychological assessment and related services, with procurement limited to PTO-compliant providers.

The bill further mandates the prompt issuance of the Implementing Rules and Regulations and provides reasonable transitory periods to ensure orderly and equitable compliance.

Through this measure, the State reaffirms its duty to ensure that psychological services—whether delivered in person or through digital platforms—are rendered competently, ethically, and safely, in accordance with contemporary professional standards and the evolving needs of Philippine society.

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


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ


MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
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House Bill No. 7691

AN ACT
TO REGULATE THE PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY CREATING FOR THIS PURPOSE A
PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY, APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, AS AMENDED

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

ARTICLE I
TITLE

SECTION 1. Title. — This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Psychology Act".

ARTICLE II
STATEMENT OF POLICY

Section 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 diverse functions specific to the varied specializations. In particular, it recognizes the significance of the psychological services that practicing psychologists provide to diverse types of clients, but also recognizes the need to protect the public by preventing inexperienced or untrained individuals from offering psychological services. Hence, it shall nurture competent, upright and assiduous 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

Section 3. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(a) "*Psychology*" is the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. It involves the systematic application of scientific methods to inquire into the biological, cognitive, affective, developmental, personality, social, cultural and individual difference dimensions of human behavior and view of understanding, explaining, predicting, promoting the human well-being across diverse contexts.

(b) "*Practice of Psychology*" consists of the delivery of psychological services that involve the application of psychological principles and procedures for the purpose of understanding, predicting, and influencing the behavior of individuals or groups, to facilitate optimal psychological growth and functioning well-being and adoptive. Such services include, but are not limited to:

1. *Psychological Assessment – administering, interpreting, and integrating test and non-test data for clinical diagnosis and treatment planning; issuing mental-health certifications and clearances for employment, promotion, licensing, and other civil or*

- judicial processes; and providing expert opinion in judicial or quasi-judicial proceedings;*
2. *Psychological Interventions – delivering evidence-based psychotherapy, psychological counselling, coaching, psychosocial support, debriefing, and group therapy to individuals, families, groups, or organisations;*
 3. *Program Development and Evaluation – designing, planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating psychological or mental-health programmes for individuals, communities, and institutions, including promotion and prevention initiatives;*
 4. *Supervision and Training – supervising psychologists-in-training, psychometricians, and other supervised mental-health providers, and teaching psychology subjects that form part of the psychologist licensure examination, provided the academic requirements set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are met;*
 5. *Inter-disciplinary Collaboration – working with other mental-health and allied professionals in integrated care, within the bounds of one's competence and ethical standards; and*
 6. *Other emerging Functions –relevant to the practice of Psychology assessing from advances in science and practice, and exercised in a manner consistent with professional competences ethical standards and applicable the laws.*

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 and psychometricians or other recognized institutions, organizations, centers 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. Composition and Qualifications of the Board. — 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 Professional Regulation Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, 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 submitted by the Professional Regulation Commission. The list of nominees shall be submitted to the Commission by the AIPO for Psychologists and Psychometricians, an established institution or organization other than an HE for by self-nomination. The Board shall be organized not later than sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act. At the time of appointment and for the duration of their term, the Chairperson and every member of the Board shall:

- (1) be a natural-born citizen and resident of the Philippines;
- (2) be at least thirty-five (35) years of age;
- (3) be of proven good moral character;
- (4) hold at least a doctorate degree in psychology conferred by a higher-education institution in the Philippines recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) or by a foreign institution whose program has been certified by CHED as equivalent;
- (5) have at least ten (10) years of full-time, documented practice in psychology and, in psychometrics, in a duly recognized organization, clinic, center, institution, or agency;
- (6) have at least five (5) years of combined teaching experience in psychology at the tertiary and graduate level;
- (7) hold current, unexpired certificates of registration and professional identification

cards as RPsy and RPm;

(8) not be an officer, trustee, or faculty member of any higher-education institution that offers undergraduate or graduate psychology programs or operates review classes, and shall have no direct or indirect pecuniary interest therein;

(9) not be an elected officer of the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) of psychologists nor of any of its practice divisions at the time of appointment; and

(10) not have been convicted by final judgment of a crime involving moral turpitude.

No member shall, during their incumbency and for a period of one (1) year thereafter, accept employment or consultancy in any review center or psychological center/facility regulated by the Board.

SEC. 6. Term of Office. - (a) The Chairperson and the four (4) members of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology (hereinafter, the *Board*), as constituted under Section 5 hereof, serve a term of five (5) years, and 4 members, 3 years from the term shall continue in office until their successors are appointed and duly qualified: Provided, That no person shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive full terms. Prior the assuming the duties of his office, every member of the Board shall take the proper oath of office in accordance with law.

SEC. 7. Powers and Functions of the Board. — Subject to the general supervision of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology (the *Board*) shall exercise the following powers, functions, and duties:

- (a) Implementing authority. Administer and enforce this Act; and, with PRC approval, promulgate, revise, or update such rules, resolutions, and guidelines as may be necessary.
- (b) Regulation of practice and Board Licensure Examinations (BLE). Supervise and monitor the registration, and professional practice of Registered Psychologists (RPsys) and Registered Psychometricians (RPms) in the Philippines. The Board is likewise responsible for the construction, development and validation of test items for the BLE of entry psychologists and psychometricians, and oversee the licensure examinations for both categories.
- (c) Oath-taking. Administer the professional oath to successful examinees
- (d) Issuance and discipline. Issue, suspend, revoke, or reinstate certificates of registration and professional identification cards for RPsys and RPms, with full observance of due process and the PRC's rules on administrative investigations.
- (e) Official seal. Adopt and prescribe the Board's official seal.
- (f) Standards monitoring. Track conditions affecting the profession and, in consultation with the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO), its practice divisions, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and other stakeholders, adopt measures that promote high professional, ethical, and technical standards.
- (g) Visitorial power. Issue permits and conduct on-site inspections of institutions, associations, corporations, partnerships, and government agencies to ensure harmonization of policies and to verify that those providing psychological services are duly licensed, giving reasonable notice and complying with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173).
- (h) Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Career Progression and Specialization Program (CPSP). Recommend to the PRC, and implement upon approval, the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Career Progression and Specialization Program (CPSP) guidelines for RPsys and RPms in accordance with R.A. 10912.
- (i) Coordination with CHED. Work with CHED to ensure that higher-education institutions offering psychology program including internship programs comply with CHED standards insofar as such compliance affects licensure and professional practice.
- (j) Licensure-exam syllabi. Prepare, adopt, issue, and periodically amend the syllabi for the licensure-examination subjects for RPsys and RPms after stakeholder

consultation; provided, that this authority does not extend to curricular matters beyond those syllabi.

- (k) Investigative and adjudicatory power. Investigate and, when warranted, hear administrative cases involving violations of this Act, its IRR, or the applicable Codes of Ethics; and, for that purpose, issue subpoena *ad testificandum* and subpoena *duces tecum*. Decisions of the Board may be appealed to the PRC within fifteen (15) days of receipt.
- (l) Residual authority. Perform any other act necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act or lawfully delegated by the PRC.

Section 8. Compensation and Allowances. - The Chairperson and members of the Board shall receive the same compensation and allowances as those received by the Chairperson and members of the existing regulatory boards under the Commission, as provided in the charter of the Commission and in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 9. Removal or Suspension of Members of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology. - Any member of the Board may, upon the recommendation of the Commission, upon observance of due process and completion of the proper investigation, be suspended or removed by the President from office for cause, 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 grant and corruption, and participation in the manipulation of or any dishonesty relative to the licensure examinations and/or the registration process.

Section 10. Administrative Supervision over the Board, Custodian of its Records, Secretariat and Support Services. - The Board shall be under the administrative supervision and oversight of the Commission. 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 Commission. The Commission shall designate the Secretary of the Board and shall provide the secretariat with necessary support services to effectivity implement the provisions of this Act.

ARTICLE V LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS

SEC. 11. Examinations Required. - All applicants for registration to practice psychology or psychometrics shall be required to pass the respective licensure examinations for Registered Psychologists (RPs) and Registered Psychometricians (RPMs) to be conducted by the Board in such places and dates, and under such requirements, as may be prescribed by the Commission.

SEC. 12. Qualifications of Applicants for the Licensure Examination for Registered Psychologists. - Qualifications of Applicants for the Licensure Examination for Registered Psychologists. Any person may apply to take the psychologist licensure examination upon satisfactory proof to the Board that the applicant:

- (a) Shall 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) Shall hold at least a master's degree in psychology conferred by a university, college, or school in the Philippines or abroad recognized or accredited by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and has obtained sufficient academic credits for the subjects covered in the examination,
- (c) *Shall be a duly licensed psychometrician*
- (d) Shall have undergone a minimum of Six hundred (600) hours of supervised practicum, internship, or clinical experience related to the services enumerated in Section 3(b) of this Act, under the supervision of an RPs or other licensed mental-

- health professional;
- (e) Shall have of good moral character; and
- (f) Shall not have been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of an offence involving moral turpitude.

SEC. 13. *Qualifications of Applicants for the Licensure Examination for Registered Psychometricians.* Any person may apply to take the psychometrician licensure examination upon satisfactory proof to the Board that the applicant:

- (a) Shall 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) Shall hold at least a bachelor's degree in psychology conferred by a university, college, or school in the Philippines or abroad recognized or accredited by CHED and has obtained sufficient academic credits for the subjects covered in the examination;
- (c) Shall have completed at least one hundred fifty (150) hours of supervised practicum or internship experience in services enumerated in Section 3(c) of this Act and under the auspices of an RPsy or other licensed mental-health professional: Provided, That CHED may, after stakeholder consultation, prescribe a higher minimum number of hours;
- (d) Shall be of good moral character; and
- (e) Shall not have been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of an offence involving moral turpitude.

SEC. 14. *Examination Subjects for Psychologists.* - The licensure examination for psychologists shall cover the following subjects:

- (a) Ethics, Laws and Professional Practice in Psychology;
- (b) Psychopathology;
- (c) Measurement, Evaluation and Advanced Psychological Interventions;
- (d) Theories of Personality; and
- (e) Professional Development and Supervisions

SEC. 15. *Examination Subjects for Psychometricians.* - The licensure examinations for psychometricians shall cover the following subjects:

- (a) Developmental Psychology*;
- (b) Abnormal Psychology;
- (c) Organizational Psychology;
- (d) Psychometrics Theory and Psychological Assessment;
- (e) Introduction to Counseling, Mental Health, Adjustment and Well-being.

The Board may recluster, rearrange, modify, add or exclude and prescribed subjects for psychologists and psychometricians as the need arises.

SEC.16. *Ratings in the Examination.* - A candidate passes the licensure examination for Registered Psychologists or Registered Psychometricians when the examinee earns a general weighted average of seventy-five percent (75 %) or higher and no grade below sixty percent (60 %) in any subject.

An examinee who attains a general weighted average of at least 75 % but falls below 60 % in one or more subjects shall be marked "conditioned." That examinee may remove the deficiency by re-taking each failed subject once, within two (2) years from the date of the original examination, in accordance with the Professional Regulation Commission's two-year removal rule. If, on the conditional retake, the examinee obtains at least seventy-five percent (75%) in every previously failed subject, the examinee shall be considered to have passed the entire licensure examination; otherwise, the examinee must repeat the full examination.

SEC. 17. *Report of Ratings.* - The Board shall submit to the Commission an official report detailing the ratings obtained by each examine within ten (10) calendar days after the examination, unless such period is extended for just cause.

ARTICLE VI REGISTRATION

SEC. 18. *Oath of Psychologists and Psychometricians.* - All successful examinees qualified for registration and all 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 Commission authorized to administer oaths, prior to entering into the practice of psychology or psychometrics in the Philippines.

SEC. 19. *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 Commission. The certificate of registration shall bear the signature of the Chairperson of the Commission and members of the Board, indicating that the person named therein is entitled to practice the profession with all the privileges and concomitant responsibilities appurtenant thereto. The said 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 Commission, shall likewise be issued to every registrant who has paid the prescribed registration fee. Upon expiration of the professional identification card, the psychologist and psychometrician may renew the same upon proof of compliance with *continuing professional development requirements of 45 points for Psychologists and 30 points for Psychometricians.*

SEC. 20. *Disclosure of Registration Information.* - The psychologist or psychometrician shall be required to indicate his/her registration and professional identification card number and date of issuance, the duration of validity, including the professional tax receipt number on each document signed, used or issued in connection with the practice of his/her profession.

SEC. 21. *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 setting forth the reasons for such denial, which statement shall be incorporated to the records of the Board.

SEC. 22. *Foreign Reciprocity.* - No foreigner shall be admitted to the psychology or psychometrics licensure examinations unless he/she proves that the country of which he/she is a citizen either:

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

SEC. 23. *Practice through Special/Temporary Permit.* - Special/temporary permits may be issued by the Board, subject to the approval by the Commission and payment of appropriate fees, to the following persons:

- (a) Licensed psychologists or psychometricians from foreign countries/states who are internationally acknowledged specialists or outstanding experts in psychology or psychometrics: *Provided*, That their services are important 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 or psychometrics through transfer of technology;
- (b) Licensed psychologists or psychometricians from foreign countries/states whose services shall be free and offered exclusively to indigent patients in a particular hospital, center or clinic; and
- (c) Licensed psychologists or psychometricians from foreign countries/states employed as exchange professors to teach psychology or psychometrics in schools, colleges, universities offering psychology or psychometrics courses or programs.

The permit shall detail the conditions thereof which shall, among other things, include the effectivity period of not more than one (1) year subject to renewal and the specific place of practice such as the clinic, hospital, center, school, college, university offering the course of psychology or psychometrics. The Board, subject to the approval by the Commission, shall prescribe rules and regulations on the implementation of this particular section.

SEC. 24. *Suspension or Revocation of Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card or Cancellation of a Special/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 special/temporary permits granted pursuant to this Act on any ground set forth in Section 33 of this Act or any of the instances hereunder:

- (a) Procurement of a certificate of registration and/or professional identification card or 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 or 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 his/her clients/patients;
- (e) Professional misconduct or negligence in the performance of duties as a psychometrician; and
- (f) Engaging in the practice of the profession during the period of one's suspension.

SEC. 25. *Reinstatement.* - A psychologist or psychometrician 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 shall conform to requirements hereinafter prescribed by the Board. No certificate of registration or 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 or professional identification card or special/temporary permit in lieu of one that has been lost, destroyed or mutilated shall be subject to applicable rules prescribed by the Commission.

SEC. 26. *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 Commission within the same period. The Commission's decision on appeal may be further appealed before the Court Appeals within fifteen (15) days from receipt thereof.

SEC. 27. *Rights of the Respondent.* - The respondent psychologist or psychometrician shall have the right to be represented by counsel at all stages of the proceedings as well as to speedy disposition of his/her case. He/She shall have the right to confront witnesses against him/her in addition to such other rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

ARTICLE VII PSYCHOLOGY PROFESSIONALS IN GOVERNMENT

SEC. 28. *Government Positions for Registered Psychologists and Registered Psychometricians.* –

(a) Classification. Pursuant to Book V of Executive Order No. 292, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) shall, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and in accordance with CSC-DBM Joint Circular No. 1-s. 2020, classify the positions of Registered Psychologist (RPsy) and Registered Psychometrician (RPm) in the *Index of Occupational Services, Occupational Groups, Classes, and Salary Grades* under the Medicine and Health Services occupational group.

(b) Salary grades. In determining the appropriate salary grades, the DBM shall apply the indexing and point-factor methodology prescribed in Republic Act No. 6758 (Compensation and Position Classification Act) and its succeeding Salary Standardization Laws, taking into account the duties, level of responsibility, and competency requirements of each position. The CSC and DBM shall consult the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) of psychologists, its practice divisions, and other stakeholders to ensure that the resulting position titles, qualification standards, and compensation packages reflect the actual scope and complexity of psychological services.

(c) Creation of plantilla items. Consistent with Chapters IV and V of Republic Act No. 11036 (Mental Health Act) and subject to the personnel-services caps, organizational, and budgetary guidelines set by the DBM:

1. National government agencies, government-owned or controlled corporations, and all levels of local government units (LGUs) shall endeavor to establish RPsy and RPm positions after a workload and service-demand assessment approved by the CSC;
2. Government hospitals at the regional, provincial, and tertiary levels, as well as DOH-licensed private hospitals that cater to paying and non-paying patients, shall include RPsy and RPm items in their staffing patterns as a condition of initial or continued licensure, in accordance with DOH staffing standards;
3. Public and private educational institutions that operate psychology programs or deliver school-based mental-health services shall comply with CHED and DepEd staffing requirements for psychological services personnel; and
4. Workplaces required to implement mental-health programs under Section 25 of the Mental Health Act and its IRR shall retain or engage suitably licensed RPsys or RPms, consistent with Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) guidelines.

(d) Funding source and approval process. The creation of new government plantilla items under this section shall be processed in accordance with DBM National Budget Circulars on position creation, and funded from each agency's or LGU's authorized personnel-services (PS) allotments or from special appropriations as may be provided in the General Appropriations Act.

(e) Periodic review. The CSC and DBM shall review the position titles, qualification standards, and salary grades for RPsys and RPms at least once every five (5) years, or sooner if warranted by changes in practice standards, to keep them aligned with international benchmarks and domestic labor-market conditions.

ARTICLE VIII

PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATION AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

SEC. 29. *Privileged Communication.* (a) General rule. Without the written consent of the client or patient, a Registered Psychologist (RPsy) or Registered Psychometrician (RPm) may not be examined in any civil, criminal, administrative, or legislative proceeding about any confidential communication made to or information obtained by them in the course of professional service. The privilege covers all related records, whether physical or electronic, and extends to any secretary, clerk, or staff member who gains access to such information.

(b) Exceptions. The privilege does not apply when:

1. the client or patient voluntarily puts his or her mental condition in issue in any proceeding;
2. disclosure is reasonably necessary to prevent an imminent threat of serious harm to the client or to another person;
3. a court of competent jurisdiction, after hearing, orders disclosure on the ground that the public interest in the administration of justice outweighs the confidentiality of the communication;
4. disclosure is mandated under special laws on child abuse, gender-based violence, or similar protective statutes; or
5. the client or patient expressly waives the privilege in writing.

(c) Inadmissibility and penalties. Any evidence obtained in violation of this section is inadmissible for any purpose. The unauthorized disclosure of privileged material shall constitute unprofessional conduct subject to the disciplinary powers of the Board and the Professional Regulation Commission.

(d) Data privacy. All collection, processing, storage, and disposal of client data must comply with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the *Data Privacy Act of 2012*, and its implementing rules.

SEC. 30. *Integration of the Profession.* - The profession shall hereinafter be integrated by consolidating all practitioners into one (1) national organization of registered and licensed psychologists and psychometricians, which shall be recognized and accredited by the Board, subject to approval of the Commission. A psychologist or psychometrician duly registered and licensed by the Board and the Commission shall automatically become a member of said organization and shall receive the benefits and privileges, as well as be subject to all responsibilities and obligations, appurtenant thereto upon payment of the required fees and dues. Membership in the integrated organization shall not be a bar to membership in any other association of psychologists and/or psychometricians.

SEC. 31. *Code of Ethics and Code of Professional Practice.* -

(a) Adoption and scope. The Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology (*the Board*), in collaboration with the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) of psychologists and its practice divisions, shall formulate, adopt, and promulgate a Code of Ethics and a Code of Professional Practice that shall govern all Registered Psychologists (RPsys) and Registered Psychometricians (RPms).

(b) Procedure. Draft codes and any amendments thereto shall:

1. undergo public consultation with stakeholders, including the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), local government units, and consumer-advocacy groups;
2. be reviewed and approved by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) pursuant to Section 5(b) of Republic Act No. 8981 and PRC Resolution No. 01-2017

- (or any successor issuance); and
3. take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation and after filing with the Office of the National Administrative Register, in accordance with Book VII, Chapter 2 of Executive Order No. 292.

(c) Periodic review. The Board shall review the codes at least once every five (5) years, or earlier when required to harmonize with new legislation or regulations, including but not limited to the Mental Health Act (R.A. 11036), the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173), and the Continuing Professional Development Act of 2016 (R.A. 10912).

(d) Enforcement. Violation of any provision of the Code of Ethics or the Code of Professional Practice shall constitute unprofessional conduct and shall be grounds for administrative sanction under this Act and the PRC Rules on Administrative Investigation.

ARTICLE IX

PROHIBITED ACTS, PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT OF THIS ACT

SEC. 32. *Prohibited Acts.*

(a) No person shall:

(1) Engage in the professional practice of psychology or psychometrics nor represent himself/herself as a professional practicing psychologist or psychometrician without a valid certificate of registration or valid professional identification card, or a valid special/temporary permit granted by the Board pursuant to this Act;

(2) Represent himself/herself to be a licensed and authorized practicing psychologist or psychometrician during the time that his/her certificate of registration has been suspended or revoked or professional identification card without being renewed, or special/temporary permit cancelled;

(3) Allow any other person to use his/her certificate of registration and professional identification card or special/temporary permit for any purpose, regardless of whether such enables the unqualified individual to engage in the practice of psychology or psychometrics;

(4) Use, exhibit and/or misrepresent as his/her own the certificate of registration and/or professional identification card or special/temporary permit of another; and

(5) Give any false, inaccurate, misleading or incomplete information to the Board on order to obtain a certificate of registration or professional identification card or special/temporary permit.

(b) No corporation, partnership, association or entity shall operate a psychology or psychometrics office, center, clinic or otherwise engage in the practice or allow the practice of psychology or psychometrics within its premises without securing a permit therefor from the Board. Such permit shall be issued only after the Board is satisfied that such establishment is competently staffed by a psychologist and equipped with sufficient and adequate psychology-related instruments and facilities. *Provided that such establishment is headed by a Registered Psychologist with at least 5 years of clinical experience.*

(c) A violation of any provision of this Act or of its implementing rules and regulations shall be penalized accordingly.

SEC. 33. *Penalties.* - Any person who violates any provision of this Act 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), or both, at the discretion of the court.

SEC. 34. *Injunction.* - The Board may initiate action to enjoin, restrain, and/or prosecute any individual, corporation, association, partnership or entity engaging in the practice of psychology and psychometrics in violation of this Act.

SEC. 35. *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. 36. *Funding Provision.* - The Chairperson of the Commission shall immediately hereinafter include in the Commission's programs the prompt implementation of this Act, funding of which shall be provided for in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 37. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days after the constitution of the Board, it shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations, subject to approval of the Commission, to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 38. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall at any time be found to be unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder thereof not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 39. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, rules or regulations inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

ARTICLE X TRANSITORY AND FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 40. *Saving Clause. Renewal of Existing Licenses.* Existing Certificates of Registration and Professional Identification Cards issued under R.A. 10029 shall be renewable under the same substantive requirements in force at the time of their original issuance, subject only to the CPD units mandated by R.A. 10912 or related issuances.

SEC. 41. *Non-impairment of Vested Rights.* Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish or impair any right or privilege already vested in a holder of a valid license issued under R.A. 10029.

SEC. 42. *Hold-over Board.* — The incumbent members of the Professional Regulatory Board of Psychology constituted under Republic Act No. 10029 shall continue to serve in an interim capacity for not more than sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, or until a new set of members has been appointed, taken oath, and organized pursuant to Sections 5 and 6 hereof, whichever comes first. During such hold-over period, the Board shall exercise only routine and non-policy making functions necessary to avoid disruption of public service.

SEC. 43. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,