

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **9242**



Introduced by HON. PHILIP CONRAD "DOK BONG" M. ACOP

AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE
STUDENTS TO PLANT TWO (2) TREES EACH AS A CIVIC DUTY FOR
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION, AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For decades, the walk across the graduation stage has symbolized the end of a journey, a final bow before entering the "real world." With the introduction of the Graduation Legacy for Reforestation Act, that walk is being redefined. This legislation proposes that before a student picks up a diploma, they must first put down roots.

By requiring every graduating senior high school and college student to plant two trees, the State is not merely adding a checklist item to graduation; it is weaving the spirit of bayanihan into the very fabric of environmental conservation. It is a clarion call for the youth to pay forward the resources they have consumed, ensuring that as they grow into the nation's next leaders, the forests grow with them.

This Act is both timely and essential, serving as a strategic response to the climate's shifting temperament. In a country frequently battered by typhoons and rising temperatures, reforestation is no longer a luxury—it is a survival mechanism. By mobilizing millions of students annually, the government creates a massive, sustained workforce for environmental restoration that no single agency could achieve alone. This is not just about planting seeds; it is about systemic restoration.

With the mandate focusing on indigenous species and site-specific topography, the bill ensures that we are not just creating "green spaces," but functional ecosystems that can withstand the local climate, protect our watersheds, and prevent the devastating landslides that have historically claimed too many Filipino lives.

Beyond the ecological impact, the bill poses positive ripple effects. Culturally, it fosters a “legacy mindset” among the youth. Instead of leaving behind only footprints, students leave a living monument to their hard work: a tree that will sequester carbon long after their graduation caps have collected dust.

Economically, the bill strengthens local communities by mandating the establishment of nurseries and seedling banks through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Department of Agriculture (DA), potentially creating green jobs and supporting local agricultural sectors. It turns the entire archipelago into a classroom without walls, where biology and civic duty intersect in the soil.

Ultimately, the Graduation Legacy for Reforestation Act recognizes that the youth are the primary stakeholders of the future. By making environmental stewardship a prerequisite for professional entry, the law ensures that the next generation of doctors, engineers, and artists enters the labor force with a literal and figurative “grounding” in the earth. It is a beautiful, symbiotic exchange: the country provides the education, and the student provides the life that will sustain the country.

As these millions of saplings take root, they represent more than just shade or timber; they serve as a living embodiment of the landmark 1993 case of *Oposa v. Factoran*. In this historic ruling, the Philippine Supreme Court crystallized the concept of intergenerational responsibility, a legal principle that changed the landscape of environmental law worldwide by asserting that the current generation has a moral and legal obligation to preserve the environment for the benefit of future generations.

By putting this principle into practice, these trees represent a nation’s collective commitment to ensuring that the Philippines remains as lush and vibrant for the next generation as it was for the last.

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



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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 “Graduation Legacy for Reforestation Act”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Toward this end, the State shall promote and pursue reforestation programs and encourage tree planting as a means of involving the youth in public and civic affairs.

SEC. 3. Tree Planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation. – As an act of public service before they join the country’s labor force, all graduating students in senior high school and college, except physically handicapped and students with special needs, shall plant two (2) trees each as a prerequisite for graduation.

SEC 4. Tree Planting Sites. – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the concerned local government units (LGUs) shall determine the appropriate tree planting sites within the LGU territories, in coordination with schools, colleges and universities.

SEC 5. Preference for Indigenous Species. – The species of trees to be planted should be appropriate to the location, climate and topography of the area, with preference for the planting of indigenous species.

SEC. 6. Partner Agencies and Stakeholders and their Responsibilities.

– The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall implement the provisions of this Act, in partnership with the following agencies:

- a. DENR;
- b. Department of Agriculture (DA);
- c. Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
- d. Department of Science and Technology (DOST); and
- e. National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

The responsibilities of these agencies shall include:

- a. Establishment of nursery and seedling preparation;
- b. Site identification and preparation;
- c. Technical support and extension services; and
- d. Monitoring and evaluation.

SEC. 7. Provision of Seedlings. – The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of the DENR and the DA, in partnership with LGUs throughout the Philippines, shall maintain a seedling bank that will serve as a ready source of seedlings to be used in the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd and CHED shall, in coordination with the DENR and DILG, and in consultation with other agencies, promulgate and issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 9. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The LGU concerned may set aside funds from any local revenue an amount deemed appropriate for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – Should any portion or provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,