



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 10057

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

AN ACT
CREATING AN ADVANCED STUDIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
FOR EXCEPTIONAL EMPLOYEES FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND
THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Human capital is the foundation of national progress. In an increasingly knowledge-driven and innovation-centered global economy, the Philippines must invest deliberately and strategically in developing a critical mass of highly skilled professionals who can lead in science, technology, research, and other disciplines essential to economic transformation. While the country produces talented graduates and professionals, there remains a pressing need to systematically nurture exceptional individuals who can acquire advanced expertise from leading international institutions and translate such knowledge into tangible national gains. The proposed *Pensionado Act* institutionalizes a forward-looking and merit-based fellowship program designed to cultivate first-rate specialists who will serve as catalysts of innovation, productivity, and policy excellence.

This measure establishes the Pensionado Program under the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in coordination with key development agencies, to provide fellowships for exceptionally capable and highly motivated Filipinos from government, the private sector, and the self-employed sector. The Program shall support advanced studies and research in priority disciplines identified as

vital to national development. It creates a National Secretariat to oversee administration, coordination of foreign and local grants, and reintegration of scholars, as well as a Selection Panel composed of distinguished academic leaders to ensure integrity and merit in the selection process. The fellowship shall provide comprehensive support, including paid study leave, travel, stipends, research allowances, and insurance, through a cost-sharing mechanism between the National Government and the scholar's employer, with opportunities for international cost-sharing arrangements.

Crucially, the bill ensures that public investment yields measurable national returns. Pensionados shall be required to render return service equivalent to twice the period of their fellowship and to share their expertise through seminars, training programs, and research engagement. A National Network of Specialized Institutes for Advanced Studies shall be developed to provide returning scholars with platforms for sustained collaboration, innovation, and policy contribution. By consolidating and strategically managing scholarship grants, the State positions itself to harness global knowledge for domestic advancement. Ultimately, the Pensionado Act strengthens the country's long-term competitiveness by building a community of elite Filipino professionals committed to national service and transformative leadership.

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



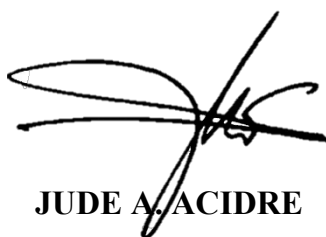
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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines
in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the "Pensionado Act"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policies.* — Human resources developments are essential for economic development and progress. In the pursuit of economic development and progress, the State shall give priority to the creation of a critical mass of elite professionals who shall take the lead in harnessing science, technology, and related disciplines towards accelerating the productivity of the country's human resources. Consonant with this thrust, it is hereby declared a policy of the State to devise a program for exceptionally able and highly

motivated employees, preferably aged thirty (30) to forty (40) years, from the government, the private sector and/or the self-employed to undertake advanced studies in a branch of science, technology, or related fields of learning on which depends the development and progress of the country. As such, it shall provide for fellowships to enable them to pursue advanced studies or research in their field of expertise. The State shall develop a critical mass of first-rate specialists in various disciplines and areas of specializations vital to national development to form a collective national "think tank" who shall place continuously their knowledge and skills at the service of the nation, be it in industry, the academe, or the highest policy-making levels of government, with the government taking the lead in harnessing their knowledge and skills for the greatest good of the country.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereunder defined as follows:

- (a) Post-graduate refers to a formal degree course program of training research requiring at least a Master's Degree for entry; a student pursuing such program;
- (b) Advanced studies refer to a post-graduate problem-oriented program of studies and/or research, not necessarily leading to a degree, undertaken for further specialization or advanced knowledge in a specific field of study, or to acquire specialized knowledge and/or skills in a particular area of science or technology; and
- (c) Pensionado refers to a Filipino citizen selected and supported by the Philippine government under this program to undertake advanced studies in selected institutions of higher learning or recognized research centers, 18 in fields relevant to the officially-declared priority areas for development.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of Pensionado Program.* — There shall be established under the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in coordination the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the private sector and non-government organizations (NGOs) a fellowship program to be called as the Pensionado Program for Filipinos employed in the government and the private sector, and those who are self-employed.

The Program shall pool together all fellowships, scholarships, training grants sponsored or extended by foreign government, agencies and other bodies, as well as by local agencies and organizations, whether public or private, intended for advanced studies in international centers of advanced learning, scholarship and research.

SEC. 5. *Establishment of a National Secretariat; Functions and Composition.*

— There shall be established a National Secretariat with the following functions:

- (a) Identify and assist in negotiations with sponsors of fellowships, scholarships and grants;
- (b) Provide assistance to the selection panel in accomplishing its work;
- (c) Provide the Pensionados continuing assistance from the time of selection thru the time of their return to the country, including assistance for the productive utilization of their newly-gained expertise;
- (d) Serve as the administrative arm of the government for the program; and
- (e) In general, promulgate and implement the policies and guidelines governing the Program.

The National Secretariat shall be headed by an Executive Officer with the rank of Assistant Secretary, to be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of CHED. The members of the Secretariat

shall consist of representatives from CHED, NEDA, DTI, and DOST. These representatives shall be seconded to the Secretariat for a period of one (1) year, subject to renewal every year. Service rendered thereat shall be considered as part of their performance for promotions purposes.

SEC. 6. *Number of Pensionados and Length of Grant.* — There shall be selected twenty-four (24) Fellows annually — three (3) Fellows for each priority discipline / industry field of the eight (8) vital disciplines or areas of specializations identified by the CHED in consultation with the NEDA as frontiers or new areas essential for pushing the economic and social development thrusts of the country. The scholarship shall be for a period not exceeding three (3) years.

SEC. 7. *Selection Process.* — There shall be a Selection Panel under the Secretariat consisting of three (3) university presidents and two (2) eminent members from the academe to be appointed by the CHED. They shall serve on a staggered basis for the purposes of continuity and consistency, each for a term of three (3) years. The Selection Panel shall make the final selection of the Pensionados from among the nominees from the academe, industry and research centers. The integrity and objectives of the program are paramount considerations for the panel in making the selection.

SEC. 8. *Qualifications.* — In order to qualify for the Fellowship Program, the applicant must be:

- (a) a Filipino citizen;
- (b) gainfully employed;
- (c) a college degree graduate, with honors;

- (d) with demonstrated leadership and proven exceptional performance in his/her present work;
- (e) enthusiastic in undergoing further training; and
- (f) willing to sign a contract requiring him/her to return to his/her job in 8 another capacity after training.

SEC. 9. *Place of Study.* — The Pensionados shall be sent to a foreign country well-known for its advanced stage in particular discipline of area of specialization. Training and education may be an academic institution, research and development (R&D) center or a major industrial establishment with R&D program. It may or may not lead to an advanced academic degree.

SEC. 10. *Assistance to Grantees.* — The Pensionado is entitled to the following benefits:

- (a) Up to three (3) years leave with pay, including allowances and other benefits;
- (b) One economy round-trip air fare to and from the host country plus other travel expenses required for foreign travel;
- (c) Clothing allowance to be determined by the Secretariat;
- (d) Monthly stipend while on study abroad, of such amount to be determined by the Secretariat;
- (e) Books / instructional materials / research allowance of such amount to be determined by the Secretariat; and
- (f) Health, travel and insurance fees of such amount to be determined by the Secretariat.

SEC. 11. *Program Funding.* — The cost of each fellowship grant shall be shared by the Pensionado's employer and the National Government. The employer pays

the salary, allowances and other benefits due the Fellow as employed for the whole period of the advanced studies overseas while the National Government, thru the Program, shall be responsible for items b, c, d, e, and f as enumerated in Section 10 of this Act. With the transfer of all pertinent foreign and local grants for coordination under the Program, the government through the Program, may negotiate bilateral arrangements with host governments, host universities, host research institutions and host corporations to share at least fifty percent (50%) of the total cost of items b, c, d, e, and f under Section 10 hereof. The National Government may also negotiate bilateral agreements with host governments, host universities, research institutions and corporations to enable our scholars to stay abroad and continue their studies or training at a minimal cost to the National Government. A sharing program can be established where the host government, host-universities, research institutions and corporations can shoulder 10 the expenses of the scholars while abroad.

SEC. 12. *Service Obligation.* — Immediately upon completion of the studies or training, a Fellow shall be required to return to their job or in another capacity approved by the Secretariat and serve on a full-time basis for a minimum period equivalent to twice the period covered by the fellowship grant. In addition, the Fellow shall be required to hold seminars or training sessions for employees from the government and the private sectors on topics related to the course or training that he/she has completed. Any recipient of the program who has not completed his course shall reimburse the fellowship grant in cash or through equivalent service. Any Pensionado who violates the service obligation imposed under this Section shall reimburse the sponsoring agency or company and the National Government of the fund assistance received under this Act in full or in part as the case may be.

SEC. 13. *Mechanism for Utilization of Returned Fellows.* — There shall be established and developed a National Network of Specialized Institutes for Advanced Studies in universities selected by CHED in consultation with the DOST and other appropriate agencies to be determined by the Secretariat to provide returning scholars an office, laboratory, library/ and conference facilities for their continuing activities. The Institute shall also serve as a place for an Exchange Program and Collaborative Research among local and international scientists and scholars in priority areas of research and development.

SEC. 14. *Appropriations.* — The amount needed to initially implement the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations of the current year of the concerned departments and agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the appropriation of the concerned departments and agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 15. *Transfer of Other Fellowship, Scholarship, and Training Grants* — All foreign and locally sponsored fellowship, scholarship and training grants will be transferred to the program for coordination. With respect to government employees who may be affected by the transfer, the pertinent rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) shall apply.

SEC. 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, CHED, in coordination with NEDA, DTI, DOST, and CSC, and upon consultation with the private sector stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the provisions hereof.

SEC. 17. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 18. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 19. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,