



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

Twentieth Congress
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 10453

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE KATRINA REIKO CHUA - TAI**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education stands as a driving engine for national progress and social transformation, molding Filipino citizens into skilled, knowledgeable contributors. Yet for countless graduates from low-income families, a college diploma is not a golden key to professional success. The vital bridge to economic mobility, the professional licensure examination, often remains blocked by daunting financial barriers.

Every year, the Philippines witnesses a fresh surge of hope as hundreds of thousands of college graduates aspire to become licensed professionals in fields like education, nursing, engineering, accountancy, architecture, criminology, and social work. With more than 700,000 graduates stepping into the world from public and private institutions, these individuals carry the nation's dreams on their shoulders. Yet for many, the path from classroom to career is strewn with obstacles that make the leap from graduation to professional practice a daunting climb.

Even after conquering the rigors of their academic journey, many graduates find the road to professional licensure blocked by steep financial hurdles. The true cost of board examinations stretches far beyond the exam fee, encompassing review courses, study materials, online resources, transportation, meals, internet access, document processing, and lodging. For those from distant or rural areas, these expenses multiply as they journey far from home to reach review centers and testing sites. Depending on the field and location, the total cost of preparing for board exams can soar from ₱20,000 to ₱80,000 or more. For indigent families, these expenses compete with the most basic needs: food, shelter, healthcare, and other essentials. As a result, many capable graduates, armed with knowledge and determination, are forced to delay or even abandon their dreams of becoming licensed professionals simply because they cannot afford the price of opportunity.

Consequently, many graduates are pushed to enter the workforce right away, often settling for any job they can find, regardless of whether it matches their education, skills, or aspirations. This harsh reality fuels the ongoing issue of underemployment among Filipino graduates. The Philippine Statistics Authority reports that a large share of college-educated workers remain in roles that fail to tap into their full potential. The problem only deepens when professional licenses, essential for

career growth, remain out of reach due to financial barriers. of qualified graduates to obtain professional licenses does not represent only an individual hardship but also a loss of national potential. The country invests significant resources in educating its citizens, yet many graduates are unable to completely realize their capabilities because they cannot overcome the final barrier toward professional recognition. Each graduate who is prevented from taking a licensure examination could have become a teacher influencing young minds, a healthcare worker serving communities, an engineer contributing toward national infrastructure, an accountant supporting businesses, or a professional driving economic growth and public service.

This measure seeks to create a program that supports qualified graduates from indigent families who are ready to take professional licensure exams. The program will help with examination fees, documentary requirements, government-backed review materials, digital learning resources, transportation, and other essential expenses, empowering beneficiaries to pursue their professional dreams with confidence.

This program offers more than just financial aid, it is a strategic investment in the country's future. By enabling deserving graduates to earn their professional licenses, the government expands the ranks of skilled professionals who can drive national progress, uplift industries, enhance public services, and support communities. The program will prioritize those who have finished their academic requirements, genuinely need financial help, and are ready to take the next step toward licensure.

At the start, the government can set yearly targets for beneficiaries based on resources, exam demand, and the pool of qualified applicants. In its early stages, the program could help tens of thousands of indigent graduates each year, ensuring that support reaches those facing the steepest financial obstacles. Assistance will be carefully allocated through thorough government assessment and budgeting to cover essential licensure exam expenses.

The funding required for this program should be viewed as an investment that yields lasting economic and social rewards. Enabling a graduate to earn a professional license opens doors to stable jobs, higher incomes, and greater financial security for families. Licensed professionals give back to society through their work, entrepreneurship, taxes, and public service. Supporting just one graduate can spark a ripple effect, uplifting families, supporting dependents, and fortifying communities. hardworking Filipinos from disadvantaged backgrounds with a route toward economic mobility. It affirms that excellence, dedication, and professional potential exist in every sector of society and should never be limited by a person's ability to pay for examination-related expenses.

The State must guarantee that financial hardship does not stop qualified graduates from turning their education into meaningful careers. By breaking down economic barriers to licensure exams, the government makes the most of its investment in education, champions equal opportunity, and empowers more Filipinos to help build the nation.

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


KATRINA REIKO CHUA-TAI



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HOUSE BILL NO. 10459

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE KATRINA REIKO CHUA-TAI**

1 **AN ACT**

2 **PROVIDING FREE BOARD EXAMINATION FEES AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR**
3 **QUALIFIED INDIGENT EXAMINEES, ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL ASSISTANCE**
4 **PROGRAM FOR ASPIRING PROFESSIONALS FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES,**
5 **AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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7 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in*
8 *Congress assembled:*
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11 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the “**Free Board Examination**
12 **Assistance Act for Indigent Examinees.**”
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14 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to promote equal access to
15 professional opportunities and ensure that financial hardship shall not prevent qualified Filipino
16 graduates from obtaining professional licenses. The State recognizes the importance of supporting
17 capable and deserving individuals from indigent families who have the knowledge, skills, and
18 dedication necessary to become licensed professionals.
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1 SEC. 3. **Definition of Terms.** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms are herein
2 defined as follows:

3
4 **“Indigent Examinee”** refers to a graduate qualified to take a professional licensure
5 examination whose family income falls within the poverty threshold or income
6 classification determined by appropriate government agencies.

7
8 **“Board Examination”** refers to any professional licensure examination administered by
9 the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and other authorized government
10 regulatory bodies.

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12 **“Qualified Beneficiary”** refers to an indigent examinee who satisfies the eligibility
13 requirements under this Act.

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15 SEC. 4. **Establishment of the Free Board Examination Assistance Program.** - There
16 shall be established a nationwide program to provide free board examination assistance to qualified
17 indigent examinees. The program shall cover:

- 18
19 a. Full payment of board examination application fees;
20 b. Assistance for documentary requirements;
21 c. Reasonable transportation or communication support when necessary;
22 d. Access to government-supported review materials and learning resources; and
23 e. Other forms of assistance necessary to improve examination readiness.

24
25 SEC. 5. **Eligibility Requirements.** - There A qualified beneficiary shall:
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- a. Be a Filipino citizen;
- b. Be a graduate of a recognized educational institution;
- c. Be eligible to take a professional licensure examination;
- d. Belong to an indigent family bracket as certified by the appropriate government authority; and
- e. Submit the requirements prescribed by implementing agencies.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Agencies.* - The Professional Regulation Commission, in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Commission on Higher Education, and other concerned government agencies, shall formulate the rules and procedures necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Funding.* - The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. Government agencies may also accept grants, donations, and other lawful contributions to support the objectives of this program.

SEC. 8. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* - The implementing agencies shall submit an annual report to Congress regarding:

- a. The number of beneficiaries assisted;
- b. The professional examinations covered;
- c. The success rate of beneficiaries;
- d. The impact of the program on increasing access to professional licensure; and
- e. Recommendations for improvement.

1 **SEC. 9. *Non-Discrimination Clause.*** - No qualified applicant shall be denied assistance
2 on the basis of economic status, geographic location, or social background, provided that all
3 eligibility requirements are met.

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5 **SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within ninety (90) days from the
6 effectivity of this Act, the implementing agencies shall issue the necessary rules and regulations
7 for its effective implementation.

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9 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision of this Act is declared
10 unconstitutional, the remainder shall continue to be in full force and effect.

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12 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws inconsistent with this Act are hereby
13 amended or repealed accordingly.

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15 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
16 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

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18 Approved,