

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



16 JUL 19 P2:46

SENATE

S. No. 545

Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

AN ACT
AMENDING CERTAIN SECTIONS OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NUMBERED
NINETY-SEVEN, AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE MERCHANT
MARINE OFFICERS LAW"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

During the last two decades, the rapid development of the marine profession as well as the marine industry, both in the academic and technological aspects, has made the requirements of future marine officers, per P.D. No. 97, quite obsolete. The advances in the international field have been more phenomenal among the Western countries who are members of the International Marine Organization (IMO), with the Philippines lagging behind.

Of utmost concern to the country is the state of affairs of its domestic or coastwise shipping industry where there are numerous vessels with lower than 200 gross tons capacity that are manned by unqualified seafarers. Based from the reports of sea disasters, these accidents may just have been due to human errors/negligence, which is primarily due to the lack of sound and solid education on the field despite the years of actual sailing.

The age of computerization and automation only heightens the problem. Procedures and equipment of modern merchant vessels have not only increased in complexities but have been constantly improving by the adoption of new developments in science and technology further promoting efficiency and safety of operations. We cannot be caught flat-footed. We, therefore, have to upgrade not just the techniques, but most of all, the basic academic and hands-on experience qualifications.

Stiffer competition with our Asian neighbors and Eastern European countries only emphasizes our lack of these essential pre-requisites. For this reason, we need to use our naval vessels when they are not engaged in emergencies for the training of our future deck officer, engineers and crewmen apart from the traditional vessels that lend them apprenticeship training.

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


ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator



16 MAR 19 12:46

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

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 15 of the Presidential Decree Numbered Ninety-Seven, as
2 amended, otherwise known as the Philippine Merchant Marine Officers Law is hereby
3 amended to read as follows:

4 "Sec. 15. Admission Requirements for Examination. - No person shall
5 be qualified for examination as a marine officer unless he/she is:

6 "[(a) male;]

7 "[(b)] (A) Citizen of the Philippines;

8 "[(c)] (B) At least twenty-one years of age;

9 "[(d)] (C) Mentally-sound and physically fit with normal vision perception,
10 as certified by a competent physician; and

11 "[(e)] (D) Of good moral character."
12

13 **SECTION 2.** Paragraphs (d), (e) and (f) of Section 16 of the Decree are hereby
14 amended as follows:

15 "SEC. 16, Requirements of Deck Officers. -

16 x x x

17 "(d) Third Mate. - Applicant must be a holder of a degree of Bachelor
18 of Science in Marine Transportation, major in Navigation and Seamanship,
19 after completion of a nautical curriculum of academic and theoretical studies,
20 and twelve months of practical apprenticeship which must be served on
21 [merchant marine] **BOARD SEAGOING VESSELS** of not less than two
22 hundred [fifty] gross tons registered for foreign or coastwise trade to qualify
23 for third mate license. **A LOGBOOK SHALL HAVE BEEN**
24 **ACCOMPLISHED AND** [the] certification of service issued by the Master
25 and Chief Mate of the vessel. The apprenticeship shall be under the
26 supervision of a permanent staff of the institution assigned solely for such
27 purpose.

28 "(e) Major Patron - An applicant for Patron in major coastwise trade
29 shall be at least twenty-[five] **ONE** years of age and shall produce a certificate
30 showing that he/she has **COMPLETED TWO YEARS IN NAUTICAL**
31 **SCIENCE** or its equivalent in an officially recognized school and he/SHE has
32 navigated on a coastwise or a [high sea] **SEA-GOING** vessel as boatswain,

1 quartermaster, [sailor] **ABLE SEAMAN** or apprentice mate [on a merchant
2 marine vessel] of not less than two hundred [fifty] gross tons for a period of at
3 least [ten] **TWO (2)** years [or that he has navigated as minor patron for at least
4 five years].

5 "(f) Minor Patron - An applicant for certificate for patron in [the]
6 Minor coastwise trade shall not be less than twenty-[five] **ONE** years of age
7 and shall produce satisfactory evidence showing that he/SHE has passed [high
8 school] **THE ONE YEAR BASIC MERCHANT SEAMAN'S COURSE** of
9 its equivalent in an officially-recognized school and that he has [navigated]
10 **SERVED AS APPRENTICE OR SEAMEN FOR ONE YEAR ON**
11 **BOARD** a coastwise vessel of **NOT LESS** than thirty (30) gross tons [of over
12 a period of not less than five years] **AND ONE (1) YEAR ON BOARD**
13 **COASTWISE VESSEL OF NOT LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED GROSS**
14 **TONS** as boatswain, quartermaster, [or sailor] **ABLE SEAMAN.**"

15
16 **SEC. 3.** Paragraphs (d) and (e) of Section 17 of the same Decree are hereby amended
17 to read as follows:

18 "SEC. 17. Engine Officers. -

19 x x x

20 "(d) Fourth Marine Engineer. - An applicant must be at least a [second
21 year high school] **GRADUATE OF THE FOUR-YEAR BACHELOR OF**
22 **SCIENCE IN MARINE ENGINEERING IN A SCHOOL** recognized by
23 the government, having served for at least **SIX MONTHS** as apprentice **IN A**
24 **SHIPYARD AND SIX MONTHS AND/OR ONE YEAR CONTINUOUS**
25 **ON BOARD VESSEL AS APPRENTICE**, engineer, oiler, or machinist on
26 vessels propelled by motor or steam engines of not less than two hundred
27 fifty BHP [Under this category, he must pass through a review class before
28 admitted to take examinations]: *Provided, however,* That [if the applicant is a
29 marine engineer graduate, of a recognized school, he must have at least served
30 two years as apprentice engineer, oiler, or machinist: *Provided, further,* That a
31 certificate of service is issued] **AN ENGINEER MUST BE**
32 **ACCOMPLISHED AND DULY SIGNED** by the Chief Engineer and
33 Master of the vessel and duly authenticated by the ship owner or by the ship
34 representative of the vessel.

35 "(e) Motor Engineer. - An applicant shall be at least twenty-one years
36 of age, a graduate [of elementary school] **IN ASSOCIATE IN MARINE**
37 **ENGINEERING OR ITS EQUIVALENT RECOGNIZED BY THE**
38 **GOVERNMENT**, and shall produce satisfactory evidence showing that he
39 has served as **APPRENTICE ENGINEER, WIPER**, oiler, machinist or
40 apprentice motor engineer **FOR SIX MONTHS IN A SHIPYARD AND SIX**
41 **MONTHS ON BOARD A motor vessel OR CRAFT PROPELLED** [for at
42 least five years] **WITH NOT LESS THAN TWO HUNDRED FIFTY BHP**
43 **OR ONE YEAR OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE.**"

44
45 **SEC. 4.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,