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P. S. RES. No. 791

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Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PROPOSAL TO ABOLISH BOARD LICENSURE EXAMS TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT, PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF LABOR, AND IMPROVE THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 17 of the 1987 Constitution provides that, "[t]he State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.";

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 18 of the 1987 Constitution provides that, "[t]he State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare.";

WHEREAS, Article XII, Section 14 of the 1987 Constitution provides that, "[t]he sustained development of a reservoir of national talents consisting of Filipino scientists, entrepreneurs, professionals, managers, high-level technical manpower and skilled workers and craftsmen in all fields shall be promoted by the State. The State shall encourage appropriate technology and regulate its transfer for the national benefit. The practice of all professions in the Philippines shall be limited to Filipino citizens, save in cases prescribed by law.";

WHEREAS, as of 01 July 2021, the country's unemployment rate was 7.7%.¹ More people were being classified under "elementary occupations" and fewer as professionals and managers;²

WHEREAS, on 07 July 2021, an official of the Department of Labor and Employment questioned the need for licensure exams for certain professions, arguing that students have already gone through several tests before graduating and the tests are merely additional expenses;³

WHEREAS, Presidential Decree No. 223, which created the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), grants it the power to administer, implement, and enforce the regulatory policies of the National Government with respect to the regulation and licensing of the various professions and occupations under its jurisdiction;⁴

WHEREAS, the PRC regulates 43 professional regulatory boards ranging from accountancy to veterinary medicine;

WHEREAS, approximately 6 out of 10 examinees fail the PRC's licensure examinations with national passing percentages of 42.61%, 39.21%, 39.76%, 39.29%, and 37.55% in the years of 2012 to 2016,⁵ and a national passing percentage of 38.71% in 2018 ;⁶

WHEREAS, the lack of healthcare professionals compromised the country's ability to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in thousands of deaths. The lack of professionals in other economic sectors also stifles the country's economic recovery;

WHEREAS, the State must not only facilitate the recovery of the national economy, but also uplift its citizens from the economic ravages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;

¹ Rivas R. (1 July 2021) Unemployed Filipinos down to 3.73 million in May 2021 as lockdowns ease, Retrieved 22 July 2021, from <https://www.rappler.com/business/unemployment-rate-philippines-may-2021>

² Rivas R. (6 May 2021) Unemployment down to 7.1% in March 2021 but quality of jobs still in question, Retrieved 22 July 2021, from <https://www.rappler.com/business/unemployment-rate-philippines-march-2021>

³ Rey A. (7 July 2021). Bello on board, Bar exams: 'Tanggalin na 'yang exam-exam na 'yan' . Retrieved 22 July 2021, from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/department-labor-employment-silvestre-bello-comment-board-bar-exams>

⁴ Section 5(a), PD No.223

⁵ Commission of Higher Education (21 March 2017) Professional Regulation Commission National Passing Percentage by Discipline: 2012-2016, Retrieved 22 July 2021, from <https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PRC-National-Passing-Percentage.pdf>

⁶ Professional Regulation Commission (February 2019) Professional Regulation Commission 2018 Annual Report, Retrieved 22 July 2021, from

<https://www.prc.gov.ph/sites/default/files/2018%20Annual%20Report%2006-04-2015.pdf>

WHEREAS, the concerns in abolishing licensure exams is that the quality of the professionals produced might decline and that other countries are requiring national exam passers for employment. The State must, therefore, evaluate both the short-term and long-term consequences of such abolition on the economy and everyday life. There is a need to evaluate the proposal of abolishing the licensure exams to provide the State with a much needed influx of professionals and employment to millions of Filipinos;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the proposal to abolish board licensure exams to reduce unemployment, promote the welfare of labor, and improve the national economy.

Adopted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis Tolentino', with a stylized flourish at the end.

FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO