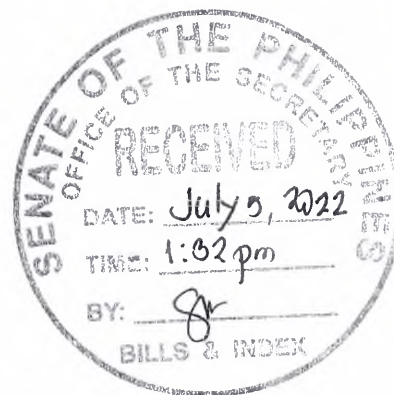


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

SENATE

S. No. 32



Introduced by SENATOR MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID

AN ACT
EXEMPTING QUALIFIED INDIGENT FILIPINOS FROM PAYMENT OF
PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION FEES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution provides in Art. II, Sec. 9, that "[t]he State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all."

Education is a key driver of socio-economic development. With the passage of Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, the youth has now been given a chance at having a better future by being able to acquire a college degree for free. However, in disciplines requiring professional certification, our graduates still need to hurdle the professional licensure examinations.

The fees range from Php 500 pesos for civil service eligibility examinations with the Civil Service Commission to Php 600 pesos for non-baccalaureate degree examinations with the Professional Regulatory Commission to Php 10,000 for the bar examinations.

While these amounts may seem insignificant to many of our countrymen, it can be monumental for fresh graduates from indigent families who are already struggling to find means to support themselves to review for these examinations.

In many instances, graduates opt to delay taking the examinations to be able to save up, which in turn diminishes the momentum they gained from the academe, making it more difficult for them to pass.

Malaking bagay po sa pamilyang Filipino na magkaroon ng professional sa kanilang hanay. Hindi lamang po ito pinagmumulan ng karagdagang kabuhayan para sa kanila, ito ay nagbibigay karangalan at pag-asa sa kanila para sa lalong mabuting kinabukasan.

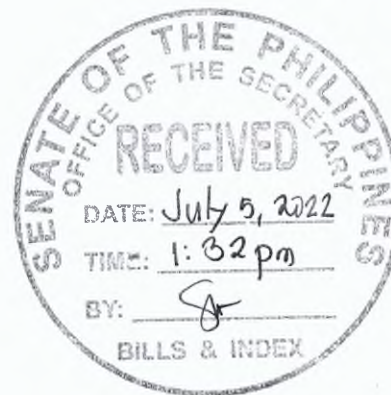
Makatutulong din po sa ating bansa na magkaroon ng mas maraming propesyunal na makapagpapataas ng kalidad ng ating workforce na kinikilala hindi lamang dito sa Pilipinas kundi sa buong mundo.

With this, the Government should endeavor to give every opportunity for qualified indigents to take the professional examinations by removing yet another obstacle to their advancement. This measure seeks to exempt them from paying the examination fees to government administered professional examinations.

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


MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator 

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



SENATE

S. No. 32

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

AN ACT
EXEMPTING QUALIFIED INDIGENT FILIPINOS FROM PAYMENT OF
PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION FEES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Free Professional*
2 *Examinations Act*".

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the declared policy of the State to promote
4 full employment and to provide equal opportunities for employment for all. Corollary
5 to this is the concomitant responsibility of the state to ensure that there are no inroads
6 that may effectively hinder the professional growth of our citizens.

7 Furthermore, it is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social
8 order that will free the people from poverty through policies and programs that provide
9 adequate social services and improve the quality of life for all. In this regard, efforts
10 should be initiated so as we may afford the qualified but indigent Filipinos access to
11 government certifications and other state mechanisms that will recognize their
12 potential as professionals and partners to nation-building.

13 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As provided for in this Act;

14 a) "*Professional Examinations*" shall refer to the licensure examinations conducted
15 by Professional Regulations Commission leading to the issuance of a
16 professional license. It shall also include examinations conducted by the Civil

1 Service Commission leading to eligibility for employment to the government as
2 a civil service professional or sub- professionals and the Bar Examinations
3 conducted by the Supreme Court of the Philippines.

4 b) "*Qualified Indigent*" refers to a person who has no visible means of income or
5 support, or whose income is insufficient for the subsistence or basic needs of
6 his family, as may be determined by the Department of Social Welfare and
7 Development (DSWD).

8 *Sec. 4. Requirements for Availment.* - For purposes of availing of the benefits
9 of this Act, an examinee shall secure a certification from the DSWD that he/she is a
10 qualified indigent. Such certification shall be presented to the Professional Regulations
11 Commission (PRC), the Civil Service Commission (CSC) or the Supreme Court of the
12 Philippines, as the case maybe, in lieu of the payment of examination fees.

13 No other fee shall be charged against the qualified indigent for purposes of the
14 professional examination.

15 *Sec. 5. Limitations on Availment.* - Benefits of this Act may be availed of only
16 by a qualified indigent once per year.

17 *Sec. 6. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Campaign.* - The
18 DSWD, PRC, CSC and the Supreme Court of the Philippines, in cooperation with the
19 Philippine Information Agency (PIA), is hereby mandated to conduct an annual IEC
20 campaign in order to inform the people of the procedures and guidelines in availing
21 the benefits of this Act.

22 *Sec. 7. Reportorial Requirement.* - For purposes of determining the
23 effectiveness and social impact of the provisions of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, CSC and
24 the Supreme Court of the Philippines shall submit an annual report to both Houses of
25 Congress indicating therewith the number of parties who benefited from this Act.

26 The report shall state in detail, among others, the geographic location,
27 demographic characteristics and socioeconomic profile of the beneficiaries of this Act.

1 *Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* - Within ninety (90) days
2 from the date of effectivity of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, CSC and the Supreme Court
3 of the Philippines shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper
4 and effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

5 *Sec. 9. Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared
6 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall
7 remain in full force and effect.

8 *Sec. 10. Repealing Clause.* - Any law, decree, ordinance or administrative
9 circular not consistent with any provision of this Act is hereby amended, repealed or
10 modified accordingly.

11 *Sec. 11. Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
12 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general
13 circulation.

14 *Approved,*