



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1914

Introduced by Representative FRANZ S. PUMAREN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

National hero Dr. Jose P. Rizal strongly believed in the transformative power of education. He wrote, “Without education and liberty, which are the soil and sun of man, no reform is possible, no measure can give the result desired.” This transformative power of education can also serve as a positive socioeconomic driver. Education equips individuals with the necessary tools to end the cycle of poverty and pursue a more dignified life.

The State affirmed the commitment to providing quality and accessible education with the passage of key measures such as Republic Act No. 10533, or the “Enhanced Basic Education Act,” and Republic Act No. 10931, or the “Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act.” By extension, this commitment by the State must include supporting degree holders, particularly from low-income households, to becoming licensed professionals. This

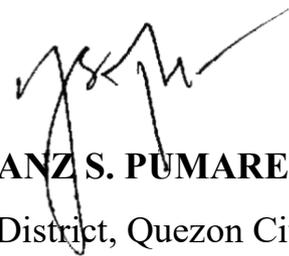
commitment will bridge the education-to-employment gap by ensuring financial barriers will not prevent indigent graduates from pursuing licensure and eligibility.

While examination fees may seem modest, these can be a major obstacle for some financially disadvantaged graduates. Financial barriers effectively deny indigent jobseekers access to employment opportunities that require certification or eligibility.

The Free Professional Examinations Act seeks to address that gap by institutionalizing free professional and civil service examinations for qualified indigents. With the passage of this Act, every qualified Filipino can now pursue a productive career and a more dignified life regardless of socioeconomic background.

The passage of this measure is a crucial step in the State's reaffirmation of the principles of social justice, inclusive development, and equal opportunity.

In view of the foregoing, this Representation earnestly seeks the immediate passage of this bill.



FRANZ S. PUMAREN
3rd District, Quezon City



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**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS TO
QUALIFIED INDIGENTS**

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Free
2 Professional Examinations Act.”

3 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is declared the policy of the State to
4 promote full employment and to provide equal opportunities for employment for
5 all.

6 Furthermore, it is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic
7 social order that will free the people from poverty through policies and programs
8 that provide adequate social services, and improve the quality of life for all. In

1 this regard, the State shall provide the poor access to mechanisms that expand
2 opportunities for better employment.

3 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

4 (a) *Professional Examinations* refer to the licensure examinations
5 conducted by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) leading to the
6 issuance of professional licenses to successful examinees. It shall also include
7 examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) leading to
8 eligibility for employment in the government.

9 (b) *Qualified Indigents* refer to persons who have no visible means of
10 income or support, or whose income may not be sufficient for the subsistence or
11 basic needs of the family, as may be determined by the Department of Social
12 Welfare and Development (DSWD) and certified by their respective Local
13 Government Units (LGUs).

14 **SEC. 4. *Requirements for Availment.*** – For purposes of availing the
15 benefits of this Act, an examinee shall secure a Certificate of Indigency from their
16 respective LGUs. Such certification shall be presented to the PRC and CSC, as
17 the case may be, to be exempt from the payment of examination fees.

18 No other fees shall be charged against the qualified indigents for purposes
19 of taking the professional or eligibility examinations.

20 **SEC. 5. *Limitations on Availment.*** – Benefits of this Act may be availed
21 of by a qualified indigent only once a year.

22 **SEC. 6. *Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign.***
23 – The DSWD, PRC, and CSC, in cooperation with the Philippine Information
24 Agency, is hereby mandated to conduct an annual IEC campaign in order to
25 inform the people of the procedures and guidelines in availing the benefits of this
26 Act.

27 **SEC. 7. *Reportorial Requirement.*** – For the purposes of determining the
28 effectiveness and social impact of the provisions of this Act, the DSWD, PRC,

1 and CSC shall submit an annual report to both Houses of Congress indicating
2 therein the number of indigent examinees who benefited from this Act.

3 **SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of part of this Act is
4 declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall
5 continue to be in full force and effect.

6 **SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.*** – All other laws, decrees, executive orders,
7 proclamations, other issuances, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent
8 with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

9 **SEC. 10. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
10 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,