



Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**Twentieth Congress**  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4067



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**Introduced by Representative Giselle Mary L. Maceda**

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#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that “The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.” This provision reflects the fundamental policy of the State to uplift the lives of Filipinos through education and to ensure that no Filipino is left behind due to economic hardship.

In response to this Constitutional mandate, several significant laws have been enacted over the years to expand educational access. One notable legislation is Republic Act No. 10931, or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, which institutionalized free tuition and other school fees in state universities and colleges, local universities and colleges, and state-run technical-vocational institutions.

While these legislative measures are highly commendable and have significantly improved access to education, there remains a critical gap in our legal framework. For many students, particularly those seeking to enter professions regulated by the government, graduation does not mark the end of their journey. In order to practice in their respective fields, they are still required to take and pass licensure or professional board examinations.

Professional examination fees can be prohibitively expensive for indigent graduates. For instance, the 2024 Philippine Physician Licensure Examination required a fee of Php10,000.00, while the 2024 Bar Examination cost Php12,800.00. These figures do not yet account for associated expenses such as review center

enrollment, materials, transportation, and daily sustenance during the review period. For many indigent students who come from households with no visible means of income or whose income barely meets their basic subsistence needs, these costs present a serious and sometimes insurmountable barrier.

This bill seeks to address this policy gap by institutionalizing free professional examinations for qualified indigents. By doing so, it ensures that the gains made in accessible education are not diluted at the final hurdle to professional recognition. It upholds the principle that poverty should never be a barrier to achieving one's full potential as a professional, especially after years of perseverance and academic accomplishment.

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



**REP. GISELLE MARY L. MACEDA**  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Manila City



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

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

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the **FREE PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS ACT**.

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the declared policy of the State to promote full employment and provide equal opportunities for employment for all. Furthermore, it is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will free the people from poverty through policies and programs that provide adequate social services, and improve the quality of life for all. In this regard, the State shall provide the poor with access to mechanisms that expand opportunities for better employment.

**SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act:

- a. *Professional Examinations* refer to the licensure examinations conducted by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) leading to the issuance of professional licenses to successful examinees. It shall also include examinations conducted by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) leading to eligibility for employment in the government;

- b. *Qualified Indigents* refer to persons who have no visible means of income or support, or whose income may not be sufficient for the subsistence or basic needs of the family, as may be determined by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

**SECTION 4.** *Requirements for Availment.* – For purposes of availing the benefits of this Act, an examinee shall secure a Certificate of Indigency from the DSWD. Such certification shall be presented to the PRC and CSC, as the case may be, to be exempt from the payment of examination fees.

No other fee shall be charged against the qualified indigents for purposes of taking the professional examinations.

**SECTION 5.** *Limitations on Availment.* – The benefits under this Act may be availed of by a qualified indigent only once a year.

**SECTION 6.** *Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign.* – The DSWD, PRC, and CSC, in cooperation with the Philippine Information Agency (PIA), are hereby mandated to conduct an annual IEC Campaign in order to inform the people of the procedures and guidelines in availing the benefits under this Act.

**SECTION 7.** *Reportorial Requirement.* – For purposes of determining the effectiveness and social impact of the provisions of this Act, the DSWD, PRC, and CSC shall submit an annual report to both Houses of Congress indicating therein the number of indigent examinees who benefited from this Act.

**SECTION 8.** *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

**SECTION 9.** *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances, or any part thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

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

*Approved,*