

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7662

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR REFORMS IN LEGAL EDUCATION, CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE A LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD AND, FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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

Section 1. *Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "*Legal Education Reform Act of 1993.*"

Section 2. *Declaration of Policies.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uplift the standards of legal education in order to prepare law students for advocacy, counseling, problem-solving, and decision-making, to infuse in them the ethics of the legal profession; to impress upon them the importance, nobility and dignity of the legal profession as an equal and indispensable partner of the Bench in the administration of justice; and, to develop socially-committed lawyers with integrity and competence.

Towards this end, the State shall undertake appropriate reforms in the legal education system, require proper selection of law students, maintain quality among law schools, and require legal apprenticeship and continuing legal education.

Section 3. *General and Specific Objectives of Legal Education.* -

- (a) Legal Education in the Philippines is geared to attain the following general objectives:
- (1) to prepare students for the practice of law;
 - (2) to increase awareness among members of the legal profession of the needs of the poor, deprived and oppressed sectors of society;
 - (3) to train persons for leadership;
 - (4) to contribute towards the promotion and advancement of justice and the improvement of its administration, the legal system and legal

institutions in the light of the historical and contemporary development of law in the Philippines and in other countries.

(b) Legal education shall aim to accomplish the following specific objectives:

- (1) to impart among law students a broad knowledge of law and its various fields, and of legal institutions;
- (2) to enhance their legal research abilities to enable them to analyze, articulate and apply the law effectively, as well as to allow them to have a holistic approach to legal problems and issues;
- (3) to prepare law students for advocacy, counseling, problem-solving and decision-making, and develop their ability to deal with recognized legal problems of the present and the future;
- (4) to develop competence in any field of law as is necessary for gainful employment or sufficient as a foundation for future training beyond the basic professional degree, and to develop in them the desire and capacity for continuing study and self-improvement;
- (5) to inculcate in them the ethics and responsibilities of the legal profession; and
- (6) to produce lawyers who conscientiously pursue the lofty goals of their profession and faithfully adhere to its ethical norms.

Section 4. *Legal Education Board; Creation and Composition.* - To carry out the purposes of this Act, there is hereby created the Legal Education Board, hereinafter referred to as the Board, attached solely for budgetary purposes and administrative support to the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

The Board shall be composed of a Chairman, who shall preferably be a former justice of the Supreme Court or Court of Appeals, and the following as regular members: a representative of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP); a representative of the Philippine Association of Law Schools (PALS); a representative from the ranks of active law practitioners; and, a representative from the law students' sector. The Secretary of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, or his representative, shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board.

With the exception of the representative of the law students' sector, the Chairman and regular members of the Board must be natural born citizens of the Philippines and members of the Philippine Bar, who have been engaged for at least ten (10) years in the practice of law, as well as in the teaching of law in a duly authorized or recognized law school.

Section 5. *Term of Office; Compensation.* - The Chairman and regular members of the Board shall be appointed by the President for a term of five (5)

years without reappointment from a list of at least three (3) nominees prepared, with prior authorization from the Supreme Court, by the Judicial and Bar Council, for every position or vacancy, and no such appointment shall need confirmation by the Commission on Appointments. Of those first appointed, the Chairman and the representative of the IBP shall hold office for five (5) years, the representatives of the PALS and the PALP for three (3) years; and the representative from the ranks of active law practitioners and the representative of the law students' sector for one (1) year, without reappointment. Appointments to any vacancy shall be only for the unexpired portion of the term of the predecessor.

The Chairman and regular members of the Board shall have the same salary and rank as the Chairman and members, respectively, of the Constitutional Commissions: *Provided*, That their salaries shall not be diminished during their term of office.

Section 6. Office and Staff Support. - The Department of Education, Culture and Sports shall provide the necessary office and staff support to the Board, with a principal office to be located in Metropolitan Manila.

The Board may appoint such other officers and employees it may deem necessary in the performance of its powers and functions.

Section 7. Powers and Functions. - For the purpose of achieving the objectives of this Act, the Board shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) to administer the legal education system in the country in a manner consistent with the provisions of this Act;
- (b) to supervise the law schools in the country, consistent with its powers and functions as herein enumerated;
- (c) to set the standards of accreditation for law schools taking into account, among others, the size of enrollment, the qualifications of the members of the faculty, the library and other facilities, without encroaching upon the academic freedom of institutions of higher learning;
- (d) to accredit law schools that meet the standards of accreditation;
- (e) to prescribe minimum standards for law admission and minimum qualifications and compensation of faculty members;
- (f) to prescribe the basic curricula for the course of study aligned to the requirements for admission to the Bar, law practice and social consciousness, and such other courses of study as may be prescribed by the law schools and colleges under the different levels of accreditation status;
- (g) to establish a law practice internship as a requirement for taking the Bar which a law student shall undergo with any duly accredited private or public law office or firm or legal assistance group anytime during the law course for a specific period that the Board may decide, but not to exceed a

total of twelve (12) months. For this purpose, the Board shall prescribe the necessary guidelines for such accreditation and the specifications of such internship which shall include the actual work of a new member of the Bar;

(h) to adopt a system of continuing legal education. For this purpose, the Board may provide for the mandatory attendance of practicing lawyers in such courses and for such duration as the Board may deem necessary; and

(i) to perform such other functions and prescribe such rules and regulations necessary for the attainment of the policies and objectives of this Act.

Section 8. Accreditation of Law Schools. - Educational institutions may not operate a law school unless accredited by the Board. Accreditation of law schools may be granted only to educational institutions recognized by the Government.

Section 9. Withdrawal or Downgrading of Accreditation. - The Board may withdraw or downgrade the accreditation status of a law school if it fails to maintain the standards set for its accreditation status.

Section 10. Effectivity of Withdrawal or Downgrading of Accreditation. - The withdrawal or downgrading of accreditation status shall be effective after the lapse of the semester or trimester following the receipt by the school of the notice of withdrawal or downgrading unless, in the meantime, the school meets and/or upgrades the standards or corrects the deficiencies upon which the withdrawal or downgrading of the accreditation status is based.

Section 11. Legal Education Fund. - There is hereby created a special endowment fund, to be known as the Legal Education Fund, which shall be under the control of the Board, and administered as a separate fund by the Social Security System (SSS) which shall invest the same with due and prudent regard to its solvency, safety and liquidity.

The Legal Education Fund shall be established out of, and maintained from, the amounts appropriated pursuant to paragraph 2, Section 13 hereof, and from sixty percent (60%) of the privilege tax paid by every lawyer effective Fiscal Year 1994, and from such donations, legacies, grant-in-aid and other forms of contributions received by the Board for the purposes of this Act.

Being a special endowment fund, only the interests earned on the Legal Education Fund shall be used exclusively for the purposes of this Act, including support for faculty development grants, professorial chairs, library improvements and similar programs for the advancement of law teaching and education in accredited law schools.

The Fund shall also be used for the operation of the Board. For this purpose, an amount not exceeding ten percent (10%) of the interest on the Fund shall be utilized.

The Board, in consultation with the SSS, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the collection, administration and utilization of the Fund.

Section 12. Coverage. - The provisions of this Act shall apply to all schools and colleges of law which are presently under the supervision of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. Hereafter, said supervision shall be transferred to the Board. Law schools and colleges which shall be established following the approval of this Act shall likewise be covered.

Section 13. Appropriation. - The amount of One Million Pesos (P1,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be charged against the current year's appropriation of the Contingent Fund for the initial expenses of the Board.

To form part of the Legal Education Fund, there shall be appropriated annually, under the budget of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, the amount of Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) for a period of ten (10) years effective Fiscal Year 1994.

Section 14. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or the application thereof to any person, circumstance or transaction is held invalid, the validity of the remaining provisions of this Act and the applicability of such provisions to other persons, circumstances and transactions shall not be affected thereby.

Section 15. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Section 16. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

EDGARDO J. ANGARA
President of the Senate

JOSE DE VENECIA, JR.
*Speaker of the House
of Representatives*

This Act, which is a consolidation of House Bill No. 4698 and Senate Bill No. 100, was finally passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on December 15, 1993 and December 14, 1993, respectively.

DEMAREE J. B. RAVAL

Acting Secretary of the Senate

Representative

CAMILO L. SABIO

Secretary General

House of

Approved: 23 December 1993

FIDEL V. RAMOS

President of the Philippines