

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4373, June 19, 1965]

**AN ACT TO REGULATE THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL WORK AND THE
OPERATION OF SOCIAL WORK AGENCIES IN THE PHILIPPINES
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

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

Article I.—Definition of Terms

Section 1. As used in this Act:

- a. "Social Work" is the profession which is primarily concerned with organized social service activity aimed to facilitate and strengthen basic social relationships and the mutual adjustment between individuals and their social environment for the good of the individual and of society.
- b. A "social worker" as used in this Act is a practitioner who by accepted academic training and social work professional experience possesses the skill to achieve the objectives as defined and set by the social work profession, through the use of the basic methods and techniques of social work (casework, group work, and community organization) which are designed to enable individuals, groups and communities to meet their needs and to solve the problems of adjustment to a changing pattern of society and, through coordinated action, to improve economic and social conditions, and is connected with an organized social work agency which is supported partially or wholly from government or community solicited funds.
- c. A "social work agency" is a person, corporation or organization, private or governmental, that engages mainly and generally, or represents itself to engage in social welfare work, whether casework, group work, or community work, and obtains its finances, either totally or in part, from any agency or instrumentality of the government and/or from the community by direct or indirect solicitations and/or fund drives, and/or private endowment.

Article II.—Organization of the Board of Examiners for Social Workers

SEC. 2. *Name and composition of the Board.*—Within sixty days after the approval of this Act, there shall be created a Board of Examiners for Social Workers hereinafter to be referred to as the Board, composed of a Chairman and four members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines with the consent of the Commission on Appointments, from among social workers of recognized standing in the Philippines, and who, at the time of their appointment shall:

- a. Be a citizen and resident of the Philippines;
- b. Be at least thirty years of age and of good moral character;
- c. Possess either a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work (B.S.S.W., B.S.S. or its equivalent), or Master's Degree in Social Work (M.S.S.W., M.S.S., M.A.S.W. or

its equivalent), conferred by a reputable school, college or university duly recognized by the government.

- d. Have had at least five years of practice in a social work agency in the case of a holder of Bachelor's Degree in Social Work or its equivalent, or at least two years of social work practice in the case of a holder of Master's Degree in Social Work or its equivalent, after receiving the respective degree.
- e. Be a registered social worker duly qualified to practice social work under this Act: *Provided, however,* That this qualification shall not be required of the first appointees to the Board under this Act; and
- f. Not be a member of the faculty of any school, college or university at the time of appointment; nor during the year immediately exceeding the appointment to be a member of the Board conferring the Bachelor's and/or Master's degree in socialwork, or shall have any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in such institution.

SEC. 3. *Functions and duties of the Board.*—The Board shall have the following functions and duties:

- a. To administer the provisions of this Act;
- b. To administer oaths in connection with the administration of this Act;
- c. To prepare the official seal of the Board;
- d. To issue, suspend, and revoke certificates of registration for the practice of social work;
- e. To look into the conditions affecting the practice of social work in the Philippines, and, whenever necessary, adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the maintenance of the good standing and the ethics of the profession of social work; and
- f. To investigate such violations of this Act or of the rules and regulations issued thereunder as may come to the knowledge of the Board, and, for this purpose, to issue *subpoenas* and *subpoenas duces tecum* to secure the appearances of witnesses and the production of documents in connection therewith.

SEC. 4. *Term of office.*—The members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three years or until their successors shall have been appointed and duly qualified: *Provided,* That the members of the first Board appointed under this Act shall hold office for the following terms: the Chairman for three years, two members for two years, and two members for one year, which shall be specified in their appointment. Any vacancy occurring within the term of a member shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term only. Each member of the Board shall qualify by taking the proper oath of office prior to entering upon the performance of his or her duties. No member shall succeed himself on the Board.

SEC. 5. *Executive officer and Secretary of the Board.*— The Commissioner of Civil Service shall be the Executive Officer of the Board and he shall conduct the examinations given by it according to the rules and regulations promulgated by the Board and approved by the President of the Philippines. The members shall elect a Secretary among them, who shall take charge of the records. All the records of the Board, including examination papers, minutes of deliberations, and records of administrative proceedings and investigations shall be kept by the Civil Service Commission.

SEC. 6. *Compensation of Board Members.*—The chairman and members of the Board shall each receive as compensation the sum of ten pesos for each applicant

examined.

SEC. 7. *Removal of Board Members.*—Any member of the Board may be removed by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of Civil Service for continued neglect of duty, incompetence, unprofessional, unethical, immoral, or dishonorable conduct, for commission or toleration of irregularities in the examination, after having been given the opportunity to defend himself in a proper administrative investigation.

SEC. 8. *Rules and Regulations.*—Subject to the approval of the President of the Philippines and with the advice of the Commissioner of Civil Service, the Board shall set ethical and professional standards for the practice of social work in general, and adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act. Such standards, rules and regulations shall take effect thirty (30) days after publication in the Official Gazette.

SEC. 9. *Annual Report.*—The Board shall submit an annual report to the President of the Philippines and to Congress after the close of the fiscal year, giving a detailed account of the proceedings of the Board during the year and embodying such recommendations as the Board may desire to make.

Article III.—*Examination and Registration of Social Workers*

SEC. 10. *Practice of social work and appointment as Social Workers.*—Unless exempt from registration, no person shall practice or offer to practice social work in the Philippines as defined in this Act, or be appointed as a social worker or to any position calling for social worker in any social work agency whether private or governmental, without holding a valid certificate of registration as a social worker issued by the Board of Examiners for Social Workers: *Provided*, That registration shall not be required of recognized social workers or authorities on social work who are residents and/or citizens of other countries called in for consultations in an agency or working with the United Nations and/or similar international social agencies : *Provided, further*, That no provision of this Act shall be construed to prejudice regularly appointed social workers who are employed in social work agencies at the date of the approval of this Act, except those in government social work agencies whose salaries may not be increased or adjusted until they shall have passed the civil service examination and qualified as social workers in accordance with the provisions of this Act: *And provided, finally*, That those who at the time of the effectivity of this Act, possess the qualifications enumerated in Section twelve and are actually engaged in the practice of social work for a period of five years in a social work agency recognized by the Community Chest, Council of Welfare Agencies, Philippine Youth Welfare Coordinating Council, or Social Welfare Administration, shall be exempted from taking the examination as provided herein, if they register as social worker within a period of one year after the approval of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Holding of examinations.*—Except as otherwise specifically allowed under the provisions of this Act, all applicants for registration as social workers shall be required to undergo a written examination which shall be given by the Board annually in Manila at such time and place as may be fixed by it, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of Civil Service and the President of the Philippines. Written or printed notices of such examination shall be mailed to each candidate who has filed his