

**[ REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1998, June 22, 1957 ]**

**AN ACT TO REGULATE THE PRACTICE OF OPTOMETRY IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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

SECTION 1. *Definition of terms.*—As used in this Act, the term—

- a. "Optometry" means the science and art of examining the human eye, analyzing the ocular function, and prescribing ophthalmic lenses, prisms, contact lenses, ocular exercises, visual training, orthoptics, prosthetics, and other preventive or corrective measures for the aid, correction, or relief of the human eye, or to insure maximum vision and comfort, without the use of drugs or medicines.
- b. "Optometrist" means a person legally qualified to practice optometry under this Act.

SEC. 2. *Inhibition against the practice of optometry.*—No person shall practice or attempt to practice optometry, as denned in this Act, without holding a valid certificate of registration as optometrist issued to him by the Board of Examiners in Optometry herein created and in accordance with the provisions hereof: *Provided*, That valid certificates of registration as optometrists shall be issued to optometrists of good moral character now registered in accordance with the provisions of chapter thirty-three of the Revised Administrative Code, who shall, by application within a period of one year from the effectivity of this Act, be exempt from the provisions of sections eleven, twelve and twenty-three of this Act: *Provided, further*, That registration shall not be required of optometrists in the service of the United States Armed Forces stationed in the Philippines while rendering services as such for members of the said armed forces, nor of regularly licensed and duly registered physicians in the Philippines as certified by the Philippine Board of Medical Examiners.

SEC. 3. *Board of Examiners in Optometry.*—There is created a new Board of Examiners in Optometry, hereinafter referred to as the Board, which shall be organized within thirty days from the date of effectivity of this Act, and which shall be composed of three members, one to be designated as chairman, all to be appointed by the President of the Philippines, upon the recommendation of the Commissioner of Civil Service, among such optometrists of recognized standing and possessing the qualifications prescribed in section five as certified to by a *bona fide* organization of optometrists as academically and morally qualified and as having practiced for at least ten years. Each member of the Board shall qualify by taking the proper oath of office before entering upon the performance of his duties.

SEC. 4. *Functions and duties of the Board.*—The Board is vested with authority and required, conformably with the provisions of this Act, to—

- a. Administer the provisions of this Act;
- b. Administer oaths in connection with the administration of this Act;
- c. Issue, suspend and revoke certificates of registration for the practice of optometry;
- d. Look, from time to time, into conditions affecting the practice of optometry in the Philippines and, whenever necessary, adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the maintenance of good ethics and standards in the practice of optometry; and
- e. Investigate such violations of this Act or of the regulations issued thereunder as may come to the knowledge of the Board and, for this purpose, issue *subpoena* and *subpoena duces tecum* to secure appearance of witnesses and production of documents in connection with the charges presented to the Board.

SEC. 5. *Qualifications of Board members.*—Each member of the Board shall, at the time of his appointment:

- a. Be a citizen and resident of the Philippines;
- b. Be at least thirty years of age, and of good moral character;
- c. Be a graduate from a school, institute, college or university recognized by the government or the state in which established, who has been engaged in the practice of optometry for at least ten years prior to his appointment;
- d. Be a registered optometrist duly qualified to practice optometry under this Act: *Provided*, That this qualification shall not be required of the first appointees to the Board under this Act;
- e. Not be a member of the faculty of any school, institute, college or university where a regular course in optometry is taught, nor have a pecuniary interest in any such institutions; and
- f. Not be a former member of the faculty of any school, institute, college or university where a regular course in optometry is taught, unless he had stopped teaching therein at least for the two consecutive years immediately preceding his appointment.

SEC. 6. *Term of office of Board members.*—The members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three years after appointment and until their successors shall have been appointed and shall have qualified: *Provided*, That the first appointees to the Board shall hold office for the following terms: the Chairman for three years, one member for two years, and one member for one year. Interim vacancies in the Board shall be filled for the unexpired term only.

SEC. 7. *Removal of the Board members.*—Any member of the Board may be removed by the President of the Philippines for neglect of duty, incompetency, malpractice, or unprofessional, unethical, immoral or dishonorable conduct, after having been given opportunity to defend himself in a proper administrative investigation: *Provided*, That during the process of investigation, the President shall have the power to suspend such member under investigation and appoint a temporary member in his place.

SEC. 8. *Executive Officer of the Board.*—The Commissioner of Civil Service shall be

the executive officer of the Board, and shall conduct the examinations given by it according to the rules and regulations promulgated by him and approved by the President of the Philippines. The secretary of the Board of Examiners appointed in accordance with section ten of Act Numbered Four thousand seven, as amended by Republic Act Numbered Five hundred forty-six, shall also be the secretary of the Board. All the records of the Board, including examination papers, minutes of deliberations and records of administrative proceedings and investigations, shall be kept by the Bureau of Civil Service.

SEC. 9. *Compensation of Board members.*—The members of the Board shall each receive as compensation the sum of ten pesos for each applicant examined. Any optometrist in the service of the Government of the Philippines appointed as member of the Board shall receive the compensation herein provided in addition to his salary.

SEC. 10. *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 optometry and prescribe collegiate courses therefor and, in general, adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Examination.*—Every applicant for registration as optometrist shall undergo a technical examination as provided in this Act, Examinations for the practice of optometry in the Philippines shall be given once a year in July on such working days and places as the Bureau of Civil Service may designate and shall be governed by Civil Service rules and regulations. To each applicant for examination having the necessary qualifications, written or printed notice thereof shall be mailed at least fifteen days prior to the date of the first day of the examination.

SEC. 12. *Prerequisite qualifications for examination.*— Every applicant for examination under this Act shall, prior to the date thereof, furnish to the Board satisfactory proof that—

- a. He is of good moral character;
- b. Before he began the study of optometry, he had finished a four-year high school course as prescribed by the Department of Education of the Philippines, or its equivalent; and
- c. He has received a diploma either as Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) or as Graduate in Optometry (O.G.) from a school, institute, college or university recognized by the government or the state wherein established, in which the following subjects are taught during four years in regular nine months' courses: mathematics, general chemistry, practical and mechanical optics, psychology, physiologic optics, theoretic optometry, practical optometry, sociology, applied psychology, general anatomy and physiology, general histology and embryology, ocular anatomy and physiology, general pathology, ocular pathology, clinical optometry, orthoptics, optometric ethics, economics and jurisprudence, and optometric hygiene and sanitation.

SEC. 13. *Scope of the Examination.*—The examination shall comprise all the subjects of optometry and other auxiliary subjects mentioned in the preceding