

H. No. 8529 S. No. 462

Republic of the Philippines Congress of the Philippines Metro Manila Seventeenth Congress Third Regular Session

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[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11249]

AN ACT REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

ARTICLE I TITLE AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Speech Language Pathology Act".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State recognizes the important role of speech language pathologists in nation building and promotes the sustained development of a corps

of speech language pathologists whose competence have been determined by honest and credible licensure examinations, and whose standards of professional practice and services are world-class, internationally recognized, and globally competitive through regulatory measures, programs and activities that foster their continuing professional growth.

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

(a) Communication disorder refers to the impairment in the ability to: (1) receive and/or process symbol systems; (2) represent concepts in systems; or (3) transmit and use symbol systems. The impairment may be observed in the disorders of hearing, language, and speech processes.

(b) Diagnosis refers to the act of identifying a human communication system showing abnormality or disorder by analyzing the symptoms presented. It may also include a study of the origin and development of the symptoms.

(c) Evaluation refers to the global appraisal of the significance and implications of a diagnostic assessment that may include formal and informal procedures.

(d) Language refers to any socially and culturally accepted, structured symbolic system for interpersonal communication composed of sounds, letters, manual sign or other symbols arranged in ordered sequences or strings that express thoughts, intentions, experiences and feelings comprised of orthographic, phonological, syntactic, semantic or pragmatic components.

(e) Speech refers to the medium of oral communication that employs a linguistic code (language). Through this medium, one can express thoughts and feelings, and understand those of others who employ the same code.

(f) Speech language pathologist refers to a person who is registered and licensed to practice speech language pathology and who holds a valid certificate of registration and professional identification issued by the Professional Regulatory Board of Speech Language Pathology and the Professional Regulation Commission under the provisions of this Act.

(g) Speech language pathology refers to the allied health profession devoted to the evaluation, diagnosis, management, and prevention of human communication and swallowing disorders.

(h) Swallowing disorder refers to difficulties in the management of a solid or liquid bolus in the oral, pharyngeal, or laryngeal stages of feeding.

ARTICLE II THE PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BOARD OF SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

SEC. 4. Creation and Composition of the Board. - Within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, there shall be created the Professional Regulatory Board of Speech Language Pathology, hereinafter referred to as the Board, under the administrative supervision and control of the Professional Regulation Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission. The Board shall be composed of a chairperson and two (2) members who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines from the three (3) recommendations for each vacant position chosen from the five (5) nominees of the Accredited Integrated Professional Organization (AIPO) of speech language pathologists.

SEC. 5. Qualifications of the Members of the Board. - The chairperson or member of the Board shall, at the time of appointment, possess the following qualifications:

(a) A natural born citizen of the Philippines and an actual resident thereof for at least five (5) years before appointment;

(b) A duly registered and licensed speech language pathologist holding a valid certificate of registration and professional identification card, in active practice for the past five (5) years as a member in good standing of the AIPO of speech language pathologists prior to appointment, except if appointed as the first chairperson or member;

(c) Of good moral character and must not have been convicted of any offense involving moral turpitude; and

(d) Must neither have pecuniary interest, directly or indirectly, in any school, academy, college, university or institution conferring an academic degree necessary for admission to the practice of speech language pathology, or where review classes in preparation for the licensure examination are being offered, nor be a member of the faculty or of the administration thereof.

SEC. 6. Powers and Functions of the Board. - The Board shall have the authority to:

(a) Promulgate, administer and enforce rules and regulations necessary for carrying out the provisions of this Act;

(b) Administer oaths in connection with the administration of this Act;

(c) Supervise and regulate the registration, licensure, and practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines;

(d) Adopt an official seal of the Board;

(e) Maintain a roster of speech language pathologists indicating therein basic information about the professionals;

(f) Study the conditions affecting the practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines and adopt measures for the enhancement of the professional, ethical and technical standards of the practice;

(g) Ensure, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), that all educational institutions offering speech language pathology education comply with the policies, standards and requirements of the course prescribed by the CHED in the areas of curriculum, faculty, library and facilities;

(h) Adopt a Code of Ethics for speech language pathologists;

(i) Develop and maintain standards for the practice of speech language pathology;

(j) Issue, suspend, revoke, and reinstate the certificate of registration or cancel special temporary permit for the practice of speech language pathology;

(k) Prescribe guidelines and criteria in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program for speech language pathology;

(l) Prescribe the area of competence to be included in the examination and their relative weights; determine the syllabi and specifications (SYB) of the examination subjects, in consultation with the AIPO of speech language pathologists and the duly recognized association of schools conferring a bachelor's or other entry level degree in speech language pathology; construct the test questions in licensure examinations; and score and rate the examination papers;

(m) Hear or investigate any violation of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations and the Code of Ethics for speech language pathologists, and for this purpose, to issue subpoenas duces tecum and/or ad testificandum to secure the appearance of the witnesses and the production of documents in connection therewith; Provided, That the decision of the Board shall, unless appealed to the Commission, become final and executory fifteen (15) days from receipt of the judgment or decision;

(n) Grant registration without examination, subject to the approval by the Commission;

(o) Issue or cancel certificates of recognition for advanced studies, researches and accomplishments that contribute to the enrichment of the profession; and

(p) Perform such other powers and functions as it may deem necessary to carry out the objectives of this Act.

The policies, resolutions, rules and regulations issued or promulgated by the Board shall be subject to the review and approval of the Commission.

SEC. 7. Term of Office. - The chairperson and members of the Board shall hold office for three (3) years after appointment or until their successors shall have been appointed and duly qualified; Provided, That members of the first Board to be appointed after the approval of this Act shall hold office for the following terms: chairperson for three (3) years, one member for two (2) years, and the other member for one (1) year; Provided, further, That the chairperson or any member may be reappointed for another term of three (3) years but in no case shall the individual serve continuously for more than six (6) years. Vacancy in the Board shall be filled for the unexpired term only. Each member of the Board shall automatically be registered as speech language pathologist and issued a certificate of registration and professional identification card and shall take the proper oath of office prior to assumption.

SEC. 8. Compensation of the Members of the Professional Regulatory Board. - The chairperson and members of the Board shall receive compensation and allowances comparable to those being received by the chairpersons and members of existing regulatory boards under the Commission as provided for in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. Suspension or Removal of Board Members. - Any member of the Board may be suspended or removed from office for gross neglect of duty, incompetence, malpractice, unprofessionalism, immorality, unethical or dishonorable conduct, final judgment of crimes involving moral turpitude, manipulation or rigging of the licensure examination results, and disclosure of secret and confidential information in the examination questions prior to the conduct of the said examination, or tampering of grades.

The administrative proceedings shall be heard by the Commission, whose recommendation shall be submitted to the Office of the President. During the investigation, the respondent shall be placed under preventive suspension by the Commission and another qualified individual shall be designated to fill the temporary vacancy in the Board.

SEC. 10. Supervision of the Board, Custody of its Records, Secretariat and Support Services. - The Board shall be under the administrative supervision of the Commission.

All records of the Board, including applications for examination, and administrative and other investigative cases conducted by the Board shall be under the custody of the Commission.

The Commission shall designate the Secretary of the Board and shall provide the secretariat and other support services to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 11. Annual Report. - The Board shall submit an annual report to the Commission after the close of each calendar year, giving a detailed account of the proceedings of the Board during the year and recommending measures to be adopted, with the end in view of upgrading and improving the conditions affecting the practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines.

ARTICLE III LICENSURE EXAMINATION AND REGISTRATION

SEC. 12. Examination Required. - Unless otherwise provided in this Act, all applicants for registration for the practice of speech language pathology shall be required to undergo a licensure examination to be administered by the Board in such places and dates as the Commission may designate, after giving compliance with the requirements prescribed by the Commission.

SEC. 13. Qualification for Examination. - In order to be admitted in the licensure examination, it must be established to the satisfaction of the Board that, at the time of filing of application, the applicant is:

(a) A citizen of the Philippines or of a foreign state/country which observes reciprocity with the Philippines for the practice of speech language pathology;

(b) Of good moral character;

(c) Has not been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude; and

(d) A graduate of a bachelor's degree in speech language pathology from a school of excellence in the Philippines or abroad that is recognized by the CHED.

SEC. 14. Scope of Examination. - The coverage of the licensure examination for speech language pathologists shall include the following:

(a) Anatomy and physiology of the speech and hearing mechanism;

(b) Neurological bases of speech and hearing disorders;

(c) Articulation and phonological disorders;

(d) Hearing impairment and aural habilitation;

(e) Language and cognitive communication disorders;

(f) Fluency disorders;

(g) Voice disorders;

(h) Cleft Lip and Palate and Craniofacial Conditions;

(i) Dysphagia;

(j) Medical and neurological disorders that may cause communication and swallowing disorders;

(k) Normal development and function of speech, language, hearing and swallowing;

(l) Principles of assessment and intervention for speech, language, hearing and swallowing conditions; and

(m) Research, Professional Ethics and Community Development.

The coverage of the speech language pathology licensure examination, including the percentage weights of the examination subjects, shall be defined, or may be modified, reclustered or rearranged by the Board, as the need arises, to conform to changes in the standards of practice.

SEC. 15. Registration Without Examination as Speech Language Pathologist. - A person who possesses the pertinent qualifications required for admission in the licensure examination for speech language pathologists pursuant to the provisions of this Act may be registered without examination:

Provided, That the applicant files with the Board, within one (1) year from the effectivity of the implementing rules and regulations, an application for registration and issuance of a certificate of registration and professional identification card by submitting credentials showing that the applicant before the effectivity of this Act holds a bachelor's degree in speech language pathology from a college or university recognized by the CHED; and, further, That the applicant is a certified member of the AIPO of speech language pathologists.

SEC. 16. Ratings in the Examination. - To be qualified as having passed the licensure examination for speech language pathologists, a candidate must have obtained a general weighted average of at least seventy-five percent (75%), with no grade lower than fifty percent (50%) in any given subject of the examination.

SEC. 17. Report of Ratings. - The Board shall submit to the Commission the ratings obtained by each candidate within ten (10) calendar days after the examination unless extended for just cause.

SEC. 18. Oath of Profession of Speech Language Pathologists. - All individuals admitted for registration, with or without examination, shall be required to take an oath of profession before any member of the Board or any officer of the Commission authorized to administer oaths prior to entering the practice of speech language pathology in the Philippines.

SEC. 19. Issuance of the Certificate of Registration and Professional Identification Card. - A certificate of registration and professional identification card shall be issued to all registrants, with or without examination, upon the registrant's compliance with all the legal requirements, including payment of fees prescribed by the Commission. The certificate of registration shall bear the signature of the chairperson of the Commission and the chairperson and members of the Board and shall indicate that the person named therein is entitled to the practice of the profession within all the privileges appurtenant thereto. The certificate of registration shall remain in full force and effect until withdrawn, suspended or revoked in accordance with this Act.

A professional identification card bearing the registration number and dates of issuance and expiry, duly signed by the Chairperson of the Commission, shall likewise be issued to every registrant who has complied with all the requirements set by the Board and the Commission, including the payment of prescribed fees.

SEC. 20. Indication of Certificate of Registration and Professional Tax Receipt. - All documents that the speech language pathologist signs, uses or issues in connection with the practice of the profession shall indicate the speech language pathologist's certificate of registration number, dates of validity and expiry of the professional identification card and the income tax registration number.

SEC. 21. Refusal to Register. - The Board shall not register any successful examinee who has been convicted by final judgment by a court of competent jurisdiction of any offense involving moral turpitude or has been found guilty of immoral or dishonorable conduct after investigation by the Board, or has been declared to be of unsound mind. The reason for the refusal shall be set forth in writing.

SEC. 22. Revocation or Suspension of the Certificate of Registration/Professional License and Professional Identification Card and Cancellation of Special Permit. - The Board may, after giving proper notice of hearing to the party concerned, revoke the practitioner's certificate of registration or suspend the practice, or cancel the special temporary permit for any of the causes or grounds mentioned in Section 21 of this Act or for any unprofessional or unethical conduct, malpractice, and violation of any of the provisions of this Act, its implementing rules and regulations, the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for speech language pathologists.

SEC. 23. Reinstatement, Reissuance or Replacement of Certificate of Registration/Professional License. - A person may apply to the Board for reinstatement of the certificate of registration two (2) years from the date of its revocation. The application shall be in writing and shall conform with the requirements as provided by the Board. No certificate of registration shall be reinstated unless the Board is satisfied that a good cause exists to warrant reinstatement.

A suspended certificate of registration and professional identification card may be reinstated; Provided, That the suspended speech language pathologist has established fitness to practice anew. The Board shall issue a resolution to effect such reinstatement.

SEC. 24. Roster of Speech Language Pathologists. - The Board shall prepare, update and maintain a roster of speech language pathologists, in coordination with the AIPO. The roster shall contain the names of the speech language pathologists, their respective certificate of registration numbers, and other data which the Board may deem pertinent.

SEC. 25. Issuance of Special Temporary Permit. - Special temporary permits may be issued by the Board, subject to the approval by the Commission and payment of the fees, to the following persons:

(a) A foreign speech language pathologist called for consultation for a specific purpose which, in the judgment of the Board, is essential to the growth of the profession; Provided, however, That the activities shall be limited only to the particular work for which the foreign practitioner is being engaged; Provided, further, That the person is qualified to practice the profession in the state or country of origin; Provided, finally, That there is no Filipino speech language pathologist qualified for such work;

(b) A foreign speech language pathologist who is an internationally recognized expert or specialist in any branch of speech language pathology and whose services are essential for the advancement of speech language pathology in the Philippines; and

(c) A foreign speech language pathologist to be engaged as professor, lecturer, or trainer in fields essential to speech language pathology education in the Philippines.

The special temporary permit shall provide for the limitations and conditions for its issuance, which shall include the following: validity of the special temporary permit which shall be for a period of not more than one (1) year, but subject

to renewal at the discretion of the Board; the branch or specialty of speech language pathology to practice or engage in; and the specific place of practice such as clinic, hospital, center, or school/college/university. The Board, subject to the approval by the Commission, shall prescribe the rules and regulations for the implementation of this particular section.

SEC. 26. Issuance of Certificates of Recognition. - The Board shall prescribe guidelines for the issuance of Certificates of Recognition for advanced studies, researches and accomplishments that contribute to the enrichment of the profession.

ARTICLE IV PRACTICE OF SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

SEC. 27. Scope of the Practice of Speech Language Pathology. - The scope of the practice of speech language pathology shall embrace the performance, in collaboration with other professionals, families and the community, of any of the following:

(a) Screening, identifying, assessing, diagnosing, managing and preventing disorders of communication such as articulation, fluency, voice, hearing and language;

(b) Screening, identifying, assessing, diagnosing, managing and preventing disorders of oral-pharyngeal functions such as dysphagia and related disorders;

(c) Screening, identifying, assessing, diagnosing, and managing cognitive communication systems and provide training in their use;

(d) Assessing, selecting, and developing augmentative and alternative communication systems and providing training in their use;

(e) Screening hearing acuity for the purpose of speech language evaluation and aural rehabilitation;

(f) Planning, teaching, and carrying out home programs and training for patients and their families;

(g) Planning, conducting, and evaluating teaching-learning activities for students of speech language pathology and other related courses, and for other practitioners, patients, their families and the general public;

(h) Planning, conducting, and evaluating researches in pursuit of new knowledge for the growth of speech language pathology in the Philippines;

(i) Providing consultancy to government and nongovernment organizations regarding the field of speech language pathology; and

(j) Teaching, lecturing, and reviewing subjects given in the licensure examination.

SEC. 28. Positions in Public and Private Entities Requiring the Services of Speech Language Pathologists. - Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, all existing and proposed positions in public and private entities primarily requiring the services of speech language pathologists shall accordingly be filled only by speech language pathologists.

SEC. 29. Prohibition on the Practice of Speech Language Pathology. - No person shall practice or offer to practice speech language pathology in the Philippines or pass off oneself as a speech language pathologist, or use the title, word, letter, figure, or a sign tending to convey the impression that one is a speech language pathologist, or advertise or indicate in any manner whatsoever that one is qualified to perform the work of a speech language pathologist unless one has satisfactorily passed the licensure examination given by the Board, except as otherwise provided in this Act, and is a holder of a valid certificate of registration and professional identification card or a valid special temporary permit duly issued by the Board and the Commission.

SEC. 30. Prohibited Acts. - No person shall:

(a) Engage in the practice of speech language pathology by representing oneself as a speech language pathologist without a valid certificate of registration and professional identification

card or a valid special temporary permit granted by the Board pursuant to this Act;

(b) Practice the profession during the period of one's suspension from the practice thereof;

(c) Allow an unqualified person to advertise or to practice the profession by using one's certificate of registration, professional identification card or special temporary permit; and

(d) Use as one's own the certificate of registration, professional identification card or special temporary permit of another.

SEC. 31. Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Speech Language Pathologists. - The Board shall prescribe, adopt, and promulgate the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for speech language pathologists, in consultation with the AIPO of speech language pathologists.

SEC. 32. Integration of All Speech Language Pathologists. - The speech language pathology profession shall be integrated into one (1) national professional organization of speech language pathologists which shall be duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Board, subject to approval by the Commission, shall accredit the said organization as the one and only AIPO of speech language pathologists. All speech language pathologists whose names appear in the Registry Book of speech language pathologists shall ipso facto or automatically become members thereof and shall receive all the benefits and privileges appurtenant thereto upon payment of the AIPO membership fees and dues.

Membership in the AIPO shall not bar membership in other organizations of speech language pathologists.

SEC. 33. Foreign Reciprocity. - No foreign speech language pathologist shall be given a certificate of registration and professional identification card or be entitled to any of the privileges under this Act unless the country of which the foreigner is a subject or citizen specifically permits Filipino

speech language pathologists to practice within its territorial limits on the same basis as the subjects or citizens of said country or state.

SEC. 34. An Act Not Affecting Other Professions. - This Act shall not be construed to affect or prevent the practice of any other legally recognized profession.

ARTICLE V FINAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 35. Funding Provision. - The Chairperson of the Commission shall immediately include in its programs the implementation of this Act, the funding of which shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and thereafter.

SEC. 36. Penal Provision. - Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this Act or any of its implementing rules and regulations as promulgated by the Board, and approved by the Commission shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine of not less than Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00) but not more than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) or by imprisonment of not less than two (2) years but not more than five (5) years, or both, at the discretion of the court.

SEC. 37. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within six (6) months from the passage of this Act, the Board shall, subject to the approval of the Commission, promulgate the rules and regulations and the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for speech language pathologists to effectively implement its provisions.

SEC. 38. Separability Clause. - If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such shall not invalidate any other section or provision of this Act.

SEC. 39. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, orders, issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 40. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a major newspaper of general circulation.

Approved: VICTENTE C. SOTTO III, President of the Senate; GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

This Act was passed by the House of Representatives as House Bill No. 8529 on November 21, 2018 and adopted by the Senate as an amendment to Senate Bill No. 462 on January 21, 2019.

MYRA MARIE D. VILLARICA, Secretary of the Senate; DANTE ROBERTO P. MALING, Acting Secretary General, House of Representatives.

Approved: MAR 22 2019

RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE, President of the Philippines.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, Manila, 2019.