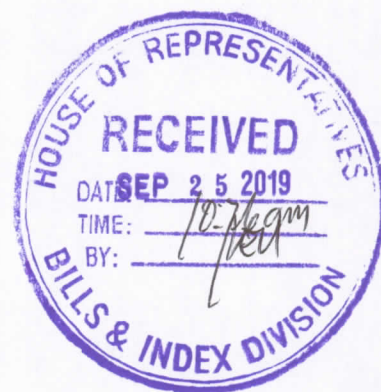


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Eighteenth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 4813

Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the year 2018, 708,445 students graduated from college, while 1.252 million students graduated from senior high school all over the Philippines. With the exception of a small minority who would immediately pursue full-time post-graduate or professional studies, college graduates will soon join the government, the business sector, NGOs, or engage in various professional and skilled trade and industry as members of the labor force. Likewise, with the implementation of the K-12 program, senior high school graduates received considerable competency and skills training, such that those who are unable to pursue further education are able to secure gainful employment. As these college and senior high school graduates join the labor force, requiring them to participate in addressing a national concern that has a direct impact on them will instill upon the youth the value of public service and civic participation in wherever trade or employment they would soon join. This is consistent with the constitutional recognition of the vital role of the youth in nation-building and the constitutional mandate of inculcating in them patriotism and nationalism, and encouraging their involvement in public and civic affairs. Towards this end, it is the purpose of this bill to involve the youth in addressing the country's dwindling forest stock, which is among our country's most pressing issues and which threatens the very future of our youth.

The Forest Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources estimates a loss of about 47,000 hectares of forest cover in the Philippines annually. It is common knowledge that the country's forest stock serves as the first line of defense against natural calamities, and is therefore crucial particularly for an island country such as the Philippines, which is frequently visited by torrential rain and strong typhoons. The continuous decimation of the country's forest stock has caused water insecurity due to degradation and poor management of watersheds, food insecurity due to soil erosion, destruction of indigenous cultures and serious threat to local biodiversity. With the urgent need to rehabilitate the environment and restore ecological balance amidst the evident force of climate change, reforestation efforts are now matters of civic responsibility and must therefore be made mandatory.

By requiring graduating college and senior high school students to plant two trees as prerequisite to their graduation, we will augment our country's forest stock by around five million trees annually, and this number is expected to improve further with the continuous implementation of the Universal Free Access to Tertiary Education, and the increase in the number of schools offering senior high school programs. This will create a significant impact in our reforestation, climate change adaptation, and sustainable development efforts.

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



MARKO. GO

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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HOUSE BILL NO. 4813

Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go

**AN ACT REQUIRING ALL GRADUATING SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND
COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PLANT TWO (2) TREES EACH AS A CIVIC DUTY
FOR ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION,
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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 “Graduating Students for Reforestation Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature. Towards this end, the State shall promote and pursue reforestation programs and encourage tree planting as a means of involving the youth in public and civic affairs.

SEC. 3. *Tree-planting as a Mandatory Requisite for Graduation.* – All graduating students from senior high school, and college shall be required to plant at least two (2) trees as a mandatory prerequisite for their graduation. The tree-planting activity shall be their first act of public service as they enter the country’s labor force.

SEC. 4. *Location.* – The trees to be planted under this Act shall be located in suitable lands and areas as determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and local government units in coordination with schools, colleges and universities.

SEC. 5. *Preference for Indigenous Species.* – The species of trees to be planted should be appropriate to the location, climate and topography of the area with preference for the planting of indigenous species.

SEC. 6. *Partner Agencies and Stakeholders.* – The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall implement the provisions of this Act, in partnership with the following agencies:

- (a) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- (b) Department of Agriculture (DA)
- (c) Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)
- (d) Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
- (e) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)

The responsibilities of these agencies shall include:

1. Establishment of nursery and seedling preparation
2. Site identification and preparation
3. Technical support and extension service
4. Monitoring and evaluation

SEC. 7. *Provision of Seedlings.* – The Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resource (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA), in partnership with local government units (LGUs) throughout the Philippines shall maintain a seedling bank and will serve as ready source of seedlings to be provided to senior high schools, colleges and universities for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DepEd and CHED, in coordination with DENR and DILG, and in consultation with other agencies, shall promulgate and issue the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) necessary to implement this Act within sixty (60) days after its approval.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the budgets of the implementing departments/agencies in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,