August 22, 2018
Serial No. 18-724

The Honorable Hokkons Baules
President of the Senate
10th Olbil Era Kelilau
Ngerulmud, Palau National Capitol
Republic of Palau 96939

RE: The Post-Graduate Scholarship Act

Dear Senate President Baules:

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for your diligent attention to the FY2019 National Budget Act, which is currently pending before you. It is always encouraging to see the level of responsibility you and your colleagues take for the fiscal health of our Republic.

As you continue your examination of our national priorities, I want to direct your attention to another important issue of financial health – this time, the financial health of post-graduate students in our national priority programs. In RPPL 9-37, you took a major step in national education policy by establishing priority areas of study, to be incentivized by the Palau National Scholarship Board. These priority fields, including Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, and Special Education, represent urgent and enduring needs for the Republic; nearly 4 full years after the passage of RPPL 9-37, we continue to struggle with filling these important posts throughout Palau.

The Palau National Scholarship Board (PNSB) does great work for our students, but it is the job of the national leadership to set scholarship policy. We must guide the board in its efforts, and on the issue of priority fields, the policy last set through RPPL 9-37 could use some small amendments. In particular, we must make clear that we support post-graduate scholarship, which is required for many of these priority fields. Masters’ degrees require fewer years to complete than doctoral programs, and certain fields, including those in Medicine or Engineering, require intensive specialization or certification programs. PNSB policies should address these specialized requirements, to ensure Palauan scholars are able to complete their programs, and bring their skills back for the good of Palau.

And in this vein, there is a group of post-graduate students in need of our urgent assistance. As you know, a number of our most promising young scholars have been accepted to the prestigious
Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM). While the Cuban government generously covers the academic costs of this program, many of these students have been struggling with basic living expenses for some time now. Because of the unique nature of this program, the PNSB has been unable to adequately assist these students, and it is time for the national leadership to provide some specific policy advice.

If you require any additional information about any of these students, or the issues they are facing as they work through their rigorous programs, I encourage you to contact the Ministry of Education and, regarding our medical students particularly, the Ministry of Health. Thank you for your attention to the needs of these important future leaders and public servants in the Republic of Palau.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau

cc:
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Palau National Scholarship Board
August 22, 2018
Serial No. 18-724

The Honorable Sabino Anastacio
Speaker of the House of Delegates
10th Olbiil Era Kelulau
Ngerulmud, Palau National Capitol
Republic of Palau 96939

RE: The Post-Graduate Scholarship Act

Dear Speaker Anastacio:

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for your diligent attention to the FY2019 National Budget Act, which is currently pending before you. It is always encouraging to see the level of responsibility you and your colleagues take for the fiscal health of our Republic.

As you continue your examination of our national priorities, I want to direct your attention to another important issue of financial health – this time, the financial health of post-graduate students in our national priority programs. In RPPL 9-37, you took a major step in national education policy by establishing priority areas of study, to be incentivized by the Palau National Scholarship Board. These priority fields, including Education, Engineering, Law, Medicine, and Special Education, represent urgent and enduring needs for the Republic; nearly 4 full years after the passage of RPPL 9-37, we continue to struggle with filling these important posts throughout Palau.

The Palau National Scholarship Board (PNSB) does great work for our students, but it is the job of the national leadership to set scholarship policy. We must guide the board in its efforts, and on the issue of priority fields, the policy last set through RPPL 9-37 could use some small amendments. In particular, we must make clear that we support post-graduate scholarship, which is required for many of these priority fields. Masters’ degrees require fewer years to complete than doctoral programs, and certain fields, including those in Medicine or Engineering, require intensive specialization or certification programs. PNSB policies should address these specialized requirements, to ensure Palauan scholars are able to complete their programs, and bring their skills back for the good of Palau.

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If you require any additional information about any of these students, or the issues they are facing as they work through their rigorous programs, I encourage you to contact the Ministry Education and, regarding our medical students particularly, the Ministry of Health. Thank you for your attention to the needs of these important future leaders and public servants in the Republic of Palau.

Sincerely,

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of the Republic of Palau

cc:
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Palau National Scholarship Board
A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend Title 22, Subchapter II of the Palau National Code to address the needs of postgraduate students in certain priority fields.

THE PEOPLE OF PALAU REPRESENTED IN THE OLBIIL ERA KELULAU DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Legislative Findings.

The Olbil Era Kelulau finds that the certain Palauan students pursuing high priority graduate coursework are in urgent need of financial assistance from the Republic, and that such assistance will greatly increase their ability to succeed and give back to the Republic in the future.

Section 2. Amendment. Subchapter II of Title 22 of the Palau National Code is hereby amended as follows:

§ 223. Definitions.

(b) "Cessation of degree studies" means the expulsion or withdrawal of a recipient from the academic institution in which he is enrolled, and in consideration of which he was receiving grant, loan, or scholarship assistance from the Board.

§ 227. Powers and duties.

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Board to:

(a) implement the policy declared by this subchapter.

(b) Develop, organize, and adopt criteria to be followed in selecting scholarship recipients. Before adopting such criteria, the Board shall ensure that such criteria is fair and nondiscriminatory. In developing such criteria, the Board shall take into consideration the national objectives and priorities of the Republic of Palau. Notwithstanding the above, the
eligibility criteria for scholarship, grant and loan recipients to be eligible to receive

scholarships or loans from the Palau National Scholarship Fund, the recipient must be a

Palauan citizen, and must;

(1) have graduated from a high school in the Republic of Palau; and/or

(2) have at least one of his/her parents or legal guardian must physically

residing in the Republic, or working for the ROP Government and paying ROP
taxes.

If eligibility is conditioned upon residency or employment of one parent in the Republic
under subsection (2) above, the qualifying residency or employment must begin prior to and
continue for the duration of the receipt of any loan, grant, or scholarship.

In the event that the recipient graduated from a high school outside of the Republic,
one or both parent or legal guardian must physically reside in the Republic. At minimum, the
criteria for residency of the parent must be two or more years of physical residency in the
Republic, or one or both parents works for the ROP Government and is a ROP taxpayer, prior
to the receipt of scholarship, grant or loan and the continued physical residency of said
parent, in the Republic, while student recipient is receiving scholarship, grant and/or
grant. All recipients of scholarship grants and loans are shall be required to work in the
Republic for the duration of three (3) years, commencing no more than two (2) years after
completion of graduate degree studies, for graduate students or commencing two (2) years
after completion of all other degree studies. If a grant, or loan, or scholarship recipient ceases
his degree studies and fails to obtain his degree, he is shall be required to pay back fifty
percent (50%) of the any grant, or loan, or scholarship within two (2) years time of ceasing
studies. All recipients of grants, loans, or scholarships shall be required to work in the
Republic for three (3) years, commencing no more than two (2) years after completion or
cessation of degree studies, regardless of whether the recipient was successful in obtaining a
degree. All grant and loan recipients regardless of completion of studies must work in the
Republic for not less than three (3) years after the two-year grace period. If a grant, or loan,
or scholarship recipient fails to return and work in the Republic within the allotted time period, said recipient shall be liable to pay back to the Scholarship Fund, the total amount of the grant, and/or loan, or scholarship, with interest.

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§ 229. Authorization; Scholarship Fund.
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(f) The Palau National Scholarship Board shall issue regulations regarding the award of scholarships to students studying in “priority fields” to encourage students to receive degrees in areas of study important to the development and growth of Palau. The regulations will shall include what areas of study constitute “priority fields,” which must at a minimum include law, medicine, education, special education, and engineering, and how much scholarship funding students seeking degrees in those fields should receive, and the requirements to qualify and maintain a scholarship for study in a priority field. Regulations shall distinguish between different levels of post-graduate study, and account for any special cost or time requirement of a particular course of study, particularly in “priority fields.” Repayment of a loan from the Fund shall be forgiven as to each student who completes degree studies in a priority field and who is employed continuously for five (5) years, commencing within two (2) years after completion of degree studies, by the national government of the Republic of Palau, a state government, or within the private sector of the Republic of Palau, including private schools and non-profit organizations, as a practitioner in the priority field for which the student received a scholarship.
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§ 232. Grant assistance for medical students.

Students enrolled in the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) through Cuban Government scholarships shall be entitled to annual grant assistance of up to $5,000 from
the Board. The Board shall develop an application, registration, or monitoring process for
this grant assistance, tailored to the course schedule and assessment procedures of the
program. The Board shall review other existing programs, and determine whether Palauan
students in any other program face circumstances sufficiently similar to warrant comparable
assistance by the Board.”

Section 3. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon approval by the President
of the Republic of Palau or upon becoming law without such approval.
A BILL FOR AN ACT

To amend Title 22, Subchapter II of the Palau National Code to address the needs of post-graduate students in certain priority fields.

THE PEOPLE OF PALAU REPRESENTED IN THE OLBIIIL ERA KELULAU DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

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The Olbiil Era Kelulau finds that the certain Palauan students pursuing high priority graduate coursework are in urgent need of financial assistance from the Republic, and that such assistance will greatly increase their ability to succeed and give back to the Republic in the future.

Section 2. Amendment. Subchapter II of Title 22 of the Palau National Code is hereby amended as follows:

§ 223. Definitions.

(a) . . .

(b) "Cessation of degree studies" means the expulsion or withdrawal of a recipient from the academic institution in which he is enrolled, and in consideration of which he was receiving grant, loan, or scholarship assistance from the Board.

(c) . . .

(e) "Recipient" means one who receives a grant, loan, or scholarship from the Board.

§ 227. Powers and duties.

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Board to:

(a) implement the policy declared by this subchapter.

(b) Develop, organize, and adopt criteria to be followed in selecting scholarship recipients. Before adopting such criteria, the Board shall ensure that such criteria is fair and nondiscriminatory. In developing such criteria, the Board shall take into consideration the national objectives and priorities of the Republic of Palau. Notwithstanding the above, the
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Palauan citizen, and must;

(1) have graduated from a high school in the Republic of Palau; and/or

(2) have at least one of his/her parents or legal guardian must physically residing in the Republic, or working for the ROP Government and paying ROP taxes.

If eligibility is conditioned upon residency or employment of one parent in the Republic under subsection (2) above, the qualifying residency or employment must begin prior to and continue for the duration of the receipt of any loan, grant, or scholarship.

In the event that the recipient graduated from a high school outside of the Republic, one parent or legal guardian must physically reside in the Republic. At minimum, the criteria for residency of the parent must be two or more years of physical residency in the Republic, or one or both parent works for the ROP Government and is a ROP taxpayer, prior to the receipt of scholarship, grant or loan and the continued physical residency of said parent, in the Republic, while student recipient is receiving scholarship, loan and/or grant. All recipients of scholarship, grants and loans are shall be required to work in the Republic for the duration of three (3) years, commencing no more than two (2) years after completion of graduate degree studies, for graduate students or commencing two (2) years after completion of all other degree studies. If a grant, or loan, or scholarship recipient ceases his degree studies and fails to obtain his degree, he is shall be required to pay back fifty percent (50%) of the any grant, or loan, or scholarship within two (2) years time of ceasing studies. All recipients of grants, loans, or scholarships shall be required to work in the Republic for three (3) years, commencing no more than two (2) years after completion or cessation of degree studies, regardless of whether the recipient was successful in obtaining a degree. All grant and loan recipients regardless of completion of studies must work in the Republic for not less than three (3) years after the two-year grace period. If a grant, or loan,
or scholarship recipient fails to return and work in the Republic within the allotted time
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government of the Republic of Palau, a state government, or within the private sector of the
Republic of Palau, including private schools and non-profit organizations, as a practitioner
in the priority field for which the student received a scholarship.

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§ 232. Grant assistance for medical students.

Students enrolled in the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) through Cuban
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this grant assistance, tailored to the course schedule and assessment procedures of the
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students in any other program face circumstances sufficiently similar to warrant comparable
assistance by the Board.”

Section 3. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon approval by the President
of the Republic of Palau or upon becoming law without such approval.

Date: ____________________  Introduced by Request: ____________________