Republic of Palau
Office of the President

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President

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December 26, 2018
Serial No. 18-882

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

Signing Statement Re: SB No. 10-123, SD2, HD1, CD1– Improving the quality of education by requiring the Ministry of Education to establish regulations for teacher certifications.

Dear President Baules:

I am pleased to sign into lawSenate Bill No. 10-123, SD2, HD1, CD1, which amends Title 22 of the Palau National Code so as to improve the quality of education in the Republic of Palau by requiring the Ministry of Education to establish regulations for teacher certifications. In passing this essential bill, you are once again putting an emphasis on our children and the future of Palau.

This important piece of legislation imposes a higher scrutiny on teacher qualifications and provides mechanisms to generally improve the overall curriculum by introducing high quality teachers. As you note in the legislative findings, establishing an official teacher certification process will ensure that all students in Palauan schools receive the best instructions, which will allow them to reach their maximum potential. It is without question that there is a correlation between a teacher's education level and the positive outcome of that teacher's students, and I thank you for ensuring better teachers for the children of Palau.

As the law now reads, no person may serve as a teacher in any public school without first having obtained at least an associate degree in the field of education, or the subject matter in which the individual seeks to teach, except for positions where there is not a qualified teacher applicant. Further, upon earning an associate degree in the relevant field, a prospective teacher shall apply for and the Ministry of Education shall issue a certificate without cost to the teacher. When there is no qualified teacher applicant, an unqualified teacher may be appointed for up to two years, during which a qualified teacher must be obtained for the position. I thank you for understanding the real-world implications of this bill and for providing a realistic solution. Given that it takes two years to earn an associate degree, I believe a two-year limit on unqualified teachers is appropriate.

Teacher certifications are essential to ensuring our teachers are, and remain, qualified. I thank you for once again being forward-thinking, and for requiring the Ministry of Education to review and renew such certifications as he deems appropriate, to establish the qualification standards and requirements for certification in the first place, and to hold continuing teacher training

programs every two years to promote teacher skills and to encourage compliance with qualification standards and requirements.

Within six months of the signing of this bill, the Ministry will be required to provide curriculum and training program schedules and expected costs, including, but not limited to, expected increases in teacher salaries, to the Olbiil Era Kelulau. Given the need for teacher training programs, I thank you for ensuring a quick turnaround on this issue. Similarly, regulations will also need to be promulgated within six months of the enactment of this bill. On one point of potential confusion, which is this bill's requirement that regulations be submitted directly to the OEK, the Ministry of Education should be able to interpret that provision in the context of the Administrative Procedures Act.

Finally, while I approve of your inclusion of a five-year grandfather clause, I believe a clerical error may need to be addressed by regulation. The final clause of this section, which reads, "to come in compliance with this Act," has been erroneously stricken. This is a necessary part of the grandfather clause; without it, what would a teacher have five years to do? Accordingly, I believe the grandfather clause should read:

> As of the Effective Date of this Act, the teachers currently teaching at public schools who do not possess the minimum educational requirements for this Act shall have five (5) years from the date the Ministry promulgates regulations of this Act as required by Section 3 *to come into compliance with this Act*." (*emphasis added.*)

As I mentioned, I believe this is a clerical error, and that the intent of the provision is explained by context and the title of the section. Therefore, it should be addressable by regulation. Thank you again for planning for our children's future, and for the future of our Republic.

I sincerely appreciate the diligent consideration of this issue by both houses.

Sincerely,

Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President of theRepublic of Palau

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December 26, 2018
Serial No. 18-882

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

Signing Statement Re: SB No. 10-123, SD2, HD1, CD1– Improving the quality of education by requiring the Ministry of Education to establish regulations for teacher certifications.

Dear Speaker Anastacio:

I am pleased to sign into lawSenate Bill No. 10-123, SD2, HD1, CD1, which amends Title 22 of the Palau National Code so as to improve the quality of education in the Republic of Palau by requiring the Ministry of Education to establish regulations for teacher certifications. In passing this essential bill, you are once again putting an emphasis on our children and the future of Palau.

This important piece of legislation imposes a higher scrutiny on teacher qualifications and provides mechanisms to generally improve the overall curriculum by introducing high quality teachers. As you note in the legislative findings, establishing an official teacher certification process will ensure that all students in Palauan schools receive the best instructions, which will allow them to reach their maximum potential. It is without question that there is a correlation between a teacher's education level and the positive outcome of that teacher's students, and I thank you for ensuring better teachers for the children of Palau.

As the law now reads, no person may serve as a teacher in any public school without first having obtained at least an associate degree in the field of education, or the subject matter in which the individual seeks to teach, except for positions where there is not a qualified teacher applicant. Further, upon earning an associate degree in the relevant field, a prospective teacher shall apply for and the Ministry of Education shall issue a certificate without cost to the teacher. When there is no qualified teacher applicant, an unqualified teacher may be appointed for up to two years, during which a qualified teacher must be obtained for the position. I thank you for understanding the real-world implications of this bill and for providing a realistic solution. Given that it takes two years to earn an associate degree, I believe a two-year limit on unqualified teachers is appropriate.

Teacher certifications are essential to ensuring our teachers are, and remain, qualified. I thank you for once again being forward-thinking, and for requiring the Ministry of Education to review and renew such certifications as he deems appropriate, to establish the qualification standards and requirements for certification in the first place, and to hold continuing teacher training

programs every two years to promote teacher skills and to encourage compliance with qualification standards and requirements.

Within six months of the signing of this bill, the Ministry will be required to provide curriculum and training program schedules and expected costs, including, but not limited to, expected increases in teacher salaries, to the Olbiil Era Kelulau. Given the need for teacher training programs, I thank you for ensuring a quick turnaround on this issue. Similarly, regulations will also need to be promulgated within six months of the enactment of this bill. On one point of potential confusion, which is this bill's requirement that regulations be submitted directly to the OEK, the Ministry of Education should be able to interpret that provision in the context of the Administrative Procedures Act.

Finally, while I approve of your inclusion of a five-year grandfather clause, I believe a clerical error may need to be addressed by regulation. The final clause of this section, which reads, "to come in compliance with this Act," has been erroneously stricken. This is a necessary part of the grandfather clause; without it, what would a teacher have five years to do? Accordingly, I believe the grandfather clause should read:

> As of the Effective Date of this Act, the teachers currently teaching at public schools who do not possess the minimum educational requirements for this Act shall have five (5) years from the date the Ministry promulgates regulations of this Act as required by Section 3 *to come into compliance with this Act*." (*emphasis added.*)

As I mentioned, I believe this is a clerical error, and that the intent of the provision is explained by context and the title of the section. Therefore, it should be addressable by regulation. Thank you again for planning for our children's future, and for the future of our Republic.

I sincerely appreciate the diligent consideration of this issue by both houses.

Sincerely,

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

RPPL NO. 10-32

The Senate

TENTH OLBIIL ERA KELULAU

P.O. Box 8, Ngerulmud
Republic of Palau 96939

NINTH SPECIAL Session

December 2019

INTRODUCED AS SENATE BILL NO. 10-123, SD2, HD1, CD1

AN ACT

(See Title Inside)

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR (S) Stevenson J. Kuartei, Hokkons Baules, Mark U. Rudimch John B. Skebong, and Phillip P. Reklai **ET, AL.,**

DATE INTRODUCED May 17, 2018

SENATE ACTION

FIRST READING:	May 17, 2018
REFERRED TO:	Health and Education
STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO.:	10-136
DATE ADOPTED:	August 08, 2018
SECOND READING:	August 08, 2018
LEGAL FORMAT:	Proper
REVIEW:	August 28, 2018
THIRD READING:	August 28, 2018
FINAL READING:	December 06, 2018

HOUSE ACTION

FIRST READING:	August 30, 2018
REFERRED TO:	Education and Youth Affairs
STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO.:	10-66
DATE ADOPTED:	October 23, 2018
SECOND READING:	October 23, 2018
LEGAL FORMAT:	Proper
REVIEW:	October 23, 2018
THIRD READING:	October 30, 2018
FINAL READING:	December 10, 2018

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ACTION

DATE:	December 06, 2018
COMMITTEE REPORT NO.:	10-4
DATE PASSED:	December 06 and December 10, 2018
FINAL READING:	December 10, 2018

Ann L. Pedro
CLERK OF THE SENATE

Marcello Ngirkelau
CLERK, HOUSE OF DELEGATES

TENTH OLBIIL ERA KELULAU

SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION, MAY 2018

RPPL No. 10–32
Passed as Senate Bill No. 10-123, SD2, HD1, CD1

AN ACT

To improve the quality of education in the Republic of Palau by requiring the Ministry of Education to establish regulations for teacher certifications, and other related purposes.

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

Section 1. Legislative Findings. The Olbiil Era Kelulau finds that establishing an official teacher certification process will ensure that all students in Palauan schools are receiving the best instruction that allows them to reach their maximum potential.

The current make up of educators in Palau paint a picture which calls for systemic improvement of the educational system from the inside out. Currently, thirty-eight percent of Palauan teachers hold only a high school diploma with some college credits, 38% hold an associate degree, with only 23% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. In stark contrast, out of twenty-five (25) educators who are foreign nationals, all but two (2) hold an associate degree or higher, with the majority of those (17) holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Recent studies show correlation between a teacher's education level and the positive outcome percentage of such teacher's students. Recent trends also show that qualified and experienced teachers are leaving the profession because of low pay and heavy school workload. The current law governing teacher's certification within the Republic is outdated and places the brunt of the authority with a Board not currently implemented. A more detailed process for obtaining a teachers' certificate will ensure better teachers for the children of Palau.

The Olbiil Era Kelulau concludes that prospective teachers, especially those of foreign backgrounds, should be required to possess at least an associate degree in education or the field they seek to instruct before being certified as an educator for the Republic of Palau, and for those who are currently teachers, to impose a strict timeline for such individuals to come into compliance. The Olbiil Era Kelulau also finds that teacher training programs need to be improved to ensure that current educators are

given the tools that they need to educate their students using the best and most current methods of teaching.

Section 2. Amendment. Sections 151 and 154 of Title 22 are amended as follows:

"§ 151. Teachers' certificates; required; qualifications.

(a) No person may serve as a teacher in any public school without first having obtained at least an associate degree in the field of education or the subject matter in which the individual seeks to teach, except for a position where there is not a qualified teacher applicant. Upon earning an associate's degree in the relevant field, a prospective teacher shall apply for and the Ministry of Education shall issue a certificate without cost to the teacher. When there is no qualified teacher applicant, an unqualified teacher may be appointed for up to two (2) years, during which a qualified teacher must be obtained for the position.

(b) Teacher certifications shall be subject to review and renewal to be determined by the Ministry of Education.

(c) The qualification standards and requirements for certification shall be established by the Ministry of Education by regulation. The Ministry of Education shall also hold continuing teacher training programs every two (2) years to promote teacher skills and encourage compliance with qualification standards and requirements. The regulations shall include, at a minimum the following:

(1) Education requirements, including but not limited to degrees in education or specific subject matter, certificates, and other proof of career development,

(2) Experience as a teacher,

(3) Practical experience in the subject matter to be taught, and

(4) A criminal background check and screening for illegal drugs.

§ 155. Teacher training programs.

(a) The Ministry shall provide training programs to enable residents of the

Republic to qualify for certification as teachers. All non-citizens must meet the minimum requirements for certification before becoming a teacher.

(b) The Minister shall establish a teacher training program for all teachers of the Republic so as to provide for the continuous upgrading of teaching skills of all teachers.

(c) Within six (6) months of the effective date, the Ministry shall provide curriculum and training program schedules and expected costs, including, but not limited to, expected increases in teacher salaries, to the Olbiil Era Kelulau."

Section 3. Regulations. The Ministry of Education shall promulgate regulations pursuant to this Act within six (6) months of enactment and submit them to the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

Section 4. Grandfather Clause. As of the Effective Date of this Act, the teachers currently teaching at public schools who do not possess the minimum educational requirements of this Act shall have five (5) years from the date the Ministry promulgates regulations of this Act as required by Section 3."

Section 5. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the President of the Republic of Palau, or upon its becoming law without such approval.

PASSED: December 10, 2018

Approved this 26th day of DECEMBER, 2018.

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