

AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF A PHILIPPINE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 244, July 12, 1973

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WHEREAS, government services for the benefit of Philippine veterans and their dependents are inadequate;

WHEREAS, veterans and their dependents deserve the renewed interest of the Government in terms of broader avenues for assistance; and

WHEREAS, such renewed attention can best be directed through an appropriate government agency capable of drawing, absorbing, investing and managing private financial contributions sufficient to provide assistance for employment, medical care, education and other related services;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and pursuant to Proclamation No. 1081, dated September 21, 1972, and General Order No. 1, dated September 22, 1972, as amended, do hereby order and decree, that:

SECTION 1. Philippine Veterans Assistance Commission. —

- To carry out the purposes of this Decree, a Philippine Veterans Assistance Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission is hereby created. The Commission shall be a body corporate and politic and shall be composed of the Secretary of National Defense, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Administrator of the Philippine Veterans Administration, the President of the Philippine Veterans Bank and three appointive members, who shall represent the veterans group, to be appointed by the President. The President shall designate the Chairman of the Commission. The term of the appointive members shall be for three years: Provided, That the terms of the first three appointive members shall be one, two and three years, respectively. All vacancies, except through the expiration of the term, shall be filled for the unexpired term only. The appointive members of the Commission shall receive seventy five pesos per diem for each meeting actually attended by them: Provided, That no compensation shall be paid for more than one meeting a week.

- The Commission shall have under its general supervision an Administrator who shall serve as the chief executive officer immediately responsible for carrying out the program and the policies of the Commission. The Administrator shall be a veteran who has had previous experience in technical and administrative fields related to the purposes of this Decree. He shall be appointed by the President and shall receive a salary to be fixed by the Commission with the approval of the President.

- The Commission, upon the recommendation of the Administrator, shall appoint all such other officers and personnel as may be deemed necessary, fix their compensation; prescribe their duties and establish such methods and procedures as may insure the efficient, honest and economical administration of the provisions and purposes of this Decree: Provided, however, That the officers and personnel of the Commission shall, as far as possible, be qualified veterans and/or their dependents.

SEC. 2. Purposes, Powers and Duties of the Commission. —

- To establish, maintain and make available for veterans and their dependents all such services necessary to provide them assistance for employment, medical care, education and other related services.

The term "veteran" refers to veterans of the Philippine Revolution, World War II, Korean War as used by the Philippine Veterans Administration and all such other veterans as may be determined by the Commission.

The term "dependents" refers to the spouse, children, legitimate, acknowledged natural or adopted children wholly dependent upon and living with the veterans, who are not more than twenty-three years of age or over twenty three years of age if they are incapable of self-support because mentally or physically defective. The term "dependents" also covers parents of the veterans who are wholly dependent upon and living with them.

- To manage, invest and otherwise deal with the funds and financial contributions transferred or made to the Commission by the Government and private persons such that the services to be provided under this Decree shall be financed out of the income of such investments and cause the Commission to operate on a self-sustaining basis.

- To adopt, amend and rescind, such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions and purposes of this Decree.

- To submit annually in January a public report to the President covering its activities in the administration and enforcement of this Decree during the preceding year and including information and recommendations on Commission policies.

- To enter into agreements or contracts for such service and aid as may be needed for the proper, efficient and stable administration of the Commission or in furtherance of its expressed purposes.

- To adopt an annual budget of expenditures including salaries of personnel against all funds available to the Commission under this Decree.

- To require reports, compilations and analysis of statistical and economic data and to make investigations as may be needed for the proper administration of the Commission.

- To acquire property, real or personal, which may be necessary or expedient for the attainment of the purposes of this Decree.

- To perform such other acts as it may deem appropriate for the proper enforcement of this Decree.

SEC. 3. Funds of the Commission. —

As the initial contribution of the Government to the Commission, there shall be appropriated out of the General Funds, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of five hundred thousand pesos to meet initial expenses for the organization and operation of the Commission and for the achievement of the purposes of this Decree.

The Commission shall actively solicit, campaign for, and receive contributions, donations, gifts and other valuable properties or money from private persons and government agencies or institutions. Such contributions, donations, gifts or transfers shall be deductible items for income tax purposes of the donor, contributor, gift-giver, or transferor. For this purpose, the pertinent provisions of the National Internal Revenue Code are accordingly amended.

SEC. 4. Disbursement and Investment of Funds; Collections and Income or Earnings from Such Collections. — Of the total yearly collection of all funds of the Commission, not more than seven per centum shall be disbursed for

the payment of salaries and wages and purchases of office equipment and materials and operational expenses of the Commission for any year.

The remaining ninety three per centum shall be invested by the Commission in any or all of the following ways only:

- In interest-bearing bonds or securities of the Government of the Philippines, or bonds or securities for payment of the interest and principal to which the faith and credit of the Republic of the Philippines is pledged.
- In interest-bearing deposits in any domestic bank doing business in the Philippines having an unimpaired paid-up capital and surplus equivalent to one million five hundred thousand pesos or over.
- In investments which will provide credit facilities for small short-term loans to veterans and their dependents.
- In other projects and investments which, in the determination, of the Commission, shall redound to the benefit of veterans and their dependents.

The total income or earnings from investments of such fund collections shall finance services provided herein for veterans and their dependents.

SEC. 5. Auditor of the Commission. —

The Commissioner on Audit or his representatives shall check and audit all the accounts, funds and properties of the Commission in the same manner and as frequently as the accounts, funds and properties of the Government are checked and audited under existing laws; and they shall as far as practicable, have the same powers and duties as they have with respect to the checking and auditing of public accounts, funds and properties in general.

SEC. 6. Miscellaneous Provisions. —

- Penalty clause. Whoever shall obtain or receive any money or check under this Decree or an agreement thereunder, without being entitled thereto, with intent to defraud the Commission, shall be fined not less than five hundred pesos nor more than five thousand pesos, or imprisoned for not less than six months nor more than one year, or both at the discretion of the court.
- Whoever fails or refuses to comply with the provisions of the Decree or with the rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission, shall be punished by a fine not less than five hundred pesos nor more than five thousand pesos, or imprisonment for not less than six months nor more than one year, or both at the discretion of the court.
- If the act or omission penalized by this Decree be committed by an association, partnership, corporation or any other institutions, its managing head, directors or partners shall be liable to the penalties provided for in this Decree for the offense.
- Any officer or employee of the Commission who receives or keeps funds or property belonging, payable or deliverable to the Commission and who shall appropriate the same, or shall take or misappropriate or shall consent, or through abandonment or negligence, shall permit any other person to take such property or funds, wholly or partially, or shall otherwise be guilty of misappropriations of such funds or property, shall suffer the penalties provided for in Article 217 of the Revised Penal Code.

SEC. 7. Repealing Clause. —

All such laws, decrees, orders, rules or regulations or any part thereof as are inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Decree are hereby repealed.

SEC. 8. This Decree shall take effect upon its approval.

Done in the City of Manila, this 12th day of July, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventy-three.

(Sgd.) FERDINAND E. MARCOS
President
Republic of the Philippines

By the President:

(Sgd.) ROBERTO V. REYES
Assistant Executive Secretary

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