

(H. B. 2561)

(No. 194)

(Approved September 1, 2006)

AN ACT

To add subsection (e) to Section 17.1 of Act No. 220 of August 29, 2002, known as the “Special Act for Youth Cooperatives,” to direct the “Cooperativist Coordination and Education Division” to implement, with the collaboration of the Puerto Rico Cooperative League, educational workshops of a cooperativist nature geared toward promoting sensible and far-sighted management of their finances in the students.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

Act No. 220 of August 29, 2002, known as the “Special Act for Youth Cooperatives,” was promulgated to authorize and promote the creation of youth cooperatives in Puerto Rico. The functions of the Youth Cooperatives are the following: 1) to promote youth participation in cooperative experiences in order to achieve integrated educational, social and economic development; 2) to establish a laboratory for cooperative practice through the collective work of its members and the community; 3) to offer services in accordance with the common needs of their communities to their members and non-members; 4) to promote the establishment of workshops for the development of creative, artistic and sports skills; and 5) to provide a workshop for the development of leadership skills.

This Act creates the “Cooperativist Coordination and Education Division” with the important functions of assisting and coordinating the implementation of the cooperative program into the public education system,

and to promote and develop school youth cooperatives among the students. However, although it is through this Division that participation in the cooperative experience in order to achieve economic development, among others, is supposed to be promoted, apparently there are no clear guidelines on how to carry out this duty.

To our best understanding, the Division could play an important role in the education on the management of their finances that should be offered to the students. At a time in which our youth enter the workforce at an earlier age, they should at least have some basic knowledge of the management of said finances. Such knowledge might be instrumental for them to use their income wisely and make investments in cooperativist entities.

Recognizing how expensive and difficult it is to prepare, develop, and implement any type of educational workshop in the Department of Education, we deem it wise to include the Puerto Rico Cooperative League within this responsibility.

The Puerto Rico Cooperative League is the central body of the Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement. It is composed by first and second degree cooperatives of all types that voluntarily affiliate to it and is governed by its clauses of incorporation, the laws in effect that apply to it and its bylaws. Its mission is to proactively work toward the integration, development and strengthening of the Puerto Rican Cooperative Movement through the development of cooperative education, direct service programs for cooperatives, and the representation and defense of its interests before the different forums in which actions that may affect the cooperative body take place. This mission is accomplished by preserving, developing and promoting cooperative values and principles, and promoting their application in Puerto Rican society.

Outstanding among its functions are: 1) to coordinate the activities of the Puerto Rico Cooperative Movement with the cooperativist activities of the public sector; 2) to perform research and studies on the common problems of the cooperative movement to achieve the integral planning of its development; 3) to intensively and permanently promote cooperative education in all levels of the cooperative movement and in all other sectors; 4) to promote the unification and strengthening of the cooperative financial system; and 5) to promote and develop cooperative education in general, and the technical preparation of cooperative action in all fields and levels, promoting the incorporation of the principles and values of cooperativism into the framework of Puerto Rican values, among others.

Given that the Puerto Rico Cooperative League has educational functions, we deem reasonable that it may become a collaborating entity in this endeavor. It is our contention that the union of the League with the Department of Education shall foster the adequate development and implementation of the educational workshops created by this Act.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.- Subsection (e) is hereby added to Section 17.1 of Act No. 220 of August 29, 2002, to read as follows:

“Section 17.1.- Cooperativist Coordination and Education Division Powers.

(a) ...

(e) It shall implement, with the collaboration of the Puerto Rico Cooperative League, educational workshops of a cooperativist nature geared toward promoting sensible and far-sighted management of their finances in the students. Provided, that such

workshops shall be offered to high school students as a part of their elective cooperativism courses.”

Section 2.- To ensure the effective compliance of this Act, the Director of the Cooperativist Coordination and Education Division is hereby directed to develop within a term not greater than ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, the educational workshops created herein which shall be implemented as of the January 2007 school semester.

Section 3.- This Act shall take effect immediately after its approval.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify to the Secretary of State that the following Act No. 194 (H.B. 2561) of the 4th Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to add subsection (e) to Section 17.1 of Act No. 220 of August 29, 2002, known as the “Special Act for Youth Cooperatives,” to direct the “Cooperativist Coordination and Education Division” to implement, with the collaboration of the Puerto Rico Cooperative League, educational workshops of a cooperativist nature geared toward promoting sensible and far-sighted management of their finances in the students,

has been translated from Spanish to English and that the English version is correct.

In San Juan, Puerto Rico, today 13th of July of 2007.

Francisco J. Domenech
Director