

(H.B. 1523)
(Reconsidered)

(No. 245)

(Approved November 11, 2006)

AN ACT

To add a new Subsection (f) and rename the present Subsection (f) as Subsection (g) of Section 4 and amend Subsection (c) of Section 6 of Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, as amended, known as the “Act for the Integral Development of the Special Communities of Puerto Rico,” so that the “The Puerto Rico Special Communities Socio-Economic Development Fund,” created under Section 6 of Act No. 1, id. may be used to promote the creation of training centers for non-traditional trades that will incorporate the unemployed women of the special communities and help in the coordination of and search for government or private funds to subsidize the initial establishment of new self owned businesses.

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

According to a report published in 2001 by the United Nations Program for Development in Relation to the Celebration of the International Women’s Day, in no country in the world do the women get the same treatment or are given the same opportunities as the men. In Puerto Rico we have been able to overcome many barriers and make strides in the labor field. The participation of the women in the labor force is of thirty-five (35) percent even when they constitute fifty-two (52) percent of the population. Out of every twenty (20) women, six (6) are under the poverty line and more than forty (40) percent of the unemployed women are found in that category. However, employment discrimination persists and many occupations remain segregated because of gender. In comparison with the men, the women hold

less compensated and distinguished positions and have fewer opportunities for developing and progressing. Women are not directly represented at the management and supervisory levels and receive lesser pay when they reach positions generally held by the men.

The Women's Advocate of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has stated that "One of the remedial measures has been the "Guaranteed Equal Employment Opportunities for the Sexes Act," Act No. 212 of August 3, 1999. This law orders the Public Agencies and Instrumentalities to develop and implement Affirmative Action Plans to guarantee that there be no discrimination against any person employed or who aspires to employment because of his/her gender. Laws such as this very effectively attempt to establish social justice through measures that lead towards the achievement of equal opportunities. These preventive plans constitute a body of specific actions that are part of the managerial efforts that respond to the need for creating and fostering significant employment opportunities for qualified persons who have traditionally been excluded from availing themselves of said opportunities or who have not received equal treatment as others.

There are impediments to the opening of opportunities. Family responsibilities or the concept that there are certain jobs that are only proper for women and which are also considered to be of lesser importance, are some of the barriers that prevent women from reaching the same employment level as the men.

Comparing the opportunities and treatment that the women and the men have had throughout history offers no doubts as to the persistence of the various manifestations of discrimination and inequality between both genders among which the restrictions and high demands that are still imposed against women regarding their access to employment and their

vocational and profession development are still perpetuated. Thus, the need to devise and implement policies of great magnitude to intervene at all levels where discrimination operates.

To offer women training in non-traditional trades as a novel alternative for improving their living conditions guarantees that they shall be able to work in different spheres of employment and surmount stereotypes. To promote the creation of training centers for non-traditional trades would give the women from the special communities the opportunity of establishing small businesses in the same community in which they reside. There are many unemployed young women and women who have lost their jobs in these communities whose real probabilities for successfully competing when looking for employment are at present limited.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF PUERTO RICO:

Section 1.-A new Subsection (f) is hereby added and the present Subsection (f) renamed as Subsection (g) of Section 4 of Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, as amended, known as the “Act for the Integral Development of the Special Communities of Puerto Rico,” to read as follows:

“Section 4.-Functions and Duties of the Office

The Office shall have the responsibility to implement the public policy set forth in this Act. To attain it, the Office shall coordinate the government efforts for the social and economic development of the special communities and to obtain the following objectives:

- a. ...
- b. ...
- c. ...
- d. ...
- e. ...

f. collaborate in coordinating the search for government or private funds to subsidize the initial establishment of an individual's own business; and,

g. adopt, in coordination with the Special Communities Council, the norms and regulations needed for its operation.”

Section 2.-Subsection (c) of Section 6 of Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, as amended, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 6.-The Puerto Rico Special Communities Socio- Economic Development Fund.

The ‘Puerto Rico Special Communities Socio-Economic Development Fund’ is hereby created. The Fund shall be nourished from appropriations made by the Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, from other public funds, including, among others, for capital improvements, other Commonwealth and Federal funds that are appropriated or granted, and contributions made to it by individuals and entities of the private sector. The Special Communities Council shall administer this Fund. The money deposited into the Fund shall be used for the following purposes, among others:

a. ...

b. ...

c. Promote activities to finance economic and self-management development, loans, guarantees, investments, financial aid, training and technical support to guarantee the success of these endeavors and to promote the creation of non-traditional trades training centers for the unemployed women of the special communities.”

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. 245 (H.B. 1523) of the 4th Session of the 15th Legislature of Puerto Rico:

AN ACT to add a new Subsection (f) and rename the present Subsection (f) as Subsection (g) of Section 4 and amend Subsection (c) of Section 6 of Act No. 1 of March 1, 2001, as amended, known as the “Act for the Integral Development of the Special Communities of Puerto Rico,” so that the “The Puerto Rico Special Communities Socio-Economic Development Fund,” etc.,

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

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

Francisco J. Domenech
Director