



**PHILIPPINE LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION, INC. (PLAI)**  
Member, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)  
Member, Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL)  
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November 14, 2017

**HON. ALICIA DELA ROSA-BALA**  
Chairman  
Civil Service Commission

Dear Madam:

The Philippine Librarians Association Inc. is the accredited and integrated professional association of license librarians in the country. Since the passage of Republic Act 6966, the first law that regulates the practice of librarianship in 1991, librarianship profession has been recognized and regulated by the Professional Regulations Commission. In 2003, RA 6966 was repealed with RA 9246 or otherwise known as Philippine Librarianship Act of 2003. Both laws define the roles of librarians and the exclusivity in the use of the term "librarian".

Last April of this year, the librarianship profession was surprised with the appointment of the National Library Director who is a non-license. With this, our members were bothered since these would affect the image and the status of librarians especially on the issue of who are allowed to manage a library.

In this regard, the National Board of Trustees of the Philippine Librarians Association Inc. is submitting to your office the "Statement of Concern" on the issue of appointing someone in a government library like the National Library of the Philippines who is not a librarian by profession as the head of the agency.

Please find attached Statement of Concern.

We hope that the Statement of Concern will be considered in the light of the implementation of RA9246.

Very truly yours,

**MICHAEL A. PINTO, RL**  
President





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## PLAI STATEMENT OF CONCERN

Through the years since its founding in 1923, the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. has constantly advanced the cause of Philippine Librarianship as a profession. With the enactment of the Philippine Librarianship Act, Republic Act No. 8986, on 19 September 1990, the library profession underwent rigorous regulation by the Professional Regulation Commission, prescribing the qualifications and competencies of librarians employed in libraries of both private and government institutions. To further the interests of the library industry in modernizing the practice of Librarianship, this law was superseded by the Philippine Librarianship Act of 2003 (RA 9246), in recognition of the essential role of librarianship as a tool for national development to "...promote and nurture the professional growth and well-being of competent, virtuous, productive and well-rounded librarians whose standards of practice and service shall be characterized by excellence, quality, and geared towards world-class global competitiveness."

For twenty-seven (27) long years, the law has mandated that all libraries in both private and public institutions shall be run by professional librarians. And since the passage of the law, the National Library of the Philippines has been run by a duly licensed professional librarian, as Director, namely, Adoracion Mendoza-Bolos, Prudenciana C. Cruz, and the late Atty. Antonio M. Santos, all license librarians.

It is therefore understandable for the Association to consider the recent appointment of the incumbent Director who is a non-librarian as a major setback in the history of our long struggle for recognition as a profession.

Below are some of the concerns:

- 1) The NLP is considered a main government library, acting as the repository of information on the country's culture. **Rep. Act No. 9246, Section 31 on Employment of Librarians** states that *"Only qualified and licensed librarians shall be employed as librarians in all government libraries. Local government units shall be given a period of three (3) years from the approval of this Act to comply with this provision"*. While recognizing and respecting the prerogative of the President of the Philippines to appoint the person of his choice, we are deeply concerned about the implications of the appointment of a non-librarian as Director of the NLP, who may be qualified in all other respects except for what we consider the most basic one: that the appointee be a licensed librarian:

*First*, the appointment of a non-librarian to the highest post in the main library in the country may have an adverse effect in that other government agencies may take this as precedent to the appointment of non-librarians in their own institutions library; and

*Second*, since the Local Government Unit heads have been accorded with a wide latitude of discretion, the association is likewise concern that more non-librarians may be placed in LGU operated libraries, drawing justification from the appointment of a non-librarian as NLP Director; and

*Third*. If government itself can set aside the provisions of Rep. Act No. 9246, what would prevent private institutions, such as schools, academic and corporations from appointing non-librarians as heads of their respective libraries.

- 2) Rep. Act No. 9246 was enacted by the Legislative Department for a reason and, we believe that the purpose for which this law was enacted will be subverted by the appointment of a non-librarian to the position of Director of the National Library of the Philippines.



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- 3) Further, the association believes that a librarian at the head of the NLP is essential for the functioning of this institution in accordance with its mandate.

Mindful of these concerns, the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. hereby raises these concerns to the Professional Regulation Commission and the Civil Service Commission to review Republic Act No. 9248 in the appointment of a career executive service position as a Bureau Director without the essential requisite of a license.

We firmly believe that adherence to the law should take precedence and should be exercised consistently at all times in order to avoid setting a precedent that would have unlicensed professionals appointed to librarian positions.

**By the National Board of Trustees**