

Congress of the
Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3837

Introduced by **HONORABLE REENA CONCEPCION G. OJILLO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to give free college education to all qualified and deserving Filipino students throughout the country.

The initiative was previously introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez on October 1, 2007 as the Philippine Free College Education System Act of 2007. He would later propose the Regional Subsidized College Education Program on July 1, 2009 but time ran out for a substitute bill at the close of the Fourteenth Congress. This merely delayed the passage of this very crucial piece of legislation and we believe that the moment of free college education in the Philippines has come.

The Constitution provides that "the State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development" and that it "shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all." The right to education is also recognized as a fundamental human right under Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the international organization that collects data for the United Nations, estimated in 2004 that nearly 1 in 6 people in the world or 800 million people need access to quality education. It is believed that one of the major causes of illiteracy is poverty. Students who would have gone on to continue their education sometimes quit school in order to work on the farm or in a factory in order to help with the family income. Also, to a poor family the basic necessities of life come before books and other educational materials.

According to the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS), a national survey that gathers information on basic and functional literacy status of the population conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in coordination with the Literacy Coordinating (LCC) and Department of Education

(DepEd), 11.6 million of 34 million population aged 6-24 were not attending school. Of this number, 30 percent were not attending school mainly because they were working or looking for work and 20 percent could not afford high cost of education. This indicates that half of those who are not attending school were too poor to do so.

In light of this we are introducing this bill guaranteeing free college education which aims to help specifically students who are financially incapable but are otherwise determined to complete their college education.

As the new administration struggles to provide basic services in the face rising costs and widespread poverty, fewer and fewer students are able to afford to go to college, much less finish with a degree. It does not help that government has failed to slow down the rise in tuition and other school fees.

It is said that providing quality education is the most important function of government. To perform this function government needs to institute a free college education system that grants free tuition, allowances and supports medical or hospitalization expenses for any four-year course.

By instituting a free college education system in our country we will help more Filipinos realize their dream of receiving a diploma and the hope of securing a better future.

In view thereof, the approval of this bill is highly recommended.

Reena
13 DEC 10

REENA CONCEPCION G. BILLO
Representative
1 Ang Pamilya Party-list

House of Representatives

HOUSE BILL NO. 3837

Introduced by HONORABLE REENA CONCEPCION G. OBILLO

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION THROUGH THE
REGIONAL SUBSIDIZED COLLEGE EDUCATION PROGRAM, DEFINING IT'S
IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES, RULES AND REGULATIONS AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines
in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** This Act shall be known as the "**Philippine Free**
2 **College Education Act of 2010**".
3

4 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** It is hereby declared the policy of the
5 State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will free the people from
6 poverty through policies that provide adequate social service, a rising standard of
7 living and an improved quality of life for all.
8

9 Further, it is the policy of the State to give priority to education, science
10 and technology, arts, culture and sports to foster patriotism, nationalism, accelerate
11 social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.
12

13 **SECTION 3. *Institution of a Free College Education System.*** There is
14 hereby instituted a free college education system in the country through the Regional
15 Subsidized College Education Program under the Commission on Higher Education
16 (CHED) which shall be open to all qualified and deserving Filipino students. It shall
17 comprise the following:

- 18 (a) Free tuition and all school expenses in any four-year college course
19 leading to degrees in Liberal Arts such as Communication Arts,
20 Journalism, Humanities Philosophy, Political Science, and Legal
21 Management; Literature and in Science courses such as Education,

Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Nursing, Business Management and Administration and Accounting, among others.

(b) Sustained provision for books, subsistence, clothing and transportation allowances; and,

(c) Contingent provision for medical or hospitalization expenses.

SECTION 4. Role of the Commission on Higher Education. The CHED shall be in charge of determining the qualified beneficiaries under this Act through its Office of Student Services (OSS). The CHED Chairman shall include in the regular functions of the OSS the following powers and functions:

(a) To formulate, administer, manage and implement the Regional Subsidized College Education Program envisioned in this Act with the end view of providing free college education to poor students;

(b) To determine and designate private colleges or universities in every region which may qualify to participate in the program as well as the number of student beneficiaries who may be enrolled in such institutions;

(c) To prepare and submit the budgetary requirements under the program based on the preceding fiscal year with the upward adjustment not exceeding ten (10%) percent. *Provided*, however, that upon the implementation of the program, the budget shall be based on the amount allocated therein;

(d) To tap, deputize and enlist the services of the regular personnel of the CHED, in every region as may be necessary to implement the program and enforce such rules and regulations as he/she may determine;

(e) To submit monthly operational reports to the Chairman of the CHED and the Oversight and Education Committees of Congress on the performance of the beneficiaries, their expenses and, matters as may aid in ascertaining the effectivity and viability of the program;

(f) To appoint additional personnel as may be necessary to effectively carry out the objectives of the program in all the regions; *Provided*, however, that they are civil service eligibles and with adequate educational background or training; and,

(g) To promulgate such rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. Courses. The Regional Subsidized College Education Program shall initially cover four-year degree courses in the Liberal Arts, such as Communications Arts, Journalism, Humanities, Philosophy, Political Science, and,

1 Legal Management; Literature and in Science courses such as Education,
2 Economics, Psychology, Sociology, Nursing, Business Management and
3 Administration and Accounting, among others hereafter. The CHED shall propose
4 additional courses as it may deem appropriate at the proper time.

5 **SECTION 6. *Qualification Requirements of Student Beneficiaries.*** A
6 student applicant may qualify as beneficiary of the program provided that he/she
7 meets the following requirements;

- 8 (a) He/She must be a Filipino citizen;
- 9
- 10 (b) He/She must have passed the admission test given by the HEI;
- 11 (c) He/She or the parents do not own any property;
- 12
- 13 (d) He/She and the parents do not have a combined total gross income of
14 One Hundred Thousand Pesos (100,000.00) per annum; and,
- 15
- 16 (e) He /She shall not leave the country within five years after graduation or
17 passing the government examination, whichever is later.
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19 **SECTION 7. *Limitations.*** The right of any college students to avail
20 himself/herself of the privileges under this Act shall not apply if;

- 21
- 22 (a) He/She fails for one(1) semester in the majority of the academic subjects
23 in which he/she has enrolled in during the course of his/her study, unless
24 such failure is due to some valid causes beyond his/her control;
- 25
- 26 (b) He/She fails to finish his/her course within two (2) years after the year
27 within which he/she should have graduated;
- 28
- 29 (c) He/She stops schooling for one(1) school year, unless such is due to
30 some valid causes beyond his/her control; and,
- 31
- 32 (d) He/She is convicted of any crime.
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34 **SECTION 8. *Role of the CHED Regional Offices (CHEDROs).*** The
35 CHED Regional Offices shall, upon admission of the beneficiary students, compute
36 and determine the school fees, cost of textbooks, allowances, transportation and
37 other expenses which must be submitted to the central office upon approval,
38 distribute or disburse them when due: *Provided*, that allowances and transportation
39 shall be disbursed at monthly intervals.

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41 **SECTION 9. *Participating Public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).***
42 Initially, the public HEIs that will offer the facilities and services for the system are
43 as follows:

- 1 (a) The University of the Philippines System;
2 (b) Philippine Normal University;
3 (c) Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila;
4 (d) Polytechnic University of the Philippines; and,
5 (e) Other government and owned and controlled universities and colleges
6 situated in various provinces in the Philippines.

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8 **SECTION 10. *Role of Private HEIs.*** The program shall involve private
9 HEIs in every region as duly accredited under the program. Any private HEI
10 submitting the lowest bid on the cost to be incurred for a four (4) year course
11 covered by the program shall be accredited. Upon accreditation, the private HEI shall
12 allocate twenty percent (20%) of its total enrolment for each year for admission of the
13 qualified student beneficiaries. The HEI shall compute and determine the amount
14 needed to cover the school fees, textbooks, allowances, transportation and other
15 school expenses and shall submit the same to the concerned CHEDRO.

16 **SECTION 11. *Regional Subsidized College Education Fund.*** Within
17 sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, The CHED shall establish Regional
18 Subsidized College Education Fund to be taken from funds not otherwise
19 appropriated but included in the proposed 2010 General Appropriations Act to cover
20 the tuition, miscellaneous and other school fees and other educational expenses of
21 qualified students under the Regional Subsidized College Education Program.

22
23 **SECTION 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** The CHED shall,
24 within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, issue such rules and regulations
25 necessary for the proper implementation of this Act.

26 **SECTION 13. *Appropriations.*** The amount of Three Billion
27 Pesos(P3,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated to carry out the purposes of this
28 Act to be taken from funds not otherwise appropriated but included in the proposed
29 2011 General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its
30 continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations
31 Act.

32
33 **SECTION 14. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act is held
34 invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected shall continue to be in full
35 force and in effect.

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37 **SECTION 15. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, presidential decrees,
38 executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with
39 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
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1 **SECTION 16. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
2 its publications in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
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4 **Approved.**