



Sixteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **3591**

Introduced by Honorable Emmanuel D. Pacquiao

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the Wireless Internet Access Program in all state universities and colleges in the country and appropriating funds therefor.

Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution states: "*The State 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.*"

Filipinos have always placed a high value on quality education. However, "high quality education" usually refers to better learning facilities and expensive tuition fees. Being so, high quality education is deemed accessible only to those with financial means and who are enrolled mostly in private learning institutions. Public schools, including state universities and colleges (SUCs) where poor but deserving Filipino students go, often lag behind their private counterparts in providing their students and teachers technology driven equipment that could increase their capacity to achieve quality education. Hence, students in SUCs who are competitive intellectually become disadvantaged when it comes to access to relevant information due to lack of facilities, one of which is wireless internet connection within the campus. Students who cannot afford to subscribe to internet plans resort to spending time in places that offer free wireless internet such as coffee shops, restaurants and internet cafes instead of staying in school.

This student behavior is understandable given the hunger for knowledge that permeates our society nowadays. The emergence of information technology and

globalization has dramatically changed human behavior. This has led to an information revolution that exposed people to tremendous amounts of sophisticated knowledge. Compared to a few decades ago, the world now runs via information highways and access to this network of information has never been as important. All sectors demand higher levels of skills in all aspects of life, such as in the school, the workplace and business. The old methods that guided education in previous decades have become obsolete. To excel, an individual now has to be properly abreast of the advanced and complex methods of data gathering, processing and reporting offered by the World Wide Web.

Through this proposed measure, I am certain that there will be substantial improvements in the performance of students in SUCs. In an article published on the Philippine Daily Inquirer in November 2011, Secretary Armin Luistro of the Department of Education stated that, *"it is not enough that we merely continue building classrooms and toilets. The real revolution in education which has long-term effects can only be done through information technology."*

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.



EMMANUEL D. PACQUIAO

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**AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS PROGRAM IN
ALL STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN THE COUNTRY AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Wireless Internet (WI) Access Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Towards this end, the State shall establish the Wireless Internet Access Program in all state universities and colleges throughout the country by providing wireless internet connection facilities, training personnel about applications and developing a system for its effective implementation.

SEC. 3. ***Wireless Internet Access Program.*** – There shall be established the Wireless Internet Access Program, hereinafter referred to as the Program, in all state universities and colleges (SUCs) throughout the country. The Information and Communications Technology Office (ICTO) under the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall formulate, establish and maintain the Program to provide wireless internet access to students, faculty members and other non-teaching personnel in the SUCs and to ensure that the connectivity requirements of the SUCs are met in an efficient and effective manner.

SEC. 4. ***Objectives.*** – The Program shall have the following objectives:

- a) Provide a network for a reliable wireless internet connection and access to students, faculty members and non-teaching personnel in all SUCs which shall promote easy access to information and services relevant to education;
- b) Improve learning techniques through cost-efficient and productivity-enhancing methods with the use of the wireless internet;
- c) Modernize the delivery of information to the students through the use and application of information and communications technology;
- d) Upgrade the capabilities of SUCs relevant to valuable educational materials; and
- e) Make the SUCs technologically competitive and at par with other educational institutions around the world.

SEC. 5. ***Program Director.*** – Prior to the implementation of this Act on the academic year immediately after its approval, all SUCs shall each appoint a Program Director who shall be the lead person in charge of all activities necessary for the determination, implementation and management of the Program in their respective campuses. The Program Director shall be an expert in the field of information and communications technology, particularly, on wireless internet access administration.

SEC. 6. ***Duties and Functions.*** – The Program Director shall exercise the following duties and functions:

- a) Execute and administer the plans and projects for the realization of the objectives set forth in this Act;
- b) Direct and supervise the operation and internal administration of the Program and, for this purpose, delegate some of the powers and duties to appropriate subordinate personnel;
- c) Select and, in coordination with their respective SUCs and the Department of Budget and Management, fix the number and compensation of personnel necessary to implement the provisions of this Act, subject to civil service laws, rules and regulations;
- d) Receive donations, grants or any form of aid from local or foreign donors relative to the Program, ensure that said donations, grants or aids are used

for their intended purpose, make a report and submit the same to the proper SUC authorities;

e) Coordinate closely with the ICTO regarding the training of necessary personnel, improvement of the program design and other related matters that require the expertise of the ICTO; and

f) Perform such other duties and functions that are proper or necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Access.* – All students, faculty members and non-teaching personnel of all SUCs in the country shall be allowed access to a wireless internet connection within the premises of their respective universities or colleges. For purposes of security and unauthorized use of the free wireless internet connection, restrictions with regard to its use shall be imposed in the form of passwords and other similar mechanisms, which shall be readily provided to the student, faculty member or non-teaching personnel upon request.

SEC. 8. *Places of Access.* – All SUCs shall ensure that access to the wireless internet connection is available anytime at common areas such as, but not limited to, classrooms, libraries, auditoriums, main lobbies, student lounges, and faculty and administrative offices of each distinct and separate publicly-accessible building within the premises of the university or college.

SEC. 9. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Science and Technology shall, in coordination with the Chairperson of the Information and Communications Technology Office, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 10. ***Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act is hereby charged from the current appropriations for the Department of Science and Technology. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 11. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, ordinances, rules and regulations and other issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,