

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4701



Introduced by HONORABLE STRIKE B. REVILLA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article 14, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that:

“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.”

In line with this constitutional mandate and following the realignment of the P8.3 billion in the proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budget to remove tuition fees in state universities and colleges (SUCs) next year, this bill seeks to ensure that the policy would be institutionalized and implemented in the succeeding years.

Tertiary education is a valuable key that can help Filipino families break out of the poverty cycle, as families headed by tertiary degree holders earn, on average, two times as much as families who do not have postsecondary education.

In the Philippines, 2 out of 5 high school graduates do not pursue tertiary education, hindered by the high tuition fees in addition to miscellaneous expenses incurred while studying. After all the hard work and sacrifices to obtain a high school diploma, it is often a disappointment to students who face the choice between working to help their family or sacrificing the education of other siblings so that one may be sent to college.

In a nation with glaring income and educational inequality, the provision of tuition-free college education will be one great leap to empower economically and socially the poor and low-income Filipino families to fully participate in our democracy. A college education is not only a qualification that results in higher paying jobs, but it is most importantly a means of leveling the field, developing knowledge, innovation and social change in our nation.

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


REP. STRIKE B. REVILLA
2nd District, Cavite

Introduced by **HONORABLE STRIKE B. REVILLA**

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A FULL TUITION FEE SUBSIDY FOR STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (SUCs), AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Free Higher Education for All Act.”

SEC 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared that accessible and quality education is an inalienable right of the Filipino. Therefore, the state shall renew its constitutionally mandated duty to make education its top budgetary priority by providing free higher education for all students in state universities and colleges.

SEC 3. Eligibility to the Full Tuition Subsidy. - All Filipino citizens who are either currently enrolled at the time of effectivity of this Act, or shall enroll at any time thereafter, in courses in pursuance of a bachelor’s degree, certificate degree, or any comparable undergraduate degree in any state university or college shall be exempt from paying tuition fees; *Provided*, That they meet the admission requirements of the SUCs where they intend to enroll in.

SEC. 4. Exceptions to the Full Tuition Subsidy. - The provisions of the next preceding Section of this Act notwithstanding the following are hereby disqualified and deemed ineligible for the full tuition subsidy:

- a. Persons who have already attained a bachelor’s degree or equivalent degree from any higher education institution, whether public or private;
- b. Persons who have been dishonorably discharged from any higher education institution, whether public or private, for any reason other than financial difficulty in paying tuition and other fees;
- c. Persons who have been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude;
- d. Persons who fail to regain good academic standing within their respective state universities and colleges after one (1) year upon being placed on academic probation or delinquent status.

SEC. 5. Special Tuition Subsidy Fund. – The Special Tuition Subsidy Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Fund, is hereby established. The Fund shall be used solely for the purpose of implementing the full tuition subsidy under the provisions of this Act. Tuition fees for units enrolled by persons eligible for the tuition benefit under the provisions of this Act, payable to state universities and colleges, shall be paid from this Fund.

SEC. 6. Administration of the Fund. – The Fund shall be administered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and shall have the following powers and functions:

- a. Manage and administer the Fund;
- b. Devise a reporting mechanism to be implemented by the state universities and colleges which will detail the exact amount of tuition fee subsidy availed of by the persons eligible for the full tuition subsidy under this Act;
- c. Formulate and implement an efficient and transparent mechanism to ensure the payment of tuition fees, using money from the Fund, to the respective state universities and colleges, pursuant to this Act;
- d. Resolve and mediate disputes concerning the ineligibility or disqualification of persons from the full tuition subsidy under the provisions of this Act or any other provision of this law; and
- e. Any other powers or functions necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. Tuition Report. – The President of each state university or college shall submit to the CHED, within five (5) days after the last day of late registration for each semester, a report detailing the names of persons eligible for the full tuition subsidy in their institution, as well as the amount of tuition fee due based on the number of units enrolled.

SEC. 8. Payment from the Fund. – The CHED shall ensure the full payment of tuition fees due to the state university or college, as reported under the next preceding section of this Act, no later than thirty (30) days after the submission of the report to the CHED; *Provided*, That the CHED shall reserve the right to withhold or disallow the payment of any reported fees which are perceived to be anomalous or irregular until further investigation has been conducted.

SEC. 9. Accountability Report. – At the end of each academic semester, the President of each university or college shall submit to CHED a report reconciling the funds received from the Fund. Any unused or improperly disbursed amount shall be returned immediately to the Fund.

SEC. 10. Midterm Report. – Starting the first school year upon effectivity of this Act, the CHED shall conduct a mandatory review and submit a midterm report to Congress as to the status of implementation of this Act.

In this midterm report, the following key metrics of access to and quality of public tertiary education:

- a. Enrollment rate;
- b. Student demographics;
- c. Graduation rate;
- d. Gross tuition receipts;
- e. Disqualification and ineligibility;
- f. Teacher's welfare and training profiles;
- g. Adequacy of funding and training profiles;
- h. Other educational quality indicators, including but not limited to physical learning infrastructures, teacher-to-student ratio and student housing.

SEC. 11. Appropriations. – There is hereby appropriated for the current fiscal year, and annually thereafter, with ten (10) percent increase per annum, out of any fund in the Philippine Treasury or other depository not otherwise appropriated, including special and corporate funds, such sums as may be necessary to pay the Special Tuition Subsidy Fund under this Act.

SEC. 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED shall promulgate the Implementing rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 13. Separability Clause. – Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

SEC. 14. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, and regulations or other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,