

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5073



Introduced by Representative Salvador B. Belaro, Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The additional Eight Billion Pesos (P8B) earmarked for scholarships in state universities in the 2017 national budget is a dream come true for advocates of free higher education. The problem is that it may only last for one year and thus, there is a need for a regular allocation in the yearly budget to sustain a free college education system in state universities. That way, it will be ensured that financially disadvantaged students will have access to college education.

However, there is also a need to ensure that the courses offered in our state universities are those that are responsive to the needs of the economy, those that are needed by our industries, and those that are in accordance with our development goals.

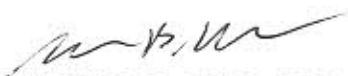
For instance, our country needs more courses relating to science and technology to accelerate industrialization in the country. Our country also needs courses, including vocational and short-courses relating to computer science, information technology, tourism and a lot more courses needed by our various industries with due regard to the varying requirements of the different regions in our country. Then, let us not also forget the requirements of our agriculture, fisheries, maritime and other industrial sectors.

In adopting a free college education system for our state universities, we have no choice but to rationalize the course offerings in our state universities so that they would prioritize courses relevant to the requirements of our economy and are reflective of the country's development goals lest we unwittingly contribute to the widening of the "education gap".

The education gap is the phenomenon whereby around 600,000 graduates of our universities end up being unemployed because of, among others, the mismatch of their courses to the requirements of our industries.

If we are to provide an indiscriminate system of free college education in our state universities, our colleges and universities will be producing more of the same graduates and will just exacerbate the education gap.

Thus, it is the objective of this act to propose a rationalized free college education system which prioritizes courses required by the needs of our economy and our industries, in accordance with our developmental goals.



SALVADOR B. BELARO, JR.
Representative
1-Ang Edukasyon Party List

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5073

Introduced by Representative Salvador B. Belaro, Jr.

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR A FREE HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND STATE-RUN
TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTES BASED ON COURSE AND
PROGRAM OFFERINGS RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OUR
ECONOMY AND OUR INDUSTRIES, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH
OUR DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS

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 “Rationalized Free Higher and Technical Education Act of 2016”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policies. –

a) It is hereby declared that every citizen has a right to quality education at all levels of education and that it is the duty of the State to protect and promote such right and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

b) In the development of educational policies and programs, the State shall take into account regional and sectoral needs, among others.

c) Science and technology are essential for national development and progress. The State shall give priority to research and development, invention, innovation, and their utilization; and to science and technology education, training and services.

d) The goals of the national economy are a more equitable distribution of opportunities, income and wealth; a sustained increase in the amount of goods and services produced by the nation for the benefit of the people; and an expanding productivity as the key to raising the quality of life for all, especially the underprivileged.

e) The State shall promote industrialization and full employment based on sound agricultural development and agrarian reform, through industries that make full and efficient use of human and natural resources, and which are competitive in both domestic and foreign markets. In the pursuit of these goals, all sectors of the economy and all the regions of the country shall be given optimum opportunity to develop.

f) The sustained development of a reservoir of national talents consisting of Filipino scientists, entrepreneurs, professionals, managers, high-level technical manpower and skilled workers and craftsmen in all fields shall be promoted by the State.

SEC. 3. Free Higher Education in State Universities and Colleges and State-Run Technical-Vocational Institutes.- Every Filipino citizen shall be exempt from paying tuition fees and all other miscellaneous fees in pursuing a bachelor's degree or any comparable undergraduate degree in any state university or college provided that he passes all the admission requirements of such state university and college and provided that his course is a priority course as defined in Section 4 below.

Every Filipino citizen also has the right to enroll free of any charge in any post-secondary technical –vocational education and training (TVET) leading to non-degree certificate and diploma programs offered by any state-run technical-vocational institute (TVI) under the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) provided that he passes the admission requirements of such state-run TVIs and provided that his program is a priority program as defined in Section 4 below.

SEC. 4. Priority Courses and Priority Programs. – The Commission on Higher Education, in collaboration with the National Economic Development Authority shall be tasked to come up with a list of priority courses with due regard to the

requirements of the national economy and our industries, and in accordance with our country's developmental goals.

Likewise, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), in collaboration with the National Economic Development Authority shall be tasked to come up with a list of priority programs with due regard to the requirements of the national economy and our industries, and in accordance with our country's developmental goals.

SEC.5. *Appropriations.* - The initial amount of Thirty Billion Pesos (P30,000,0000.00) for the initial year of implementation and thereafter, such amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act .

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Skills and Development Authority (TESDA), in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism, and other relevant stakeholders in higher and technical education , are herein mandated to formulate the rules and regulations necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, orders, issuances rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.