

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

5304
HOUSE BILL No.: _____



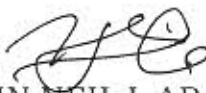
Introduced by **Representative HARLIN NEIL J. ABAYON III**
AANGAT TAYO Party-list

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to provide free tuition fee for students in State Universities and Colleges. It has been a reality that many college students were unable to pursue their higher education due to financial constraints or the need to work and earn for the family. The financial difficulties of many Filipino families that simply cannot afford to send their children to college deprives them of a powerful tool, a college degree, to lift themselves out of poverty.

Given the glaring individual and social advantages of higher education, it would be greatly beneficial to disadvantaged and poor Filipino families if higher education would be reformed by institutionalizing a tuition-free tertiary education. This revolutionary reform in our educational system will ensure poor but deserving young Filipinos a rightful opportunity to pursue and finish a college degree.

Thus, immediate approval of this landmark legislation is earnestly sought.


HARLIN NEIL J. ABAYON III

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No.: **5304**

Introduced by **Representative HARLIN NEIL J. ABAYON III**
AANGAT TAYO Party-list

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE TUITION FEE FOR STUDENTS IN STATE
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (SUCs)

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 Act.**”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It shall be the policy of the State to make higher education accessible to financially disadvantaged but deserving students. Toward this end, the State shall renew its constitutionally mandated duty to make education its top budgetary priority by providing free higher education for students in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).

SEC. 3. *Free Tuition Fee.* All Filipino citizens who are either 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 SUC shall be exempt from paying tuition fees for any units enrolled thereof, unless they are disqualified by any provisions of law.

SEC. 4. *Exceptions.* The following shall be ineligible to avail the program:

- a. Persons who fail to regain good academic standing in their respective State universities and colleges after one (1) year upon being placed on academic probation or delinquent status;
- b. Persons who have been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude.

SEC. 5. *Fund.* The Special Tuition Fee Fund is hereby established and shall be used solely for the purpose of implementing the free tuition fee program under the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Administration of the Fund.* The Fund shall be administered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

SEC. 7. *Strengthening the Student Financial Assistance Programs (StuFAPs).* The CHED, through the UniFAST shall strengthen all scholarships, grants-in-aid, student loans, subsidies and other incentives to other educational expenses and cost of living allowance that will be incurred by students in pursuing higher education in SUCs.

SEC. 8. *Appropriations.* The amount of Ten Billion Pesos (P 10,000,000,000.00) is hereby initially appropriated from the Presidential Social Fund to implement the provisions of this Act. Thereafter, such amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within 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. 10. *Separability clause.* Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Repealing clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provision of 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 two (2) newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,