

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 7531



Introduced by Rep. Winston "Winnie" Castelo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is a matter of sound government policy to give equal access to quality education most especially at the college level to all newly-graduated high school students entering college freshmen year across the entire educational landscape, namely: those coming from private schools and more so from those coming from the public school system.

It is only in this way that such access to education – be that a right or a privilege for every young citizen in this country dubbed 'hope of our fatherland' – shall be truly democratic and a level playing field. Certainly, no student especially those who come from low-income groups should be worse disadvantaged in an emerging practice employed by some private universities or colleges that essentially violate these tenets of equal access and a level playing field. With this measure, no reservation fees should be demanded or such pre-enrolment fees be paid to any university or college collecting the same. Neither should any university or college demand from entering freshmen early submission of entrance requirements for the same to be non-retractable.

A problem quite serious has emerged in our midst. This is the case of a negative externality, quite unforeseen that had been created by the delay in the release of the results of so-called UPCAT or the UP College Admission Test which apparently some universities or colleges that likewise administered their own college admission tests have taken advantage of. Thus, some universities or colleges resorted to demanding for reservation fees that in all consideration is not a petty amount. Worse, it is an amount that is not refundable for those who likewise passed the college admission tests of that university/college. Then what adds insult to injury is that at a date even earlier than the scheduled release of results of the UPCAT, such universities or colleges demand submission of entrance documents with the caveat that once submitted, students can no longer retrieve them should they later decide to enrol in UP when they found out that they qualified per UPCAT results. Effectively therefore, the chance to get at UP education is frustrated by the fact that another university/college entirely took advantage of the scenario – for its own interest, namely, profit thereby defeating the very purpose why universities or colleges are created.

This bill intends to divine wisdom by proposing henceforth a clear prohibition be set by either the DepEd or the CHED to proactively resolve this emerging problem that affect badly the plight of families in the lower income bracket. With such prohibition, it is expected to strongly democratize access to quality education at the college level, hence this humble submission. Approval of this instant bill is earnestly sought.


WINNIE CASTELO

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AN ACT
PROMOTING EQUAL ACCESS TO QUALITY COLLEGE EDUCATION AND A LEVEL
PLAYING FIELD ACROSS THE ENTIRE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND IMPOSING
APPROPRIATE SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "Equal Access and Level Playing Field at the College Level Act."

SEC. 2. There shall be appurtenant Circular/s immediately issued by DepEd or CHED and/or both to hereby prohibit one educational institution from taking advantage of another educational institution through an emerging practice that defeats equal access to quality education and a level playing field on the matter of enrolment to the detriment of aspiring or prospective college freshmen.

Provided Further That, all universities or colleges across the collegiate levels in the entire educational system shall henceforth have a uniform period of enrolment and standard policy, be that in a public or private university or college. Such policies will be issued by the cognizant implementing agency.

SEC. 3. The Department of Education and/or Commission on Higher Education shall coordinate and collaborate toward insuring that all newly-graduated high school students entering college will have equal opportunity to get enrolled in either a public or private university or college. To this end, the payment of reservation fees or submission of entrance requirements should follow a uniform schedule and practice across the entire college educational system as that which will be imposed by the implementing agency.

Provided Further That, any violation thereof shall be cause for DepEd or CHED to impose the corresponding sanctions it may deem appropriate against such university or college that violates the principles of this Act.

SEC. 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval, its publication in the Official Gazette, and in at least three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,