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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

**Eighteenth Congress**
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7426

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**Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go**

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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act 6728 and its expanded coverage through Republic Act 8545 were enacted to provide government assistance to students and teachers in private education in recognition of the government's constitutional mandate to maintain a system of grants, subsidies, and incentives to students not only in public but in private learning institutions as well.

As the State endeavors to fulfill its constitutional mandate to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and to ensure that such is accessible to all, it is high time to amend the more than two-decade old RA 8545 to cover students of private schools at the elementary level. At present, RA 8545 or the E-GASTPE Law grants tuition fee supplements only to students in private junior and senior high schools. Likewise, only teachers in private junior and senior high schools are benefited from the Teacher's Salary Subsidy Fund created in the said law. Meanwhile, underprivileged students and teachers in private elementary schools are left insecure without the privileges enjoyed by their high school counterparts.

The ongoing COVID19 pandemic has gravely affected the most vulnerable members of our population and the pandemic's direct blow is manifestly felt by the country's education sector. At the close of enrollment last July 15, 2020, The Department of Education (DepEd) recorded a significant plunge of about seven million students in basic education enrollment. Of the over 27.7 million private and public school students, only 20.7 million have actually enrolled for the upcoming academic calendar. Of these enrollees, only a little over a million registered in private schools. This year's private school enrollment is found to be only 25.3% of last year's figure. Furthermore, DepEd data also revealed that 328,862 students have transferred from private to public schools. These figures show that without the necessary government support, many private school students are forced to either transfer to public schools or to drop out of school in order to cope with the ongoing pandemic.

Enrollment dropout and exodus to public schools are challenges faced by private schools long before the pandemic, but are now palpably exacerbated by our present predicament. Private learning institutions play a significant role in nation building by partnering with public schools in shaping the country's future through the students.

Furthermore, the operation of private schools directly contributes in decongesting public schools and stimulating the economy. In multiple states, policies that either mandate or incentive class-size reduction have been promulgated, in pursuit of creating environments more conducive to learning, and reducing the burden on their teachers. By helping students to continue in their private school education, and granting public school students the option to transfer to private schools, the government can address the problems brought about by unregulated public school class sizes. Several studies have shown that maintaining smaller class sizes is an effective strategy in producing better academic outcomes for students and closing socioeconomically based achievement gaps.

In addition, the mounting financial burden due to the prolonged suspension of classes and the loss of revenues due to the recent mass exodus of students to public schools, threaten the continuous operation of many private schools. By expanding the grant of subsidies to cover private elementary school students, the government can prevent the imminent shutdown of private school enterprises which are active participants in the country's economic productivity and providers of gainful employment to teaching and non-teaching personnel and other service providers.

It is the State's responsibility to create a safety net for students who have fallen through the cracks in the country's education system. This bill seeks to address a gap in the system that has been exposed by the COVID19 pandemic. By amending RA 8545 to cover private school elementary students in the grant of subsidies, and to subsidize private elementary school teachers under the Teachers' Salary Subsidy Fund, the State takes a giant leap forward in ensuring the quality and accessibility of education in the Philippines at all levels.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate consideration and approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



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**AN ACT**
**EXPANDING THE ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8545, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "'EXPANDED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN PRIVATE EDUCATION ACT" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 4 of Republic Act No. 8545 otherwise known as the "Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

" SEC. 4. *Forms of Assistance.* — Assistance to private education shall consist of assistance to students and assistance to teachers.

"The following are forms of assistance to students in private education:

"(1) Tuition fee supplements for students in private ELEMENTARY AND high schools, including students in vocational and technical courses;

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"The following are forms of assistance to teachers and faculty in private education:

"(1) In-service training fund for teachers in private ELEMENTARY AND high schools; and

"(2) College Faculty Development Fund.

**SEC. 2.** Section 5 of RA 8545 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 5. *Tuition Fee Supplements for Students in Private High Schools.* — (1) Financial Assistance for tuition for students in private ELEMENTARY AND high schools shall be provided by the government through a voucher system in the following manner:

"(a) For students enrolled in schools charging an amount as may be determined by the State Assistance Council, the government shall provide them with a voucher in such an amount as may be determined by the council: Provided, That the government shall reimburse the vouchers from the schools concerned within one hundred twenty (120) days from the close of the registration period.

"(2) Assistance under paragraph (1), subparagraph (a) shall be guaranteed to all private ELEMENTARY AND high schools participating in the program for a number of slots as of the effectivity of this Act as the total number of students who availed of tuition fee supplements for school year 1997-1998: Provided, That the State Assistance Council may in subsequent years determine additional slots and/or additional participating high schools as may be deemed necessary.

**SEC. 3.** Section 7 (a) and (b) of RA 8545 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 7. *Expansion of the Existing Educational Service Contracting (ESC) Scheme.* — (a) The Department of Education[, Culture and Sports (DECS)] (DepEd), shall continue to enter into contracts with private schools whereby the government shall shoulder the tuition and other fees of students who shall enroll in private ELEMENTARY AND high school under this program.

"(b) The Department shall also enter into contracts with private schools in communities where there are no public ELEMENTARY AND high schools, in which case the Department shall shoulder the tuition and other fees of students who shall enroll in said private schools.

**SEC. 4.** Section 14 of RA 8545 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 14. *Teachers' Salary Subsidy Fund.* — A Teachers' Salary Subsidy Fund is hereby established in the [DECS] DepEd to grant government subsidy to teachers in private ELEMENTARY and JUNIOR high schools participating in the programs of assistance provided in this Act, AND TEACHERS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING THE SHS VOUCHER PROGRAM UNDER SEC. 10 OF RA 10533: *Provided*, That the total monthly salary which includes the subsidy to be received by such private ELEMENTARY AND high school teachers shall not be more than eighty percent (80%) of the salary of his counterpart in the public sector: *Provided, further*, That the amount of monthly subsidy shall not exceed the amount of any monthly salary increase that teachers in public high schools shall RECEIVED after the effectivity of this Act hereinafter receive: *Provided, further*, That private high school teachers qualified to receive subsidy under this Act are duly licensed by the Professional Regulation Commission: *Provided, further*, That the government shall provide them with a voucher for the salary subsidy which shall be reimbursed directly to the teachers within sixty (60) days after the close of the school year upon submission of proof of qualification and actual teaching service in a participating private ELEMENTARY AND high school: *Provided, further*, That the present allocation out of increases from tuition and other

income shall be maintained: *Provided, finally*, That in case of insufficiency of funds, priority shall be given to married teachers supporting a family.

**SEC. 5.** ***Repealing Clause.*** - Republic Act No. 8545 otherwise known as the "'Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act" is hereby amended. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 6.** ***Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved.*