



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4188



INTRODUCED BY REP. HARRIS CHRISTOPHER M. ONGCHUAN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

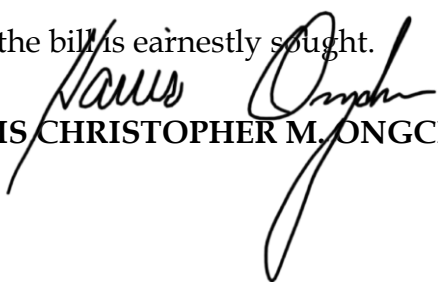
The universal access to quality tertiary education is a right cited in Section 1, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution, and therefore must be protected and made more accessible to all Filipinos regardless of gender, age, and especially social class.

This position is further supported by the 2030 Agenda, otherwise known as the Sustainable Development Goals, which was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. Fourth among the seventeen goals listed in this resolution is the universal access to quality education. With this in mind, it is the national interest to remove all barriers to quality education.

Although much progress was made in this advocacy, practices such as the issuance of college entrance exam fees continue to hinder many students from pursuing higher education. It should be the priority of the government to waive such fees for those who do not have the financial means, such as those living below the poverty line, and those who have proven themselves to be academically excellent.

This legislation proposes that all degree-offering higher education institutions in the undergraduate level waive college entrance exam fees to underprivileged high school graduates living below the poverty line, and to high school graduates belonging to the top ten percent (10%) of their batch. Furthermore, it will give the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) the power to sanction any Higher Education Institution that does not waive college entrance exam fees to those who qualify for this subsidy.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of the bill is earnestly sought.


HARRIS CHRISTOPHER M. ONGCHUAN



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Introduced by Representative
HARRIS CHRISTOPHER M. ONGCHUAN

AN ACT
MANDATING ALL HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO WAIVE THE
COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION FEES TO UNDERPRIVILEGED
GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATES BELONGING TO THE TOP TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE
GRADUATING CLASS WHO ARE APPLYING FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

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 College Entrance Examinations Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to expand and further democratize access to quality college education in higher education institutions (HEIs) by instituting mechanisms that promote the rights of the underprivileged and deserving high school graduates.

The exemption from the imposition of entrance examination fees is one such mechanism that shall ensure that underprivileged and deserving high school graduating students and high school graduates are given adequate assistance and equal opportunity to pursue their dreams of obtaining a college education.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act:

- a) *College entrance examinations* – refer to the examinations required and administered by higher education institutions on college entrants as one of the criteria for determining admission to a college degree program;
- b) *Higher education institution* – refers to an educational institution recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and is legally authorized to offer a program of education leading to the conferment of a degree; and
- c) *Underprivileged graduating high school students and graduates* – refer to graduating high school students or high school graduates entering college, whose parents live below the poverty line or belong to the poorest of the poor, as determined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the National Household Targeting System of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

SECTION 4. Waiver of Fees. – All HEIs offering degree-granting programs at the undergraduate level are hereby mandated to waive college entrance examination fees to underprivileged graduating high school students and high school graduates belonging to the top ten percent (10%) of the graduating class who are applying for college admission.

SECTION 5. Qualification Requirements. - A student shall become eligible as beneficiary under this Act when the following requirements are met:

- a) Must be a natural-born Filipino citizen;
- b) Must be a graduating high school student or a high school graduate belonging to the top ten percent (10%) of the graduating class entering college and intends to enroll in any HEI within the country; and
- c) Must have parents or guardians living below the poverty line, as determined by the NEDA and the DSWD.

SECTION 6. Sanctions. – The CHED shall reprimand any HEI official or employee and other concerned individuals violating Section 4 of this Act and impose disciplinary sanctions pursuant to its powers under Section 8 of Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994,” for a repetition of the same offense.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED shall, in coordination with the Department of Education and the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations of the Philippines, issue the necessary rules and regulations to fully implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. Separability Clause. - If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. Repealing Clause. - All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.