

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
2nd Regular Session

House Bill No. 9059



Introduced by Representatives ERIC G. YAP and EDVIC G. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It becomes alarming that the country's agricultural industry has suffered the largest employment drop in 2022. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the agricultural sector – agriculture, forestry, fishing, and aquaculture industries – had its share of total employment fall from 24.5 percent (9.7 million) in October 2020 and 24.6 percent (10.77 million) in October 2021 to 22.5 percent (10.60 million) in October 2022. After all, the PSA reports that country's farmers and fisherfolks remain to be the poorest in the country with a poverty incidence rate of 30.6% in 2021.

The Philippine Development Studies (PIDS) emphasizes that growing population, shrinking farm size and declining productivity have incentivized the shift out of agriculture. The PIDS further states that the correlation between average daily basic pay and level of education tends to be stronger in other sectors than agriculture which could attribute to the long-term movement of workers out of agriculture. Thus, initiatives in agricultural development shall not only be limited in increasing agricultural production and farming subsidies but also in incentivizing members of the agricultural sector, particularly through increasing the access of the sector's members and their families to education—a fundamental right affirmed under the 1987 Constitution.

In line with this agenda, this proposed measure seeks to grant free basic and tertiary education to children of farmers and fisherfolks. Following the implementation of the

Republic Act No. 10931 or *Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act* which provides free tuition and other school fees in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and other Local Universities and Colleges, the grant in this proposed measure will include all expenses for education, whether in public or private school, such as but not limited to tuition fees, miscellaneous and other fees, board and lodging, transportation expenses, allowances for books, clothing and food and other similar expenses.

The agricultural sector must not be left in disarray alone, or else, the shift out of the sector will continue and food security will be endangered. In addition to showing appreciation to the invaluable contribution of the agricultural, increasing the access to education of the sector's members will also uplift and motivate agricultural research that is vital in the sector's quest for development.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



HON. ERIC G. YAP



HON. EDVIC G. YAP

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR SCHOLARSHIP TO CHILDREN AND DEPENDENTS OF FARMERS AND FISHERFOLKS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "*Educational Scholarship for Children and Dependents of Farmers and Fisherfolks Act of 2023.*"

SEC. 2. *Full scholarship for Children and Dependents of Farmers.* - Children and dependents of farmers listed in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) shall be entitled to full scholarship from basic education until their completion of tertiary education subject to rules and regulations as mandated by this Act. The benefits shall include all expenses for education, whether in public or private school, such as but not limited to tuition fees, miscellaneous and other fees, board and lodging, transportation expenses, allowances for books, clothing and food and other similar expenses.

SEC. 3. *Special Fund for Educational Benefits.* - In order to carry out the provisions of this Act, there is hereby established a Special Fund, to be known as the "Educational Benefits for Farmers and Fisherfolks Fund," in the amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00). Such fund shall be perpetually maintained and used exclusively for the benefit of children and dependents of farmers; Provided, that not more than 5% of this Fund shall be used for the administration of the Special Fund.

SEC. 4. *Administration of the Fund.* - The Unified Student Financial Assistance for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Governing Board, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture and three (3) representatives from the farmers and fisherfolks selected from a verified procedure of selection as agreed upon by the farmers and fisherfolks, shall have the primary responsibility of managing and supervising the Fund. It shall also be responsible in formulating the mechanics, scope and limitations, and requirements for the scholarship program. The UniFAST

Secretariat shall serve as the Secretariat providing administrative support to the Board and shall perform functions as authorized by the UniFAST Board.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the UniFAST Board in consultation with the Department of Agriculture shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is 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,