Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **9986**



Introduced by Representative Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
GRANTING FREE TUITION FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ENROLLED IN GRADUATE EDUCATION MASTER'S PROGRAM AT STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the primordial policy of the State to protect and promote the rights of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. As such, Article XIV, Section 2 of the 1987 Constitution declared that the State shall establish and maintain a system of free public education in the elementary and high school levels, thus, our country's children have free basic education. Recently, Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2017," was passed providing for free tertiary education to bona fide students in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) regardless of the program or course they are enrolled. On the other hand, Republic Act No. 10157, otherwise known as "Kindergarten Education Law," made Kindergarten the compulsory and mandatory entry stage to basic education.

These recent legislations are a manifestation of the State's Constitutional mandate to deliver quality education at all levels. Thus, pursuance of this policy trajectory, this proposed legislation will provide free tuition to Master's students who are government employees, and who will be enrolling in SUCs.

This limitation of the segment of the population to be covered by this proposal is in consideration of the needed financial resources to successfully implement this

program. Moreover, this bill is in consonance with Republic Act No. 11032, otherwise known as the “Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018,” which called for the promotion of integrity, accountability, proper management of public affairs and public property as well as to establish effective practices, aimed at efficient turnaround of the delivery of government services and the prevention of graft and corruption in government. This bill will provide the necessary yet very important complementary support program of human resources development through the grant of higher education specializations, through a Master’s degree, to our bureaucrats and technocrats.

Given these overarching considerations to make our civil servants better educated professionals, the passage of this bill is thus earnestly sought.



Rep. JUDE A. ACIDRE
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Government Employees Free MA Tuition in SUCs Act."

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy*. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the enhanced professionalization of the civil service to further improve on the efficient delivery of the public services to the people. Further, the State shall likewise upgrade on its human resources to cope with the rapidly evolving societal and administrative requirements of a fast-moving polity. Towards this end, government workers, being an important component of the State's human resources, shall be given education advancement opportunities through adequate funding and such other mechanisms to improve their education levels, for the eventual benefit of the state bureaucracy in particular, and the country, in general.

Section 3. *Definition of Terms*. – As used in this Act:

(a) *Government employees* refer to those who are employed, whether classified as career, or non-career service positions, by the National Government or any of its political subdivision, instrumentalities, and agencies including government-owned and/or controlled corporations and local government units;

(b) *Graduate Education* refers to higher education programs leading to a master's degrees, as may be authorized and recognized by the Commission of Higher Education (CHED);

(c) A *Master's degree* refers to an academic qualification granted at the graduate education level to individuals who have successfully undergone study demonstrating a high level of expertise in a specific field of study or area of professional practice;

(d) *State universities and colleges (SUCs)* refers to the public higher educational institutions established by the national government and are governed by their respective independent boards of trustees or regents;

(e) *Tuition fees* refer to fees or school charges for subjects or course enrolled by a graduate education student;

Section 4. *Free Graduate Education for Government Employees in SUCs*. – All career and non-career service government employees are granted free tuition fee for all maximum of two-year master's program in any SUCs that they have successfully applied for: *Provided*, That non-career contractual government personnel must be employed for at least five (5) years at any time after the effectivity of this Act, to qualify for this program: *Provided, Further,* That the government employees pass the entrance examination and other admission and retention requirements of the SUCs: *Provided, Finally,* That the amount required to implement the free tuition fees in SUCs shall be determined by the respective governing boards of SUCs based on the projected number of enrollees for each academic years, which shall the primary factor in computing the annual proposed budget of SUCs. This shall in turn serve as a baseline during the preparation of the annual National Expenditure Program (NEP) by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Section 5. *Exceptions to the Grant of Free Graduate Education*. – The following students are ineligible to avail of the free graduate education leading to a Master's degree:

(1) Students who were already granted with any government-sponsored graduate education scholarship program in any higher education institution, whether public or private, in the country or abroad;

(2) Students who fail to comply with the admission and retention policies of the SUC; and,
(3) Students who fail to complete their master's degree within a year after the period prescribed in their graduate education program.

Section 6. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)*****.** – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act. *Provided*, That the non-promulgation of rules and regulations provided under this section shall not prevent immediate implementation of this Act upon effectivity.

Section 7. ***Separability Clause*****.** – If any provisions of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 8. ***Repealing Clause*****.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, letters of instructions, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act shall be deemed notified, amended, or repealed accordingly.

Section 9. ***Effectivity Clause*****.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,