Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **9987**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Introduced by Representative Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
GRANTING FREE ASSESSMENT FEE FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (SHS) UNDER THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TRAINING-VOCATIONAL-LIVELIHOOD TRACK, AND OTHER SHS TRACKS REQUIRING CERTIFICATIONS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 10533, otherwise known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," increased the number of years in the basic education from ten (10) years to twelve (12) years to make the Philippines at par with the global education standards. The additional two years in the Basic Education is the Senior High School (SHS) Curriculum, where the students can choose among four tracks – academic, technical-vocational and livelihood (TVL), sports, and arts & design – to better prepare them for entrepreneurship, college education, or employment. Further, the TVL track has five (5) strands: agri-fishery arts; home economics; industrial arts; information and communications technology (ICT); and TVL maritime.

The specific offerings under each of the TVL strands use the Training Regulations (TR) of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) that qualifies TVL strand students for assessments in corresponding Certificates of Competency (COC) and National Certifications (NC). These certificates increase career opportunities in agriculture, electronics, and trade and are required when applying for employment abroad.

To implement the TVL program, the Department of Education[1] issued a regulation on a Joint Delivery Voucher Program for Senior High School Technical Vocational and Livelihood Specializations (JDVP-TVL), which is designed to optimize TVL learning by allowing SHS students enrolled in public schools to avail of vouchers and take their TVL specializations in eligible partner institutions from either private or non-DepEd public SHSs, as well as TVIs, offering their desired specializations. The combination of one to four specializations, to include tuition and other expenses (e.g., learning materials, consumables for workshop, operational and miscellaneous) for the TVL training needed to complete applicable specializations for Grade 12.

Under the current JDVP-TVL voucher program, the assessment fee to attain COCs and NCs is not included. As pointed out by a Philippine Institute of Development Studies[2] study, "there is a clamor to subsidizing the fees for taking the NC exams for TVL graduates, particularly for students from poorer households. The NCs are expected to boost SHS graduates' probability of being hired. If they are not able to take certification assessments for one reason or the other, then it deprives them of the chance of getting certified." Moreover, the study added that the government should "explore the possibility of supporting students who are required to take the exam by their employers but cannot afford the exam fees in taking NC exams. Maybe an amount can be set aside from existing fund and a mechanism be put in place."

This bill seeks to squarely address the issue of including the assessment fee as part of the government subsidy program for the SHS curriculum, to include all tracks that require COCs and NCs, to better to achieve the SHS objective of the employability of students after finishing the program.

With this paramount consideration on hand, the passage of this bill is thus earnestly sought.



Rep. JUDE A. ACIDRE
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan

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[1] DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2021, *Guidelines on the Implementation of the Joint Delivery Voucher Program for Senior High School Technical-Vocational-Livelihood Specializations For School Year 2021-2022*

[2] Brilliantes, K., Orbeta Jr., A., Francisco-Abrigo,K., Capones, E. and Jovellanos, K. (2019). Status of Senior High School Implementation: A Process Evaluation. Discussion Paper Series No. 2019-13

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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 "Free Certification Assessment Fee for Senior High School TVL and other tracks."

Section 2. ***Declaration of Policy*****.** – It is declared policy of the State to promote full employment, equality of employment opportunities, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all, complementary to the policy of the State to promote and make equality education accessible to all Filipino citizens, especially the youth. Towards this end, the State shall encourage the certification of Senior High School (SHS) students under the technical-vocational and livelihood (TVL) track and other tracks requiring national certifications, through the granting of free assessment fee for such certifications, for their immediate employability.

Section 3. ***Free National Certification Assessment Fee for SHS students under the TVL and other Tracks*****.** – All Senior High School (SHS) students under the TVL, and other tracks that require national certifications, are granted free assessment fee for certifications of competency or national certifications conducted by the

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). *Provided*, That the amount required to implement the free national certification assessment fees program shall be determined by the Department of Education (DepEd) based on the projected number of enrollees for the TVL, and other tracks that require national certifications, for each academic year, which shall be a factor in computing the annual proposed budget of DepEd. This shall in turn shall serve as the baseline during the preparation of the annual National Expenditure Programs (NEP) by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Section 4. *Appropriations*. – The Secretary of Education shall include in the Department's program the operationalization of the free assessment fees for TESDA national certifications, the initial funding of which shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DepEd. Thereafter, the amount necessary for continued implementation of this program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in coordination with the TESDA, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act. *Provided*, That the non-promulgation of the rules and regulations provided under this section shall not prevent the immediate implementation of this Act upon effectively.

Section 6. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision 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 7. *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 8. *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,