Republic of the Philippines

House of Representatives

Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. **10448**

Introduced by Representative LORDAN G. SUAN

AN ACT
SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING SCHOLARS FROM POLITICIZATION, IMPROPER INFLUENCE AND ABUSES IN SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS OR PROGRAMS, AND IMPOSING PENALTIES THERETO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education is considered a cornerstone of progress, both on an individual and national level. A well-educated citizenry also drives innovation and economic development.

Scholarship programs are crucial for supporting students and fostering educational attainment. However, abuses in these programs can undermine their effectiveness and prevent deserving individuals from benefiting. This bill aims to combat such abuses by criminalizing them and imposing stiffer penalties. By preventing practices like political discrimination, misuse of funds, and biased selection processes, this proposed measure ensures fairness and transparency in awarding scholarships. This, in turn, guarantees that resources reach the most qualified and deserving students, ultimately maximizing the impact of these programs and promoting equal access to educational opportunities.

In light of the preceding, this bill's approval is fervently sought.

LORDAN G. SUAN
Cagayan de Oro City – 1st District

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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 *"Scholars Protection Against Politicization Act."*

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — The State recognizes scholarship grants as essential for educational equity and national development. They empower Filipinos to pursue higher education, build a skilled workforce, and drive innovation.

To safeguard these programs, the State prioritizes transparency with clear selection criteria and public information access. It enforces accountability through audits and grievance mechanisms, with strict penalties for abuse or corruption. By upholding these principles, the State ensures scholarships empower deserving Filipinos and contribute to a brighter future.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* — For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth below:

(a) Scholarship Program refers to any program, public or private, that provides financial assistance to students for educational purposes.

(b) Scholarship Politicizing refers to any act or attempt to influence the awarding or continuation of a scholarship by coercing an applicant or scholar to

perform or refrain from performing an act in exchange for receiving or maintaining the scholarship. This includes, but is not limited to:

(1) Changing of voter registration address;

(2) Demanding participation in political campaigns, rallies, or other partisan activities;

(3) Pressuring applicants or scholars to donate money or volunteer time to a specific political party or candidate;

(4) Requiring endorsement of a particular political ideology or viewpoint as a condition for receiving or keeping the scholarship; or

(5) Threatening to revoke or withhold scholarship funds based on an applicant's or scholar's political affiliation, beliefs, or activities.

(c) Private person refers to an individual who is not employed by the government or holding any public office.

(d) Public officer or employee refers to an individual who holds a position within the government or a governmental organization and has been appointed rather than elected.

(e) Politician refers to an individual who is professionally involved in politics, typically holding or seeking public office.

SECTION 4. *Prohibition on Scholarship Politicizing.*

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in scholarship politicizing as defined by this Act.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person, having influence or power over a scholarship program, to condition the awarding or continuation of a scholarship on an applicant's or scholar's:

(1) Political affiliation or beliefs;

(2) Participation in political campaigns, rallies, or other partisan activities; and

(3) Donation of money or volunteer time to a specific political party or candidate; and

(4) Endorsement of a particular political ideology or viewpoint.

(c) It shall be unlawful for any person to force, induce, influence, incite or assist another person in committing any of the prohibited acts stated above.

(d) It shall be unlawful for any person previously penalized under this Act to hold public office or transact with the government in any capacity.

SECTION 5. *Penalties.*

(a) Any private person found to have violated any of the prohibited acts enumerated in paragraphs (a) to (c) of Section 4 of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties:

(1) Perpetual ban from transacting with the government in any capacity;

(2) Perpetual disqualification from holding any public office in any capacity;

(3) A fine of not less than two hundred thousand pesos (₱200,000) but not more than five hundred thousand pesos (₱500,000); and

(4) Imprisonment for a term of not less than two (2) years but not more than five (5) years, without eligibility for parole or any reduction of sentence.

(b) Any public appointive officer or employee found to have violated any of the prohibited acts enumerated in paragraphs (a) to (c) of Section 4 of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties:

(1) Dismissal from government service with forfeiture of all retirement benefits;

(2) Perpetual ban from transacting with the government in any capacity;

(3) Perpetual disqualification from holding any public office in any capacity;

(4) A fine of not less than five hundred thousand pesos (₱500,000) but not more than one million pesos (₱1,000,000); and

(5) Imprisonment for a term of not less than five (5) years but not more than twelve (10) years, without eligibility for parole or any reduction of sentence.

(c) Any politician found to have violated any of the prohibited acts enumerated in paragraphs (a) to (c) of Section 4 of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties:

(1) A fine of not less than one million pesos (₱1,000,000) but not more than two million pesos (₱2,000,000); and

(2) Imprisonment for a term of not less than ten (10) years but not more than twenty (20) years, without eligibility for parole or any reduction of sentence.

(d) Any person found to have violated paragraph (d) of Section 4 of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties:

(1) A fine of not less than two million pesos (₱2,000,000) but not more than five million pesos (₱5,000,000); and

(2) Imprisonment for a term of not less than twelve (12) years but not more than twenty (20) years, without eligibility for parole or any reduction of sentence.

SECTION 6. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette, in a newspaper of general circulation, or on a website provided for by law.

Approved,