

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 278



Introduced by Representatives Bryan B. Revilla, Lani Mercado-Revilla, and Ramon
Jolo B. Revilla III

AN ACT
PROHIBITING PUBLIC OR PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FROM
PREVENTING THEIR DISADVANTAGED GRADUATING STUDENTS TO
PARTICIPATE IN THEIR GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR REASONS OF
OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL OR PROPERTY OBLIGATIONS, SUCH AS UNPAID
TUITION AND OTHER SCHOOL FEES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that one of the priorities of the state is to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and to implement policies that ensure that education is accessible to all.

Among the significant milestones of a student is his or her graduation - when they celebrate their achievement with their families and share the joy of graduating with their fellow graduates and friends. This marks the beginning of a new chapter in their lives, allowing them to reflect on their future and make important decisions, such as whether to pursue higher learning or gainful employment, start a business, among others.

This measure prohibits all educational institutions from preventing disadvantaged graduating students from participating in their graduation ceremony for reasons of outstanding financial or property obligations, such as unpaid tuition, graduation and other school fees.

Considering the importance of a graduation ceremony to every student, the immediate approval of the measure is hereby sought.


REP. BRYAN B. REVILLA
Representative, AGIMAT Party-list


REP. LANI MERCADO-REVILLA
Representative, 2nd District of Cavite



REP. RAMON JOLO B. REVILLA III
Representative, 1st District of Cavite

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 278

Introduced by Representatives Bryan B. Revilla, Lani Mercado-Revilla, and Ramon
Jolo B. Revilla III

AN ACT
PROHIBITING PUBLIC OR PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FROM
PREVENTING THEIR DISADVANTAGED GRADUATING STUDENTS TO
PARTICIPATE IN THEIR GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR REASONS OF
OUTSTANDING FINANCIAL OR PROPERTY OBLIGATIONS, SUCH AS UNPAID
TUITION AND OTHER SCHOOL FEES

*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 "Kapakanan ng
Magsisipagtapos Act."

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to protect and
promote the right of all citizens to quality education and to take appropriate steps to
make education accessible to all, including ensuring that educational opportunities are
made available to students regardless of their economic status. The State shall
promote the right of all graduating students to an equal opportunity to participate in
their graduation ceremony upon completion of their academic requirements for their
respective programs.

Sec 3. *Definition of Terms.* - The following phrases, when used in this Act, shall have the meanings given to them in this section, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

1. Educational Institution - refers to all public and private establishments that provide instructional and/or educational services to individuals on all levels, including post-graduate and technical-vocational courses, holding a graduation ceremony;
2. Disadvantaged Graduating Student - refers to graduating students who have already completed their academic requirements, but for specific reasons, are unable to pay tuition, and other school fees; as certified by the Municipal, City or Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, or the Regional Office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD);
3. Graduation – refers to the conferment of an academic degree to the student after completing his or her academic requirements;
4. Graduation Ceremony - refers to the formal event at which a graduating student is awarded with a diploma and/or a certificate by an educational institution. It may also refer to a commencement exercise.

Sec. 4. *Coverage.* - This Act shall cover all, public and private basic (K to 12) institutions, higher education institutions, and technical-vocational institutions (TVIs): *Provided*, That in the case of TVIs, this Act shall only cover long-term courses exceeding one (1) year.

Sec. 5. *Prohibition to Educational Institutions.* — All public and private educational institutions covered by this Act are prohibited from disallowing Disadvantaged Graduating Students to attend their graduation ceremony, regardless of any balance or arrears to their payment of tuition fees, miscellaneous fees, and other school fees; *Provided*, That the Municipal, City or Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, or the Regional Office of the DSWD, as the case may be, shall issue the necessary certificate on the disadvantaged status of the student due to calamities, emergencies, force majeure and other good or justifiable reasons in accordance with the rules and regulations to be issued by the DSWD: *Provided, further*, That this Act shall be without prejudice to the right and power of educational

institutions to require the submission of a promissory note, withhold records and credentials of students and such other legal and administrative remedies available to them for the collection of unpaid fees: *Provided, finally,* That educational institutions may voluntarily, without need of the certification mentioned herein, allow a Disadvantaged student with outstanding tuition, miscellaneous, and other school fees to attend their graduation ceremony and release their relevant records and credentials in accordance with its policies, rules and regulations.

Sec. 6. Right of Educational Institution to Withhold. - Educational institutions may withhold the release of the actual diploma and/or other academic documents of the graduating students until all fees are paid by the latter.

Sec. 7. Administrative Sanctions. - All covered public and private educational institutions found guilty of violating Section 5 of this Act shall be subject to administrative sanctions that may be imposed by the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, as the case may be.

Sec. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). - The DSWD shall, in consultation with Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Department of Interior and Local Government and relevant stakeholders, promulgate the rules and regulations defining "Disadvantaged Student" and the criteria and requirements for, and effectivity of, the issuance of a certification to that effect by the Municipal, City or Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, or the Regional Office of the DSWD, to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 9. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision is declared unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec 10. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, proclamations or administrative regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec. 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication either in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,