

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 476



Introduced by **Representative Jaime R. Fresnedi**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to promote the professionalism, competence, and education of civil servants to improve the quality of public service by subsidizing a master's degree for permanent employees of the civil service.

A master's degree would demonstrate advanced training and knowledge in a field. Such degrees would arm civil servants with greater capabilities for serving the public in their respective positions. In addition, possession of a master's degree would help improve morale by enhancing their qualifications for promotion, as the Memorandum Circular No. 5, series of 2016 issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) states that a Master's Degree is required for positions of division chief and above.

The benefits of equipping civil servants with these degrees therefore justify the expense of providing government subsidies as provided for in this measure.

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


JAIME R. FRESNEDI
Representative
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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Introduced by **Rep. Jaime R. Fresnedi**

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

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 referred to as the "*Free MA Tuition for Government Employees Act*".

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to promote the professionalism, competence, and education of its civil servants to improve the efficiency and quality of public service. To this end, the State shall provide educational opportunities to enable civil servants to achieve these aims.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- (a) *Government Employees* refer to those who are employed in career service positions in the National Government, its agencies, instrumentalities, or any political subdivisions;
- (b) *Graduate Education* refers to higher education programs leading to a Master's Degree in higher education institutions authorized to offer such programs by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- (c) *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 Colleges and Universities (SUCs)* refer to public high educational institutions established by the national government and are governed by their respective independent boards of trustees or regents; and
- (e) *Tuition Fees* refer to fees or school charges for subjects to course enrolled in by a graduate education student.

SEC. 4. *Free Graduate Education for Government Employees in SUCs.* – All career government service employees are granted free tuition for a maximum of two years for Master's Degree program in any SUC where they have been successfully admitted: *Provided*, that the Master's Degree program shall not take more than two years to complete following the regular time frame of the program: *Provided, further*, That the Master's Degree program that the government employee wishes to take has been determined by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) as relevant to the employee's career track: *Provided, finally*, That the amount necessary 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.

SEC. 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:

- (a) Students who were already granted any government-sponsored graduate education scholarship program in any higher education institution, whether public or private, in the country or abroad;
- (b) Students who have failed to comply with the admission and retention policies of any SUC; or
- (c) Students who fail to complete their Master's Degree within a year after the period prescribed in their graduate education program.

SEC. 6. *Return Service Requirement.* – Any government employee who avails of the free tuition for Master's Degree program shall, upon completion of the Master's Degree, render at least two (2) years' service to the government for every one (1) year or part thereof that they were part of the program.

SEC. 7. *Reimbursement of Tuition Fees.* – Any government employee who avails of the free tuition for Master's Degree program shall reimburse the State for tuition fees covered in the following situations:

- (a) The student failed to complete the Master's Degree program within the prescribed period;
- (b) The student decides to leave government service before the return service requirement has been satisfied; or

- (c) The student moves to a position where the Master's Degree program is not considered relevant by the CSC.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The CHED, in cooperation and consultation with the CSC, SUCs, and other relevant government agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the departments and agencies concerned. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act shall be deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected there shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All Acts, Presidential Decrees, Executive Orders and Administrative Orders, Rules and Regulations and other such issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,