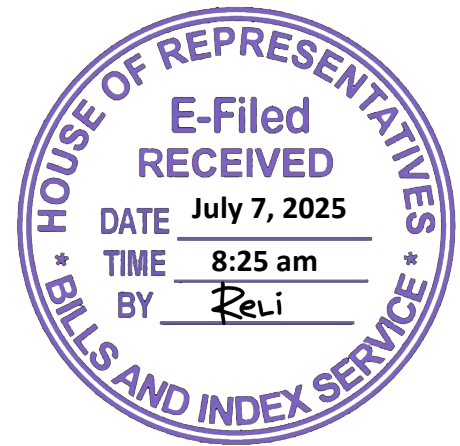




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **1348**



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:

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** — This Act shall be known as the "*Scholars*
2 *Protection Against Politicization Act.*"

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 3 (1) Changing of voter registration address;
- 4 (2) Demanding participation in political campaigns, rallies, or
5 other partisan activities;
- 6 (3) Pressuring applicants or scholars to donate money or
7 volunteer time to a specific political party or candidate;
- 8 (4) Requiring endorsement of a particular political ideology or
9 viewpoint as a condition for receiving or keeping the scholarship; or
- 10 (5) Threatening to revoke or withhold scholarship funds based
11 on an applicant's or scholar's political affiliation, beliefs, or activities.
- 12 (c) Private person refers to an individual who is not employed by the
13 government or holding any public office.
- 14 (d) Public officer or employee refers to an individual who holds a
15 position within the government or a governmental organization and has been
16 appointed rather than elected.
- 17 (e) Politician refers to an individual who is professionally involved in
18 politics, typically holding or seeking public office.

19 **SECTION 4. *Prohibition on Scholarship Politicizing.***

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

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

- 25 (1) Political affiliation or beliefs;
- 26 (2) Participation in political campaigns, rallies, or other partisan
27 activities; and
- 28 (3) Donation of money or volunteer time to a specific political
29 party or candidate; and
- 30 (4) Endorsement of a particular political ideology or viewpoint.

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

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

35 **SECTION 5. *Penalties.***

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

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

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

5 (3) A fine of not less than two hundred thousand pesos
6 (₱200,000) but not more than five hundred thousand pesos (₱500,000);
7 and

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

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

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

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

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

20 (4) A fine of not less than five hundred thousand pesos
21 (₱500,000) but not more than one million pesos (₱1,000,000); and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Approved,