

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2242**



Introduced by **HON. BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN**

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As the Philippines continues to strive for transformation and progress, the importance of providing quality public service and administration cannot be emphasized enough. Serving as the backbone of this endeavor are our dedicated government employees, who generously contribute their knowledge, expertise, and commitment to provide essential government services to Filipinos.

In line with the constitutional principle to give priority to education¹ and the State policy of promoting the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible and relevant to all, this bill seeks to provide all government employees free access to graduate education in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the country.

While Article XIV, Section 2 of the 1987 Constitution requires the establishment of a system of free basic public education for elementary and high school levels, the recent enactment of Republic Act 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2017 providing for free tertiary education to bona fide students of SUCs stands as a testament towards the thrust of the State to provide access to quality education in all levels. We can build on this momentum by extending this right to public servants who aspire to grow and serve more effectively through higher education.

This proposed Free Master's Degree Tuition for Government Employees Act

¹ 1987 Constitution, Article II, Section 17.

aims to enhance the skills of our government employees and foster professional growth by providing them access to higher degrees of learning. By promoting career advancement and fostering a culture of lifelong learning, this measure strengthens civil service standards and equips personnel to address the dynamic and ever evolving challenges of governance.

Beyond improving public service, we owe it to government employees to ensure that while they tirelessly serve, the government supports their goals for career growth and professional development. In addition to experience, training, civil service eligibility, and performance rating, educational attainment plays a vital role in the merit-based selection and promotion of civil service employees. Thus, this measure will not only boost our civil servants' morale and job satisfaction, it will also ensure employee retention, resulting in a more stable civil service.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN
Representative
2nd District of Parañaque

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2242

Introduced by **HON. BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN**

AN ACT
GRANTING FREE TUITION FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ENROLLED IN
GRADUATE EDUCATION MASTER'S PROGRAM AT 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 known as the “Free Master’s Degree Tuition for Government Employees Act”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the enhanced professionalization of the civil service to further improve on the efficient delivery of public services to the people. Further, the State shall likewise upgrade its human resources to cope with the rapidly evolving societal and administrative requirements of a fast-moving polity. Towards this end, government workers, being an important component of the state's human resources, shall be given education advancement opportunities through adequate funding and such other mechanisms to improve their education levels, for the eventual benefit of the state bureaucracy in particular, and the country, in general.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act:

- (a) Government employees – refer to those who are employed, whether classified as career or non-career service positions, by the National Government or any of its political subdivision, instrumentalities, and agencies including government-owned and/or controlled corporations, and local government units;
- (b) Graduate Education – refers to higher education programs leading to a master’s degree, as may be authorized and recognized 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 Universities and Colleges (SUCs) – refer to higher education institutions created by special laws or charters, governed by their respective board of regents or board of trustees, chaired by the CHED Chairperson pursuant to Republic Act No. 8292 or the Higher Education Modernization Act of 1997;
- (e) Tuition fees – refer to fees or school charges at the rate approved by the SUC governing board for subjects or courses enrolled in by a graduate education student. The tuition fee does not include other school fees and miscellaneous charges, including, but not limited to:
 - (i) Fees prescribed for books
 - (ii) Student registration fees; and
 - (iii) Library fees.

SECTION 4. Free Graduate Education for Government Employees in SUCs. — All career and non-career service government employees shall be granted free tuition fee for a maximum of two-years in a master's program in any SUCs that they have successfully applied for; *Provided*, that non-career contractual government personnel must be employed for at least five (5) years at any time after the effectivity of this Act to qualify for this program; *Provided*, further, That the government employees pass the entrance examination and other admission and retention requirements of the SUCs; *Provided*, that students who fail to complete their master's degree within a year after the period prescribed in their graduate education program shall be ineligible to avail of the program. The amount required 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 year, which shall be the primary factor in computing the annual proposed budget of SUCs. This shall in turn serve as the baseline during the preparation of the annual National Expenditure Program (NEP) by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

SECTION 5. Ineligibility. — The following graduate students are ineligible to avail of the free graduate education leading to a master's degree:

- (1) Government employees who were already granted with any government-sponsored graduate education scholarship program in any higher education institution, whether public or private, in the country or abroad;
- (2) Government employees who fail to comply with the admission and retention

policies of the SUC;

- (3) Government employees who fail to complete their master's degree within a year after the period prescribed in their graduate education program shall be ineligible to avail of the program;
- (4) Government employees with pending administrative charges involving grave offenses, such as, but not limited to, serious dishonesty, gross neglect of duty, conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude; and
- (5) Such other ineligibilities as may be reasonably identified by the Commission on Higher Education and the Civil Service Commission, *Provided*, that they are consistent and not contrary to the provisions and objectives of this Act.

Government employees who are found to be ineligible to avail of the free graduate education leading to a master's degree program shall be charged the tuition and other school fees as determined by the governing board of the SUCs.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), 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 effectivity.

SECTION 7. 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 8. Repealing Clause. - All laws, decrees, executive orders, letters of instructions, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act shall be deemed modified, amended, or repealed accordingly.

SECTION 9. 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,