



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. **2831**

Introduced by **Representatives JOCELYN P. TULFO, RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO, and EDVIC G. YAP**

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR FREE TERTIARY AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND OTHER RELATED COURSES TO THE DEPENDENT CHILDREN OF QUALIFIED INDIGENT FARMERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The agricultural sector serves as the backbone of the Philippine economy, yet it grapples with persistent challenges—an aging farmer population, stagnating productivity, and limited adoption of modern technologies. A key obstacle to revitalizing this critical sector is the financial inability of many indigent farmers to send their children to college, depriving the next generation of opportunities to acquire advanced knowledge in agriculture and related fields.

This bill, to be known as the **"Free Agricultural Education for Farmers' Dependents Act,"** seeks to bridge this gap by granting free access to tertiary agricultural education and allied disciplines for the dependent children of qualified indigent farmers. By eliminating the financial barriers to higher education, this Act aims to:

1. **Empower the Next Generation of Agricultural Leaders** – Equip young Filipinos from farming communities with cutting-edge knowledge, technical skills, and innovative practices to drive the modernization of Philippine agriculture.
2. **Boost Agricultural Productivity** – Promote the adoption of sustainable, science-based, and efficient farming methods to increase yields, improve incomes, and enhance the competitiveness of local farmers.
3. **Strengthen National Food Security** – Cultivate a highly skilled agricultural workforce capable of ensuring sustainable food production and long-term self-sufficiency for the nation.
4. **Promote Rural Development** – Stimulate economic growth in farming communities by creating higher-value opportunities and improving the quality of life for agricultural families.

Aligned with the government's commitment to human capital development in agriculture, this legislation recognizes that investing in the education of farmers' dependents is an investment in the future of the sector, and the nation's prosperity.

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



HON. JOCELYNE F. TULFO
Representative, ACT-CIS PARTYLIST



HON. EDVIC G. YAP
Representative, ACT-CIS PARTYLIST



HON. RALPH WENDEL P. TULFO
Representative, 2ND DISTRICT OF
QUEZON CITY



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INDIGENT FARMERS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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 *"Free Agri-Education for Farmers' Dependents Act."*

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.

It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote and protect the right of all
citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such
education accessible to all. Recognizing the pivotal role of agriculture in national
development and food security, and the socio-economic challenges faced by
indigent farmers, the State shall prioritize the empowerment of the agricultural
sector through human capital development. Towards this end, the State shall
provide free tertiary agricultural education and other related courses to the
dependent children of qualified indigent farmers, thereby ensuring a continuous
supply of skilled and knowledgeable professionals and practitioners in agriculture,
promoting sustainable farming practices, and enhancing the overall productivity and
competitiveness of the Philippine agricultural sector.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.

For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. **Commission on Higher Education (CHED)** refers to the government
agency responsible for regulating and supervising higher education
institutions in the Philippines.
- b. **Department of Agriculture (DA)** refers to the primary government agency
responsible for the promotion of agricultural development in the Philippines.
- c. **Dependent Child** refers to a legitimate, illegitimate, legally adopted, or
stepchild of a qualified indigent farmer, who is twenty-one (21) years of age

or below, unmarried, and not gainfully employed, or if over twenty-one (21) years of age, is suffering from a disability that renders them incapable of self-support.

- d. **Free Tertiary Agricultural Education** refers to the waiver of tuition fees, miscellaneous fees, and other mandatory fees, as may be determined by CHED, in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) offering agricultural education and other related courses.
- e. **Indigent Farmer** refers to a natural person engaged in farming, whether personally or through a farm worker, whose family income falls below the poverty threshold as determined by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), and who is registered with the Department of Agriculture's Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) or any equivalent official registry.
- f. **Qualified** refers to a dependent child who meets the eligibility criteria set forth in this Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.
- g. **Related Courses** refer to academic programs closely related to agriculture, such as, but not limited to, agricultural engineering, food technology, veterinary medicine, forestry, fisheries, environmental science with agricultural focus, and agribusiness management, as may be determined by CHED in consultation with DA.
- h. **State Universities and Colleges (SUCs)** refer to public higher education institutions established by law and are fully supported by the national government.

SECTION 4. Coverage.

This Act shall cover all qualified dependent children of indigent farmers who are enrolled or shall enroll in tertiary agricultural education and other related courses in any State University and College (SUC) in the Philippines.

SECTION 5. Entitlements.

A qualified dependent child of an indigent farmer shall be entitled to:

- a. **Free Tuition and Other Fees.** - Exemption from the payment of tuition fees, laboratory fees, library fees, athletic fees, computer fees, cultural fees, and all other miscellaneous and mandatory fees, as may be determined by CHED, throughout the duration of their tertiary agricultural education or related course in an SUC.
- b. **Stipend and Allowances.** - The Implementing Rules and Regulations may provide for a monthly stipend, book allowance, and other necessary allowances for qualified beneficiaries, subject to the availability of funds and specific criteria to be set by the implementing agencies.

SECTION 6. Qualifications of Beneficiaries.

To qualify for the benefits under this Act, a dependent child must:

- 1. Be a dependent child of an indigent farmer as defined in Section 3 of this Act.
- 2. Be a Filipino citizen.
- 3. Have passed the entrance examination or admission requirements of the SUC where they intend to enroll or are currently enrolled.

4. Maintain the academic standards and good moral character as required by the SUC and the provisions of this Act.
5. Not be a recipient of any other scholarship grant or financial assistance from any government agency or private institution that covers the same entitlements provided under this Act, unless the other grant is insufficient to cover all expenses and only the uncovered portion is claimed under this Act.

SECTION 7. Responsibilities of Beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries of this Act shall:

1. Maintain the academic performance required by the SUC for their course. Failure to meet the academic requirements may lead to the forfeiture of the scholarship, subject to the policies of the SUC and the Implementing Rules and Regulations.
2. Complete their chosen course within the prescribed period.
3. Upon graduation, render service to the agricultural sector in the Philippines for a period equivalent to the number of years they enjoyed the scholarship, in a manner and capacity to be determined by the DA in consultation with CHED. This may include working in government agricultural agencies, engaging in farming, or contributing to agricultural research or extension services. The Implementing Rules and Regulations shall provide the specific guidelines for this service requirement.

SECTION 8. Implementing Agencies.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall be the primary implementing agencies of this Act. They shall:

- a. Formulate and issue the necessary Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.
- b. Develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to ensure the effective implementation of this Act.
- c. Coordinate with State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to ensure the smooth admission, enrollment, and support of qualified beneficiaries.
- d. Establish a robust database of qualified indigent farmers and their dependent children, in coordination with relevant government agencies and local government units.

SECTION 9. Funding.

The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. The CHED and DA shall jointly prepare the necessary budget proposals for this purpose.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED, in consultation with the DA, the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC), and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause.

1 If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of
2 the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

3 **SECTION 12. Repealing Clause.**

4 All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with
5 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

6 **SECTION 13. Effectivity.**

7 This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette
8 or in a newspaper of general circulation.

9 *Approved,*