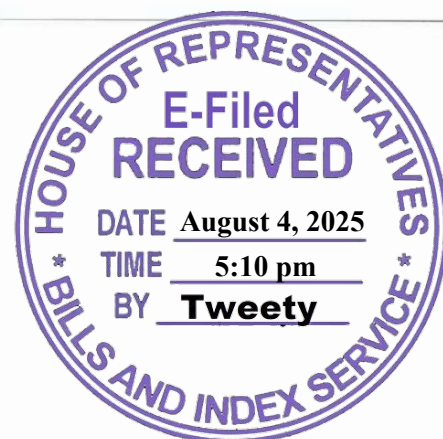


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2990



Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN "LENLEN" A. ORETA III

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act," was enacted into law on August 3, 2017 to enable those who have less in life, especially the poorest of the poor, to have access to quality tertiary (higher and technical-vocational) education. This landmark legislation also aims to provide adequate funding and mechanisms to expand and further democratize access to quality college education by providing free tertiary education in state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs) compliant with the policies, standards, and guidelines of the Commission on Higher Education, as well as in state-run technical-vocational institutions. It also provides a Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) to economically disadvantaged students from SUCs, LUCs, state-run TVIs, and private HEIs and TVIs to support the other education-related costs of education, such as books, transportation, and board and lodging, among others.

While the TES prioritizes students from households listed in the *Listahanan* 2.0 of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), there were complaints that many students under the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) are not included in the *Listahanan* 2.0 database and, therefore, were not able to avail themselves of the TES to continue their studies.

A recent study by the Philippine Institute of Development Studies revealed that free education does not truly benefit the poorest of the poor, and many 4Ps beneficiaries were excluded from the TES. Likewise, the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) findings showed that the share of the TES grantees from the poorest households or 4Ps has dramatically decreased—from 75% in Academic Year (A.Y.) 2018-2019 to just 23% in A.Y. 2022-2023, with a slight increase to 35% in 2024 after the DSWD pledged to update its database.

Thus, EDCOM II has been pushing for a special provision in RA No. 10931 to guarantee prioritization of the poorest of the poor or the 4Ps beneficiaries to ensure that the most vulnerable members of our society are given the much-needed support to improve their socio-economic status. Hence, this proposed measure seeks to ensure that the poorest students are not left behind and shall be given the opportunity to earn a college degree to help free their families from the shackles of poverty.

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


ANTOLIN "LENLEN" A. ORETA III
Lone District, Malabon City

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 2990

Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN "LENLEN" A. ORETA III

AN ACT

PRIORITIZING THE GRANT OF TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM HOUSEHOLDS UNDER THE PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM WHO QUALIFY FOR ADMISSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS RECOGNIZED BY THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10931, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION ACT"

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act", is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC 7. *TES for Filipino Students.* - To support the cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof, a TES is hereby established for all students who shall enroll in undergraduate post-secondary programs of SUCs, LUCs, private HEIs and all TVIs. The TES shall be administered by the UniFAST Board and the amount necessary to fund the TES shall be included in the budgets of the CHED and the TESDA: *Provided, That* [prioritization shall be given to students in the following order: (a) students who are part of households included in the Listahanan 2.0, ranked according to the estimated per capita household income, and (b) students not part of the Listahanan 2.0, ranked according to estimated per capita household income based on submitted documentation of proof of income to be determined by the UniFAST Board] **SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES FROM HOUSEHOLDS UNDER THE PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4PS) SHALL BE GUARANTEED THE TES UPON QUALIFYING FOR ADMISSION IN A CHED-RECOGNIZED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: *Provided, further, That* [such] SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE FUNDS, THE REMAINING TES SLOTS SHALL BE AWARDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH [prioritization shall not apply to Filipino students in cities and municipalities with no existing SUC op LUC campus] THE RANKING OF APPLICANTS BASED ON THEIR PER CAPITA INCOME HOUSEHOLD USING THE MOST UPDATED LISTAHANAN DATABASE OF THE DSWD OR SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS AS PROOF OF INCOME.**"

The TES may, among others, and to support the cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof, cover the following:

- (a) **FULL [T]uition and other school fees (TOSF) in private HEIs, and private or LGU-operated TVIs, which shall be equivalent to the tuition and other school fees of the nearest SUC or state-run TVI in their respective areas: *PROVIDED, THAT SUCH TOSF SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AVERAGE AMOUNT SPENT BY THE GOVERNMENT PER STUDENT UNDER THE FREE HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SUCS AND LUCS; PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT IN CASES WHERE THE TOSF EXCEED THIS AVERAGE AMOUNT, THE UNIFAST BOARD SHALL ADMINISTER GUIDELINES IN SETTING THE AMOUNT OF THE TES;***
- (b) An allowance for books, supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous personal expenses, including a reasonable allowance for the documented rental or purchase of a personal computer or laptop, and other education-related expenses;
- (c) An allowance for room and board cost incurred by the student;
- (d) For a student with a disability, an allowance for expenses related to the student's disability, including special services, personal assistance, transportation, equipment, and supplies that are reasonably incurred; and
- (e) For a student in a program requiring professional license or certification, the one (1)-time cost of obtaining the first professional credentials or qualifications, which may include the following: application fees, notarial fees, review classes fees, insurance premium fees and documentation fees: *Provided, That the amount of subsidy shall be based on the guidelines set forth by the UniFAST Board and on the annual budgetary appropriation for this purpose."*

SEC. 2. A new Section 7-A is hereby inserted to read as follows:

"SEC. 7-A. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE TES. - THE UNIFAST SHALL:

- (a) **IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM FOR MONITORING AND VALIDATION TO ENSURE THAT TES ALLOWANCES ARE UTILIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PURPOSES PROVIDED UNDER SECTION AND IMPOSE SANCTIONS, INCLUDING DISQUALIFICATION FOR NON-COMPLIANCE;**
- (b) **IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DBM AND COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA), DEVELOP AN EFFICIENT DISBURSEMENT SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE DISBURSEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT COST, TO ENSURE TES GRANTEES RECEIVE THEIR SUBSIDIES DURING THE SEMESTER FOR WHICH THEY ARE APPLYING THE TES, AS WELL AS TO FUND THE PROVISION OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES, AND MAY UTILIZE THE PHILIPPINE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (PHILSYS) TO FACILITATE THE VALIDATION OF ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES;**
- (c) **COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DSWD, AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM THAT INFORMS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS UNDER THE 4PS OF THEIR AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE THE BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HEIS TO ASSESS AND ENHANCE THE**

PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION, AND UTILIZE THE PHILSYS NUMBERS OF TES GRANTEES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION PURPOSES.

FOR THIS PURPOSE, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HEIS SHALL UTILIZE THE PHILSYS NUMBERS OF THE TES GRANTEES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION PURPOSES. THEY SHALL ALSO PROVIDE LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES TO TES BENEFICIARIES, INCLUDING CAREER COUNSELING, BRIDGING PROGRAMS, AND TUTORIALS.

THE CHED, IN COORDINATION WITH THE UNIFAST, SHALL ESTABLISH A REGULAR QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS FOR HEIS ENROLLING TES GRANTEES. THIS SHALL INCLUDE PERIODIC ASSESSMENTS OF BOTH INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAM QUALITY, WITH A FOCUS ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS, GRADUATE OUTCOMES, AND COMPLIANCE WITH CHED POLICIES. HEIS FAILING TO MEET THE MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARDS SHALL BE REEVALUATED AND MAY BE DISQUALIFIED FROM ENROLLING NEW TES GRANTEES UNTIL COMPLIANCE IS ACHIEVED."

XXX

SEC. 3. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the UniFAST Board, in consultation with the CHED, DepEd, DSWD, TESDA, and other stakeholders in higher and technical-vocational education, shall promulgate the revised implementing rules and regulations of R.A. No. 10931 necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of this Act: *Provided*, That the failure of the Board to promulgate the said rules and regulations shall not prevent or delay the effectivity and implementation of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Separability Clause.* — If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.* — RA No. 10931 and all laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations, or any parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act shall be revoked, repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,