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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4753



Introduced by REP. JESUS ANGEL MANUEL "BONG" C. SUNTAY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines mandates the State to "protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all" (Article XIV, Section 1). Education is a fundamental right, and access must be equitable, inclusive, and responsive to the changing needs of society.

In today's digital age, communication and connectivity have become essential components of the learning process. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the central role of internet access and telecommunications in education, particularly with the shift to blended and distance learning modalities. Even as schools gradually return to face-to-face classes, online platforms, digital tools, and internet-based resources remain integral to the educational system.

Unfortunately, many Filipino students, especially those from poor and marginalized families, continue to face challenges due to the high cost of mobile load and internet connectivity. These costs directly affect their ability to access online learning resources, communicate with teachers, and participate fully in the educational process. This digital divide exacerbates existing social inequalities and hinders the nation's efforts to ensure inclusive education for all.

This bill, therefore, seeks to institutionalize the Student Load Discount Act, which grants a 20% discount on mobile and internet services for students. It recognizes that equitable access to communication technologies is a vital form of educational support and that the State has a responsibility to ensure that economic barriers do not prevent learners from maximizing their potential.

By granting a 20% discount on load and internet services, this bill directly addresses one of the most pressing needs of Filipino students in the 21st century: affordable connectivity. It reduces the financial burden on families, particularly those in low-income households, and ensures that students can participate meaningfully in digital learning.

Furthermore, the measure reflects a balanced partnership between government and private telecommunications companies by allowing tax incentives in exchange for compliance. It also promotes accountability through mandatory reporting and penalties.

1 Ultimately, the bill is not merely an economic relief measure but an investment in
2 education and human capital development. It ensures that no Filipino student is left
3 behind due to lack of access to mobile and internet services, thereby supporting the
4 broader goals of educational equity, social progress, and nation-building.

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7 In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.
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13 **REP. JESUS "BONG" C. SUNTAY**
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13 **AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE GRANT OF STUDENT LOAD**
14 **DISCOUNT PRIVILEGE ON MOBILE AND INTERNET SERVICES AND**
15 **FOR OTHER PURPOSES**
16

17
18 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in
19 Congress assembled:

20
21 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*Student Load Discount*
22 *Act.*”
23

24 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – The State shall give priority to education,
25 science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism,
26 accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.
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28 It also recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation building.
29 Pursuant to these policies, the State ensures equitable access to education by
30 providing necessary support to students, particularly in their communication and
31 online learning needs. To achieve this, the State shall:

- 32 (a) Establish a mechanism that ensures the mandatory grant of a student load
33 discount privilege;
34 (b) Enlist the cooperation of telecommunication companies (TELCOs) in
35 extending assistance to students through this privilege; and
36 (c) Encourage students, particularly the poor and underprivileged, to utilize
37 digital tools for education.
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39 **SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

- 40 (a) Student - Any Filipino citizen currently enrolled in a duly authorized
41 elementary, secondary, technical-vocational, or higher education institution,
42 excluding post-graduate degree courses.
43 (b) Telecommunication Companies (TELCOs) - Companies providing mobile,
44 text, call, and internet services in the Philippines.
45 (c) Student Load Discount - A 20% discount on prepaid and postpaid mobile load,
46 text, call, and internet services availed by eligible students.
47

48 **SECTION 4. *Scope.*** – This Act shall cover all telecommunication services,
49 including but not limited to:

- 50 (a) Prepaid mobile load for text, call, and data;

- (b) Postpaid mobile plans; and
(c) Broadband and internet services that are used for educational purposes.

SECTION 5. *Student Load Discount Privilege.* – A student shall be entitled to a 20% discount on mobile load, text, call, and internet services, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) The discount shall be applied upon presentation of a valid school ID or proof of enrollment.
(b) The discount shall be available year-round, including weekends and holidays.
(c) The discount shall apply only to personal educational use and may not be transferred.

SECTION 6. *Prohibition of Double Discounts.* – Students cannot avail of multiple discounts at the same time. If a promotional discount from TELCO is higher than 20%, the student may choose which discount to apply.

SECTION 7. *Tax Deduction for TELCOs.* – TELCOs may claim tax deductions equivalent to the cost of the discount granted, subject to the rules to be promulgated by the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

SECTION 8. *Implementation and Monitoring.* – The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) shall oversee the implementation of this Act. TELCOs shall submit quarterly reports on compliance.

SECTION 9. *Penalties.* – The following penalties shall be imposed for violation of this Act, to wit:

- (a) TELCOs that refuse to grant the discount shall be fined:
P50,000 for the first offense
P100,000 for the second offense
P200,000 for the third and subsequent offenses
(b) Any student found using fraudulent documents to avail of the discount shall be disqualified from the privilege without prejudice to the filing of appropriate criminal charges for such act.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – Within 90 days from the effectivity of this Act, the NTC, DICT, Department of Education (DepEd), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall formulate the IRR.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations, or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,