

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 5676

Introduced by **REP. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE PRESIDENTIAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution mandates the State to "protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all" (Article XIV, Section 1).

This bill seeks to establish the Presidential Merit Scholarship Program (PMSP) to recognize and support the top one percent (1%) of students in all public and private colleges and universities across the country. Each qualified scholar shall automatically receive ₱20,000 per academic year for tuition, books, and other education-related expenses.

Although tuition is covered by the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, we aim to ensure that academic excellence is not only rewarded but genuinely supported, and that no deserving student is left behind because of economic limitations. Administered by CHED, the PMSP will promote meritocracy, empower top-performing students, and nurture future leaders who will drive national progress and innovation. In view of the foregoing, the early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


HON. BERNADETTE "DETTE" G. ESCUDERO
Representative
1st District, Sorsogon

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

3
4 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** — This Act shall be known as the "Presidential Merit
5 Scholarship Act."

6
7 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** — It is hereby declared the policy of the State
8 to promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to recognize
9 education as a vital instrument for national development. The State acknowledges
10 that academic excellence and intellectual achievement are indispensable to nation-
11 building and inclusive progress. Towards this end, the government shall identify,
12 nurture, and empower students who demonstrate exceptional academic and
13 leadership potential, and ensure that such excellence is supported through equitable
14 access to financial assistance, mentorship, and opportunities for public service.

15
16 **SEC. 3. Establishment of the Presidential Merit Scholarship Program.**
17 —There is hereby established a national scholarship program to be known as the
18 Presidential Merit Scholarship Program (PMSP), which shall be administered by the
19 Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in coordination with the Department of
20 Budget and Management (DBM) and other relevant government agencies. The
21 Program shall recognize and support the most outstanding students enrolled in public
22 and private higher education institutions (HEIs) duly recognized by CHED.

23
24 **SEC. 4. Eligibility and Selection Criteria.**—The top one percent (1%) of
25 students enrolled in each college or department of CHED-accredited HEIs shall be
26 eligible for the PMSP based on their cumulative General Weighted Average (GWA) or
27 equivalent academic ranking at the end of each academic year. Such ranking shall be
28 duly certified by the Registrar of the concerned HEI and verified by CHED. The CHED
29 shall issue the detailed implementing guidelines to ensure fairness, transparency, and

1 consistency in the selection process across all institutions. For purposes of inclusivity,
2 CHED shall ensure equitable representation of scholars across regions and sectors,
3 particularly from disadvantaged, marginalized, and underrepresented groups.
4

5 **SEC. 5. Scholarship Benefits.**—Each qualified Presidential Merit Scholar shall
6 be entitled to the following benefits:

7 a.) A financial grant of not less than Twenty Thousand Pesos (₱20,000.00) per
8 academic year to cover tuition and other school fees, books, supplies, and education-
9 related expenses;

10 b.) Priority access to government internship programs, leadership training, and
11 mentorship under CHED and partner agencies; and

12 c.) Certificate of Presidential Recognition signed by the President of the
13 Republic of the Philippines, attesting to the scholar's exemplary academic
14 achievement. Provided, That the amount shall be adjusted periodically by CHED and
15 DBM to account for inflation and changing educational costs. The grant may be
16 disbursed directly to the scholar or to the HEI concerned, subject to CHED guidelines.
17

18 **SEC. 6. Renewal and Retention of Scholarship.**—The scholarship shall be
19 renewable annually, subject to the scholar's maintenance of academic standing within
20 the top five percent (5%) of their class or equivalent ranking, and compliance with
21 CHED's standards of conduct, leadership, and community engagement.
22

23 **SEC. 7. Public Service Incentive.**—In order to cultivate civic responsibility
24 and nation-building, Presidential Merit Scholars shall be encouraged to render
25 voluntary community service, mentorship, or research assistance in government or
26 non-government programs related to education, science, governance, or social
27 development. CHED, in coordination with the Civil Service Commission (CSC), may
28 accredit such service hours for priority consideration in government scholarships,
29 fellowships, or entry-level civil service eligibility, as may be provided in the
30 implementing rules.
31

32 **SEC. 8. Administration and Monitoring.**—CHED shall create a Presidential
33 Merit Scholarship Secretariat responsible for program administration, monitoring, and
34 evaluation. The Secretariat shall maintain a national registry of scholars, ensure timely
35 disbursement of benefits, and submit an annual report to the Office of the President
36 and to Congress on the implementation, performance, and impact of the program.
37

38 **SEC. 9. Appropriations.**—The amount necessary for the implementation of
39 this Act shall be included in the respective budgets of DepEd and TESDA in the annual
40 General Appropriations Act.
41

42 **SEC. 10. Separability Clause.**—If any part or provision of this Act is held
43 invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force
44 and effect.
45

46 **SEC. 11. Repealing Clause.** —All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
47 regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
48 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

1 **SEC. 12. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
3 circulation.

Adopted,