

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5914



Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN "LENLEN" A. ORETA III

AN ACT
AMENDING SECTIONS 3 AND 7 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10931, OTHERWISE
KNOWN AS THE "UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION
ACT", TO ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY, EQUITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF
THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY PROGRAM

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The passage of Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the *Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act*, in 2017 marked a significant milestone in the country's pursuit of accessible and inclusive higher education. It provided countless Filipino students the hope to pursue and finish tertiary education. The enactment of this progressive educational law provides deserving students the opportunity to obtain a degree, acquire vital skills and enhance their employability. In doing so, it enables them to break free from the cycle of poverty and equips them to contribute productively to national development.

However, in the course of its implementation, several challenges and gaps have surfaced. While the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) was designed to support underprivileged students to reduce financial burden related to their studies, many of the most vulnerable, particularly those from Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) households, remain excluded. Issues such as vague eligibility criteria, delays in subsidy release, and the absence of guaranteed access have limited the law's effectiveness for those who need it most.

This proposed measure seeks to address these gaps by amending RA 10931 to ensure that its objectives are realized more effectively. It guarantees that all qualified 4Ps beneficiaries who have completed Senior High School and gained admission into CHED-recognized Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) shall automatically receive TES. Moreover, the bill establishes a clearer system of prioritization to ensure that the most economically disadvantaged are given due preference.

To strengthen accountability, the measure likewise mandates the creation of a monitoring and evaluation framework for TES implementation. It promotes closer coordination among government agencies and ensures the timely release of subsidies to beneficiaries.

Education is a right of every Filipino youth that the State must uphold for all. The passage of this legislation reaffirms the State's commitment to a more accessible and inclusive higher education. By refining the mechanisms of RA 10931, the measure ensures that education would be enjoyed by every Filipino, especially the underprivileged, deserving youth. It would also ensure that it would uplift the youth as it serves as a pathway to opportunity, social mobility, and sustainable national development.

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


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

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

SECTION 1. Section 3(h) of Republic Act No. 10931 or the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

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

xxx

(h) Other school fees refer to fees charged by HEIS and technical-vocational institutions which cover other necessary costs supportive of instruction, specifically the following: library fees, computer fees, laboratory fees, school ID fees, athletic fees, admission fees, development fees, guidance fees, handbook fees, entrance fees, registration fees, medical and dental fees, cultural fees, **INTERNSHIP AND RELATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE (RLE) FEES REQUIRED BY THE CURRICULUM, INCLUDING THOSE FOR NURSING AND OTHER ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS**, and other similar or related fees;

SEC. 2. Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10931 or the "Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 7. TES for Filipino Students. - To support the cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof, a Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) is hereby established for all Filipino 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]

ALL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS FROM QUALIFIED HOUSEHOLD-BENEFICIARIES OF THE THE PANTAWID FAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4PS), AS PROVIDED UNDER REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11310, SHALL BE GUARANTEED TES GRANTEES, UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND ACCEPTANCE INTO A CHED-RECOGNIZED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION OR A TESDA-RECOGNIZED TVI: *Provided, further*, That [such prioritization shall not apply to Filipino students in cities and municipality with no existing SUC op LUC campus]

SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABLE FUNDS, THE REMAINING TES SLOTS SHALL BE AWARDED BASED ON FINANCIAL NEED, AS DETERMINED BY THE HOUSEHOLD PER CAPITA INCOME OF APPLICANTS, TO BE ASSESSED BY THE RESPECTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OR TVIS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH GUIDELINES TO BE ISSUED BY THE UNIFAST BOARD: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT TES GRANTEES SHALL BE GUARANTEED CONTINUED SUPPORT UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THEIR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE OR TVET PROGRAM, SUBJECT TO THE MAINTENANCE OF SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC OR TRAINING PERFORMANCE, AND COMPLIANCE WITH INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES.

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 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) INTERNSHIP AND RELATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE (RLE) FEES THAT ARE REQUIRED BY THE CURRICULUM, INCLUDING THOSE FOR NURSING 18 AND OTHER ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS; AND

(F) 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:

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

(A) IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM FOR MONITORING AND VALIDATION TO ENSURE THAT TES ALLOWANCES ARE UTILIZED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PURPOSES PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 7, AND IMPOSE SANCTIONS, INCLUDING DISQUALIFICATION 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 BENEFICIARIES 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, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT, AND OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, TO ESTABLISH A SYSTEM THAT INFORMS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS UNDER THE 4PS OF THEIR AUTOMATIC ELIGIBILITY TO RECEIVE TES; AND,

(D) MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE TES PROGRAM EVERY FIVE (5) YEARS, INCLUDING THE UTILIZATION OF AN ONLINE INFORMATION SYSTEM TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF TES GRANTEES WHILE THEY ARE IN THE HEI, AND TRACER SURVEYS CONDUCTED 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.

FURTHER, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HEIS SHALL UTILIZE THE PHILSYS NUMBERS OF TES GRANTEES FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION PURPOSES AND LIKEWISE PROVIDE LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES TO TES BENEFICIARIES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO CAREER COUNSELING, RIDGING PROGRAMS, AND TUTORIALS.

THE CHED, IN COORDINATION WITH THE UNIFAST BOARD, 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 EMPLOYABILITY, AND OTHER RELEVANT 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.

SEC. 4. *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 education, shall promulgate the revised implementing rules and regulations of R.A. 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. 5. *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. 6. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,