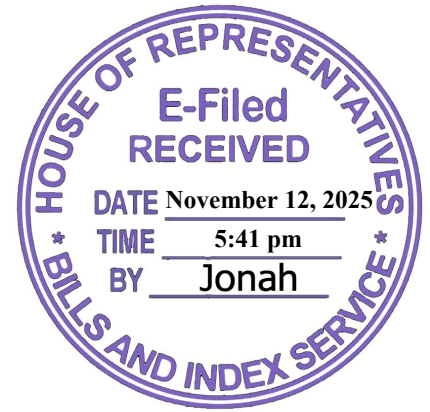


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5934



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A VOUCHER SYSTEM FOR POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10931, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION ACT”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The passage of Republic Act No. 10931, or the “Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act,” marked a significant milestone in the Philippine government’s commitment to democratizing access to higher education. It provided free tuition and other school fees in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs), and State-run Technical-Vocational Institutions (TVIs), and established the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) for eligible students.

However, despite its noble intent, RA 10931 has revealed critical gaps in its implementation, particularly in its limited coverage of students enrolled in private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and private TVIs. According to statistics from Commission on Higher Education (CHED), as of AY 2024–2025, there are 1,619 private HEIs compared to 113 SUCs (main campuses) and 154 LUCs¹, indicating that private institutions comprise the majority of tertiary education providers in the Philippines.

Furthermore, data from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) shows that 36 out of every 100 households assessed nationwide were classified as poor, totaling 5.6 million households. Of the 67 million individuals assessed, 45% (30.4 million) reside in poor households. Many of these individuals are of school age yet face barriers to education due to financial constraints.

¹ [Statistics | Commission on Higher Education](#)

RA 10931 prioritizes students in SUCs and LUCs, with TES coverage for private HEIs and TVIs restricted to areas without public institutions. This leaves out many poor students who must attend private institutions due to program availability or geographic constraints. A policy brief from the University of Southeastern Philippines highlights delays in fund allocation, unreimbursed advances, and failures in program use, affecting the effectiveness of TES and UniFAST². A study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) found that private HEIs struggled to recover enrollment losses post-K-12 implementation, while public HEIs benefited from RA 10931, and recommends expanding support to private institutions to ensure equitable access³.

To address this inequity, this bill proposes the establishment of a dedicated voucher system for poor and academically qualified students enrolled in private HEIs and TVIs, thereby amending RA 10931 to expand the scope of the TES and institutionalize a portable voucher mechanism. This is a step toward achieving inclusive and equitable tertiary education, ensuring that no Filipino student is denied access to quality education due to poverty or institutional limitations.


AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI
Representative, 3rd District of Bukidnon

²[UNIVERSAL-ACCESS-TO-QUALITY-TERTIARY-EDUCATION-ACT-RA-No-10931-IN-THE-PHILIPPINES-A-POLICY-BRIEF.pdf](#)

³ [Process evaluation of the universal access to quality tertiary education act \(RA 10931\): Status and prospects for improved implementation](#)

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5934

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A VOUCHER SYSTEM FOR POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, 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 the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 3 of Republic Act No. 10931 or the “Universal Access to Quality
2 Tertiary Education Act” is hereby amended to read as follows:

3
4 “Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

5 xxx

6 I) *POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENT* REFERS TO A
7 STUDENT WHO BELONGS TO A HOUSEHOLD RANKED AS “POOR” BY
8 THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
9 BASED ON PROOF OF INCOME AS PRESENTED TO THE UNIFAST
10 BOARD, AND WHO CONSISTENTLY MEETS THE ACADEMIC
11 RETENTION REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONCERNED HEI OR TVI FOR
12 A REGULAR UNIT LOAD;

13
14 xxx
15

1 L) *PROOF OF INCOME* REFERS TO ANY DOCUMENTATION USED TO
2 VERIFY, AUTHENTICATE, OR ASSESS THE ANNUAL INCOME OF A
3 PERSON OR HOUSEHOLD;

4 M) *PROPORTIONAL BUDGETARY ALLOCATION* REFERS TO A
5 BUDGETARY ALLOCATION WHICH SHALL SUBSIDIZE THE FULL
6 COST OF TUITION AND MISCELLANEOUS FEES IN THE FORM OF
7 PORTABLE VOUCHERS FOR POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED
8 STUDENTS;

9
10 xxx

11
12 Y) *VOUCHER SYSTEM* REFERS TO A SYSTEM THAT GRANTS
13 PORTABLE VOUCHERS TO POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED
14 STUDENTS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR TO
15 ALLOW THEM TO STUDY OR TRANSFER TO PRIVATE HEIs OR
16 PRIVATE TVIs IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE THERE ARE
17 EXISTING SUCs, LUCs, AND PUBLIC TVIs.”

18
19 **SEC. 2.** Section 3 (i) and (j) are amended to be denominated as Section 3(j) and (k),
20 respectively. Section 3 (k) to (u) are amended to be denominated as Section 3 (n) to (x).

21
22 **Section 3.** Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10931 is hereby amended to
23 read as follows:

24 “SEC. 7. *TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY (TES) for Filipino Students.* – To
25 support the cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof, a TES is
26 hereby established IN ALL SUCs, LUCs, PRIVATE HEIs, AND TVIs for all
27 Filipino students who [shall] enroll in THE FIRST undergraduate-post-
28 secondary TERTIARY EDUCATION program[s] [of SUCs, LUCs, private
29 HEIs and all TVIs] OF THEIR CHOICE. The TES shall be administered by the
30 UniFAST Board and the amount necessary to fund the TES shall be included in
31 the RESPECTIVE budgets of the CHED and the TESDA: *Provided, That*
32 prioritization shall be given to students in the following order: (a) students who
33 are part of households included in the UPDATED *Listahanan* [2.0] 3,
34 LAUNCHED ON AUGUST 1, 2022 BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL

1 WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT, ranked according to the estimated per
2 capita household income; and (b) students not part of the *Listahanan* [2.0] 3,
3 ranked according to estimated per capita household income based on [submitted
4 documentation of] THE proof income to the determined by the UniFAST Board;
5 *Provided[,] further*, That such prioritization shall not apply to Filipino students
6 in cities and municipalities with no existing SUC or LUC campus AND
7 PUBLIC TVI: *PROVIDED FINALLY*, THAT FILIPINO STUDENTS
8 ENROLLED IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN PRIVATE HEIs IN
9 CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE AN SUC OR LUC EXISTS, BUT
10 DOES NOT OFFER COMPARABLE OR EQUIVALENT DEGREE
11 PROGRAMS, SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR TES.

12
13 TO SUPPORT THE COST OF TERTIARY EDUCATION OR ANY
14 PART OR PORTION THEREOF, [T]he TES may, among others, [and to
15 support the cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof,] cover the
16 following:

- 17 a) Tuition and other school fees in private HEIs, and private [or LGU-operated]
18 TVIs, which shall be equivalent to the tuition and other school fees of the
19 nearest SUC or state-run TVI in there respective areas;
- 20 b) [An] [a] AllowanceS for books, SCHOOL supplies, transportation TO
21 AND FROM SCHOOL, and [miscellaneous personal expenses including a]
22 reasonable allowance for the documented rental or purchase of a [personal
23 computer or laptop] DESKTOP OR PORTABLE COMPUTER, WHEN
24 APPLICABLE [and other education-related expenses];
- 25 c) An allowance for rooms and board costs TO BE incurred by the student,
26 WHEN APPLICABLE;
- 27 d) xxx
- 28 e) xxx

29
30 ALL TES BENEFICIARIES SHALL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SUCH
31 BENEFITS OR SUBSIDY UNTIL THEY COMPLETE THEIR POST-
32 SECONDARY TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL COURSE OR HIGHER
33 EDUCATION DEGREE PROGRAM; *PROVIDED*, THAT THEY COMPLY

1 WITH RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
2 RULES OF THE HEIs AND TVIs.”

3
4 **SEC. 4.** A new Section denominated as Section 7A is hereby inserted after Section 7
5 of the Republic Act No. 10931 to read as follows:

6
7 SECTION 7A. *VOUCHER SYSTEM FOR POOR AND ACADEMICALLY*
8 *QUALIFIED STUDENTS OF PRIVATE HEIs AND TVIs.* – THERE SHALL BE
9 A PROPORTIONAL BUDGETARY ALLOCATION TO SUPPORT POOR
10 AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS THROUGH A
11 PORTABLE VOUCHER SYSTEM TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE
12 UNIFAST BOARD THAT SHALL ALLOW BENEFICIARIES TO STUDY IN
13 PRIVATE HEIs AND PRIVATE TVIs IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES
14 WHERE THERE ARE EXISTING SUCs, LUCs, AND PUBLIC TVIs.

15
16 THE ELIGIBILITY OF STUDENTS UNDER THE VOUCHER
17 SYSTEM SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE UNIFAST BOARD, BASED
18 ON REASONABLE ECONOMIC AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS,
19 NOT LATER THAN THE START OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR AS
20 DETERMINED BY THE CHED, AND, IN THE CASE OF TECHNICAL-
21 VOCATIONAL STUDENTS, NOT LATER THAN THE PERIOD
22 DESIGNATED BY THE TESDA, AND PRIOR TO THE START OF THE
23 SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAM OR COURSE.

24
25 STUDENTS OF PRIVATE HEIs AND PRIVATE TVIs WHO ARE TES
26 GRANTEES CAN NO LONGER QUALIFY FOR THE VOUCHER SYSTEM.
27 ALL VOUCHERS ISSUED UNDER THIS ACT SHALL BE USED
28 EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSISTING THE POOR AND
29 ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS WHO OPT TO STUDY IN
30 PRIVATE HEIs AND PRIVATE TVIs IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES
31 WHERE THERE ARE EXISTING SUCs, LUCs, AND PRIVATE TVIs.

32
33 FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND WITHIN SIXTY (60) DAYS FROM THE
34 EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT, THE UNIFAST BOARD SHALL

1 COMMISSION A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE COST OF
2 TUITION AND MISCELLANEOUS FEES FOR PRIVATE HEIs AND TVIs IN
3 THE COUNTRY, WHICH SHALL BE THE NOMINAL VALUE OF THE
4 VOUCHER UNDER THE SYSTEM. THE AMOUNT OF TUITION AND
5 MISCELLANEOUS FEES SHALL BE REVIEWED EVERY THREE (3)
6 YEARS TO ALLOW FOR ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO INFLATION.”
7

8 **SEC. 5.** Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED shall issue
9 rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.
10

11 **SEC. 6.** Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the “Universal Access to Quality
12 Tertiary Education Act”, is hereby amended. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
13 rules and regulations, and issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions
14 of this Act are repealed, amended or modified accordingly.
15

16 **SEC. 7.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (25) days after its publication in the *Official*
17 *Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
18

19 *Approved,*