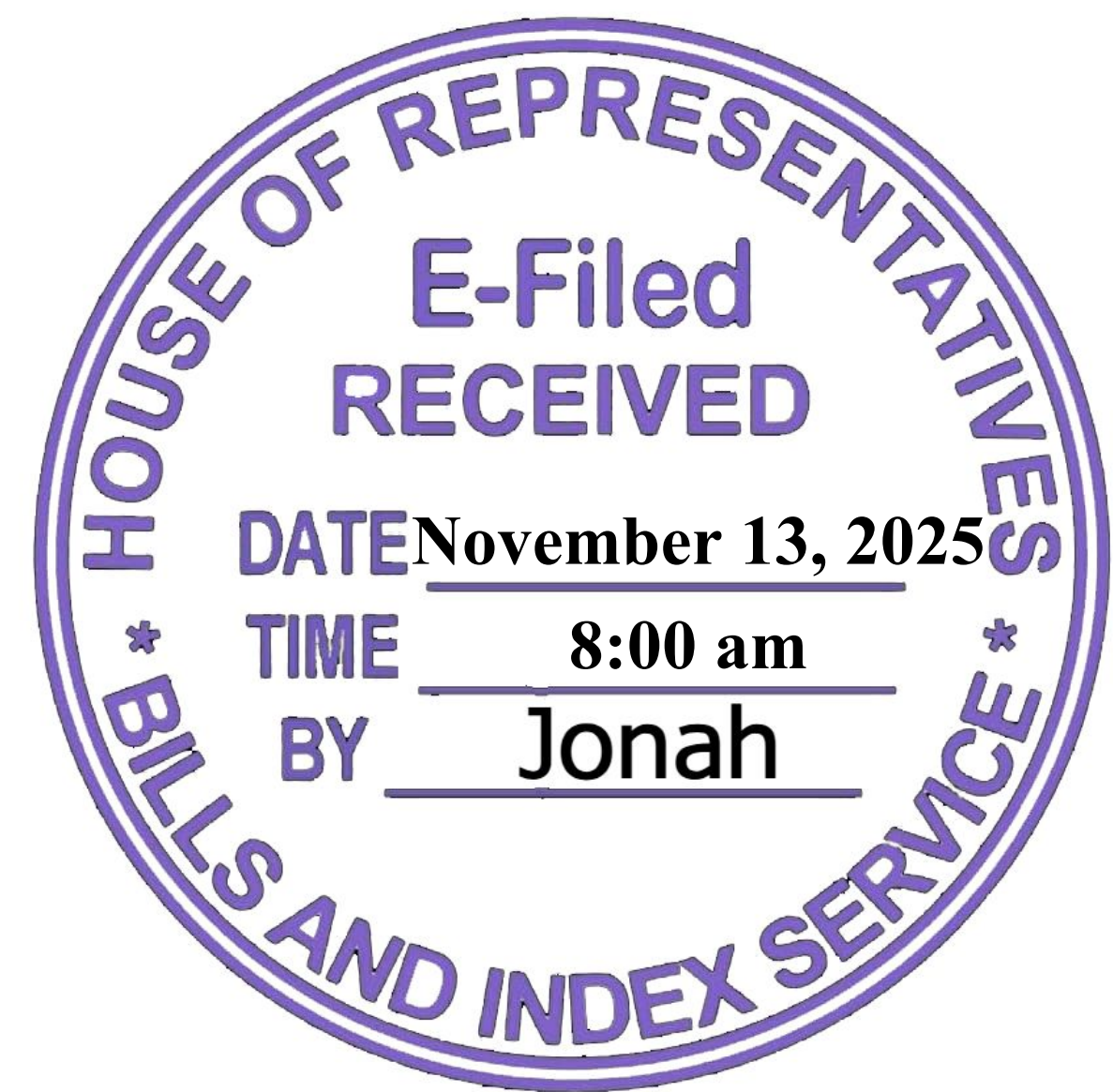




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5950



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE MARIA CRISTINA C. ANGELES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education is a right guaranteed by the Constitution, yet hidden costs of schooling, such as the purchase of notebooks, pens, and other school supplies, continue to burden many Filipino families, especially those living below the poverty line. While the government has already implemented Republic Act No. 10931 (Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act) which provides free tuition in State Universities and Colleges, there remains no national program that addresses the non-tuition barriers to education in basic schools.

This bill seeks to fill that gap by mandating the Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with Local Government Units (LGUs), to distribute a basic school kit to every student enrolled in public elementary and junior high schools at the start of each school year. Each kit shall include essential materials such as notebooks, pens, paper, crayons, rulers, and a school bag.

The measure operationalizes the principles of Republic Act No. 9155 (Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001) which entrusts DepEd with the responsibility to ensure access to quality education for all Filipino learners. It also builds on the precedent set by RA 11037, which recognized that learning is hampered when children lack basic needs like nutrition and extends that logic to learning tools and supplies. To ensure sustainability, the program may be implemented phased and targeted in coordination with LGUs, with provisions for transparency and anti-corruption safeguards especially in procurement.

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


MARIA CRISTINA C. ANGELES



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HOUSE BILL NO. 5950

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE MARIA CRISTINA C. ANGELES

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE FREE BASIC SCHOOL
SUPPLIES PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, MANDATING THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A BASIC SCHOOL KIT AT THE START
OF EVERY SCHOOL YEAR**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “Free Basic School Supplies Act of 2025.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is the policy of the State to ensure that no Filipino child is deprived of education due to economic constraints. To this end, the State shall strengthen access to quality basic education by addressing non-tuition barriers, including the lack of essential learning materials, consistent with the constitutional mandate to promote accessible and equitable education for all.

SECTION 3. *Coverage.* — This Act shall apply to all students enrolled in public elementary and junior high schools nationwide.

SECTION 4. *Free Basic School Supplies Program.* — The Department of Education (DepEd) shall implement a program to provide every student covered under this Act with a basic school kit at the start of every school year.

Each basic school kit shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Notebooks and writing pads;
2. Pencils, pens, and basic coloring materials;
3. Erasers, scissors, and ruler; and
4. A school bag.

DepEd may modify the contents of the school kit based on grade level, region, or other relevant considerations, subject to budgetary appropriations.

SECTION 5. *Role of Local Government Units.* — Local Government Units (LGUs) shall assist DepEd in the identification of beneficiaries, distribution of supplies, and monitoring of program implementation within their respective jurisdictions. LGUs may also provide counterpart funding or in-kind contributions to support the program.

Provided that in the production and distribution of the school kits and supplies under this Act, no packaging, labeling, marking, or material shall contain the name, image, logo, initials, or any form of identification of any public official or employee.

Such acts are hereby prohibited at all times, as they constitute the use of public funds and programs for personal or partisan promotion, contrary to the principles of public accountability and ethical service under Republic Act No. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees) and Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), and without prejudice to other applicable laws and administrative sanctions.

SECTION 6. *Funding.* — The amount necessary to implement this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the budget of the Department of Education. LGUs and private partners may also provide supplemental funding or donations for program expansion.

SECTION 7. *Transparency and Accountability.* — DepEd, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the Commission on Audit (COA), shall establish transparency and anti-corruption mechanisms, including:

- (a) Public posting of procurement plans and beneficiaries;
- (b) Third-party monitoring by parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and civil society groups; and
- (c) Annual reports to Congress on program implementation and spending efficiency.

SECTION 7(A). *Prohibition on Political Identification.* — In the implementation of this Act, it shall be unlawful for any public official or employee to include their name, image, initials, logo, slogan, or any similar material in any school kit, supply item, or packaging distributed under the Free Basic School Supplies Program.

Any such act shall be considered a misuse of public funds and a violation of Republic Act No. 6713 (Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees), Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act), and relevant Commission on Audit circulars. If done during the election period, violations shall be subject to administrative and criminal penalties under existing laws, including the Omnibus Election Code, RA 6713.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, DepEd, in consultation with DBM, COA, and the League of Provinces, Cities, and Municipalities, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.