

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5973



Introduced by Representative ANTOLIN “LENLEN” A. ORETA III

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING STANDARDS FOR RELATED LEARNING EXPERIENCES
(RLE) IN NURSING EDUCATION, PROHIBITING THE COLLECTION OF RLE
FEEs IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (SUCs) AND LOCAL
UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES (LUCS), AND PROVIDING FUNDING SUPPORT
THROUGH THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Related Learning Experiences (RLEs) constitute a mandatory and foundational component of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) curriculum, as prescribed under Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 14, Series of 2009. These experiences provide nursing students with supervised clinical exposure and practical training in real-world healthcare settings, thereby ensuring the development of competent, ethical, and service-oriented Filipino nurses.

While the enactment of Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, has significantly expanded access to higher education in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs), it has not fully addressed the hidden costs that continue to burden students in programs with mandatory clinical components.

Among these are the fees associated with Related Learning Experiences (RLEs)—including expenses for training, transportation, insurance, and clinical site access—which are often collected separately and without standardized regulation. For many nursing students, especially those from low-income families, these costs are more than logistical—they are deeply personal barriers that jeopardize their ability to complete their education and fulfill their calling to serve in the healthcare profession.

This measure recognizes that the pursuit of nursing is not merely academic—it is a vocation rooted in compassion, resilience, and public service. By removing financial obstacles to clinical training, the State affirms its duty to uphold inclusive and equitable education, and to invest in the future of a health workforce that reflects the dignity and diversity of the Filipino people.

This legislative measure seeks to institutionalize the non-collection of RLE fees from students enrolled in SUCs and LUCs. It mandates these institutions to submit their projected RLE expenses to CHED for funding, either through the regular budget process or via the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST). Furthermore, the bill proposes to expand the coverage of the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) to include RLE fees incurred by nursing students enrolled in accredited private higher education institutions.

By standardizing the implementation and financing of RLEs across public and private institutions, this measure affirms the State's constitutional duty to make education accessible to all and strengthens the country's health workforce by removing financial barriers to clinical training. It is a step toward a more inclusive and equitable nursing education system—one that recognizes the dignity of every student and the essential role they play in safeguarding public health.

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


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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 "Libreng RLE Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all, pursuant to Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Consistent with this mandate, and recognizing the crucial role of Related Learning Experiences (RLE) in nursing education, the State shall institutionalize standards for RLE and ensure that no additional financial burden shall be imposed on nursing students in the country for the conduct of such activities.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* This Act shall apply to:

- a. All SUCs and LUCs offering nursing education programs duly recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- b. All private higher education institutions (HEIs) with CHED-accredited nursing programs; and
- c. All nursing students enrolled in recognized nursing education programs in the Philippines.

SEC. 4. *Standards for Related Learning Experiences (RLE).* - CHED shall institutionalize and enforce standards for the conduct of RLEs. These standards shall guarantee the provision of quality clinical instruction and learning environments, adequate clinical partnerships, and competent supervision of nursing students.

SEC. 5. *Prohibition on Collection of RLE Fees in SUCs and LUCs.* - No SUC or LUC shall

collect fees or charges from nursing students for the conduct of RLEs that are part of their approved academic program. All RLE-related expenses shall be considered part of the tuition or institutional costs charged to the government through the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST).

SEC. 6. *Budgeting and Funding of RLE in SUCs and LUCs.* - All SUCs and LUCs offering nursing programs shall submit projected RLE expenses to CHED annually.

CHED shall evaluate and consolidate these for inclusion in its annual budget proposal to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Approved funding shall be disbursed to SUCs and LUCs through UniFAST or other designated CHED mechanisms.

SEC. 7. *Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) for Nursing Students in Private HEIs.* - Nursing students enrolled in accredited private HEIs may apply for assistance for RLE-related expenses under the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) program pursuant to Republic Act No. 10931. TES guidelines shall be updated to include RLE fees as allowable costs.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, CHED, in coordination with DBM and UniFAST, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* - The amounts necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the CHED budget and UniFAST Fund.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of the provisions shall not be affected.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,