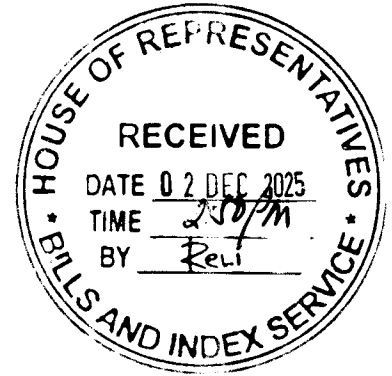


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. **6548**



Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education is a landmark piece of legislation. However, certain realities must be accommodated to fully achieve the objectives envisioned by the law. Foremost among these is the limited number of public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that can accommodate all higher education students. For Academic Year 2024-2025, there were only 709 public HEIs (SUCs and LUCs, including satellite campuses). Moreover, geographical challenges restrict student access to these public HEIs. In addition, the limited range of courses or degrees offered in each public HEIs narrows down the options of students who are relying on government subsidy in their studies. Any or a combination of any of these and other factors hinder students from enjoying the benefits of the law.

During the same Academic Year, 2.3 million students were enrolled in these 709 public HEIs. Meanwhile, the 1,619 private HEIs across the country served 2.896 million students. Many of these private HEIs are capable of absorbing more enrollees to decongest its public sector counterparts, particularly those constrained by geography. To maximize this potential, this bill seeks to grant financial assistance to students opting to study in private HEIs and private TVIs through a voucher system.

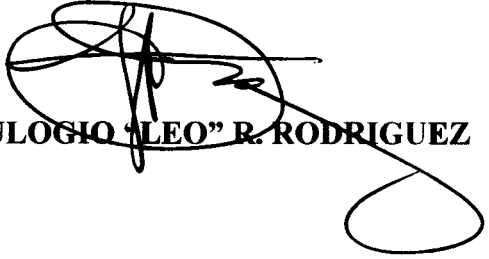
Article XIV, Section 2, paragraph 3 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall establish and maintain a system of scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students in both public and private schools, especially to the underprivileged. Creating the voucher system is compliant with this Constitutional mandate. Furthermore, Section 4, paragraph 1 of the same Article provides that the State recognizes the complementary roles of public and private institutions in the educational system and shall exercise reasonable supervision and regulation of all educational institutions.

Good governance is characterized by the sharing of the responsibility of nation-building among all sectors of the society. As we continuously strive for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth, let us create synergy with the private sector in nurturing our youth and equipping them to become productive and globally competitive.

Notably, the House of Representatives had already approved this bill seeking to establish the voucher system for poor but academically qualified students opting to study in private HEIs and Private TVIs on Third and Final Reading during the 19th Congress. However,

due to lack of material time, the Senate was unable to consider and approve the said measure. In this view, to maximize the potential of Republic Act No. 10931, this representation has filed the same bill in the 20th Congress.

Hence, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



EULOGIO "LEO" R. RODRIGUEZ

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6548**

Introduced by Honorable EULOGIO “LEO” R. RODRIGUEZ

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A VOUCHER SYSTEM FOR POOR AND ACADEMICALLY
QUALIFIED STUDENTS OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL 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 the Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Section 3 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:

(A) *COMMUNITY BASED MONITORING SYSTEM (CBMS)* REFERS TO AN ORGANIZED TECHNOLOGY- BASED SYSTEM OF COLLECTING, PROCESSING AND VALIDATING NECESSARY DISAGGREGATED DATA THAT MAY BE USED FOR PLANNING, PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT MONITORING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WHILE EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS. IT INVOLVES THE GENERATION OF DATA AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WHICH SERVES AS BASIS IN TARGETING HOUSEHOLDS IN THE PLANNING, BUDGETING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS GEARED TOWARDS POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THIS SYSTEM MERGES THE METHODOLOGIES USED IN DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES OF ALL NATIONAL AGENCIES, GEO-TAGGING, AND THE CBMS IMPLEMENTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGUs). IT ENTAILS A CENSUS OF HOUSEHOLDS UNDERTAKEN BY THE LGUS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE COMMUNITY USING ACCELERATED POVERTY PROFILING SYSTEM IN THE DATA COLLECTION, PROCESSING, MAPPING AND ANALYSIS OF DATA;

xxx

[(f) *National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR)* or *Listahanan 2.0* refers to the information management off the Department of Social

Welfare and Development (DSWD) that identifies who and where the poor are in the country. The system makes available to national government agencies and other social protection stakeholders a database of poor families as reference in identifying potential beneficiaries of social protection programs;]

xxx

(I) *POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENT* REFERS TO A STUDENT WHO BELONGS TO A HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFIED AS POOR IN THE CBMS, AND WHO CONSISTENTLY MEETS THE ACADEMIC RETENTION REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONCERNED HEI OR TVI FOR REGULAR UNIT LOAD;

xxx

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

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

xxx

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

SEC. 2. Section 3 (a) to (e) are amended to be denominated as Section 3 (b) to (f). Section 3 (i) and (j) are amended to be denominated as Section (j) and (k), respectively. Section 3 (k) to (u) are amended to be denominated as Section 3 (n) to (x).

SEC. 3. Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10931 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 7. *TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY (TES) for Filipino Students.* - To support the cost of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof, a TES is hereby established IN ALL SUCs, LUCs, PRIVATE HEIs AND TVIs for all Filipino students who [shall] enroll in THE FIRST undergraduate-post-secondary TERTIARY EDUCATION program[s] [of SUCs, LUCs, private HEIs and all TVIs] OF THEIR CHOICE. The TES shall be administered by the UniFAST Board and the amount necessary to fund the TES shall be included in the RESPECTIVE 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] IDENTIFIED IN THE CBMS AS POOR, ranked according to the estimated per capita household income; and (b) students not [part of the Listahanan 2.0] IDENTIFIED BY

THE CBMS AS POOR, ranked according to estimated per capita household income based on [submitted documentation of] THE proof of income to be determined by the UniFAST Board: Provided[, further, That such prioritization shall not apply to Filipino students in cities and municipalities with no existing SUC or LUC campus AND PUBLIC TVI: *PROVIDED, FINALLY*, THAT FILIPINO STUDENTS ENROLLED IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN PRIVATE HEIs IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE AN SUC OR LUC EXISTS, BUT DOES NOT OFFER COMPARABLE OR QUIVALENT DEGREE PROGRAMS, SHALL BE ELIGIBILIE FOR TES.

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

(a) Tuition and other school fees 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;

(b) [An] AllowanceS for books, SCHOOL supplies, transportation TO AND FROM SCHOOL, and [miscellaneous personal expenses, including a] reasonable allowance for the documented rental or purchase of a [personal computer or laptop] DESKTOP OR PORTABLE COMPUTER, WHEN APPLICABLE [and other education-related expenses];

(c) An allowance for room and board costs incurred by the student, WHEN APPLICABLE;

(d) xxx

(e) xxx

ALL TES BENEFICIARIES SHALL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SUCH BENEFITS OR SUBSIDY UNTIL THEY COMPLETE THEIR POST-SECONDARY TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL COURSE OR HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREE PROGRAM: *PROVIDED*, THAT THEY COMPLY WITH RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES OF THE HEIs AND TVIs.”

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

“SEC. 7A. *VOUCHER SYSTEM FOR POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS OF PRIVATE HEIs AND TVIs.* – THERE SHALL BE A PROPORTIONAL BUDGETARY ALLOCATION TO SUPPORT POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENTS THROUGH A PORTABLE VOUCHER SYSTEM TO BE ADINISTERED BY THE UNIFAST BOARD THAT SHALL ALLOW BENEFICIARIES TO STUDY IN PRIVATE HEIs AND PRIVATE TVIs IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE THERE ARE EXISTING SUCs, LUCs AND PUBLIC TVIs.

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

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

FOR THIS PURPOSE, AND WITHIN SIXTY (60) DAYS FROM THE EFFECTIVITY OF THIS ACT, THE UNIFAST BOARD SHALL COMMISSION A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE COST OF TUITION AND MISCELLANEOUS FEES FOR PRIVATE HEIs AND TVIs IN THE COUNTRY, WHICH SHALL BE THE NOMINAL VALUE OF THE VOUCHER UNDER THE SYSTEM. THE AMOUNT OF TUITION AND MISCELLANEOUS FEES SHALL BE REVIEWED EVERY THREE (3) YEARS TO ALLOW FOR ADJUSTMENTS DUE TO INFLATION.”

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

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

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

Approved,