

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7008



INTRODUCED BY **HONORABLE JANICE V. DEGAMO**

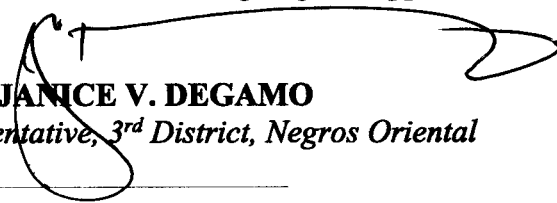
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture is an essential industry in the Philippines. The hard work and tireless efforts of our farmers and fisherfolk directly sustain our population, underpin food and nutrition security, generate economic growth, and carry deep cultural significance. Data from the *2024 Selected Statistics on Agriculture and Fisheries* published by the Philippine Statistics Authority show that in 2023, the Gross Value Added (GVA) in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing represented 8.6 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product ¹(GDP).

Despite these vital contributions, our farmers and fisherfolk remain among the poorest and most marginalized groups in society. The Philippine Statistics Authority reported that in 2023, both sectors experienced some of the highest poverty rates among other basic sectors—27 percent for farmers and 27.4 percent for fisherfolk. This means that a significant proportion of farmer and fisherfolk households are living below the official poverty threshold.² Because of poverty, access to education becomes a luxury for the families of our farmers and fisherfolk.

This bill seeks to support the education of the children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolk through educational scholarship grants including provisions for transportation, dormitory expenses, and book allowances among others, because education is a fundamental right that should be available to all.

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


JANICE V. DEGAMO
Representative, 3rd District, Negros Oriental

¹ Agriculture and Fisheries Indicators System Economic Growth: Agriculture and Fisheries, 2023, Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023

https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/infographics/Infographics_Economic%20Growth%202023_signed.pdf (last accessed, 10 December 2025)

² Poverty Incidence Declined from 2021 to 2023 in Ten Basic Sectors, Philippine Statistics Authority, released on 31 March 2025, <https://psa.gov.ph/statistics/poverty> (last accessed 10 December 2025)

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AN ACT

**GRANTING SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS TO THE CHILDREN AND
DEPENDENTS OF FARMERS AND FISHERFOLK, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

Section 1. Short Title. This Act shall be known as the "Educational Scholarship for Children and Dependents of Farmers and Fisherfolk Act."

Section 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.

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.

Section 3. Scholarship for Children and Dependents of Farmers and Fisherfolk.- The Department of Agriculture (DA), in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), shall establish a scholarship program for the children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolk who are certified as a child or dependent of a farmer or fisherfolk by the municipal or city agriculture office, or through other certification mechanisms as may be determined by DepEd, CHED, and DA or those children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolk listed in the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA). Priority shall be given to children and dependents of small farmers and fisherfolk.

The children and the dependents of farmers and fisherfolk shall be entitled to a full scholarship from basic education until the completion of tertiary education subject to rules and regulations, as mandated by this Act. Provided that the aforementioned meet the admission requirements of the public elementary and secondary schools, and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), where they intend to enroll in.

The benefits shall include all expenses for education in public elementary and secondary schools, and SUCs, such as but not limited to tuition fees, miscellaneous and other fees, board and lodging, transportation expenses, allowances for books, clothing food, and other similar expenses.

Section 4. Special Funds for Educational Benefits.- In order to carry out the provisions of this Act, there is hereby established a Special Fund, to be known as the Education Benefits for Farmers and Fisherfolk Fund,” in the amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00). Such fund shall be perpetually maintained and used exclusively for the benefit of children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolk; *Provided*, That not more than 5% of this Fund shall be used for the administration of this Special Fund.

Section 5. Administration of the Fund.- The Unified Student Financial Assistance for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Governing Board, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture (DA), the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and three (3) representatives from the farmers and fisherfolk selected from a verified procedure of selection as agreed upon by the farmers and fisherfolk, shall have the primary responsibility of managing and supervising the Fund. It shall also be responsible in formulating the mechanics, scope and limitation, and requirements of the scholarship program.

The UniFAST Secretariat shall serve as the Secretariat providing administrative support to the board and shall perform functions as authorized by the UniFAST Board.

Section 6. Non- Duplication of Benefits.- Nothing in this Act shall be construed to duplicate the benefits provided under Republic Act No. 10931 or the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, Republic Act No. 11524 or the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Fund Act, and other government programs such as Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund-Grants-in-Aid for Higher Education Program (ACEF-GIAHEP) and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources -Fisheries Scholarship Program (BFAR-FSP).

Section 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.- Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the DA, DepEd, CHED, and other private and public stakeholders including representatives from the farmers and fisherfolk sectors and civil society organizations, shall organize and promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 8. Separability Clause.- If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

Section. 9. Repealing Clause. - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive, letter of instruction, rule or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 10. Effectivity.- This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,