



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 7160

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 10931, otherwise known as the “Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act,” was enacted to remove financial barriers to higher and technical education through the Free Higher Education Program and the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES). While the law has significantly expanded access to tertiary education, implementation experience has revealed gaps in coverage, prioritization, and the scope of allowable education-related expenses under the TES.

In practice, many financially disadvantaged students enrolled in private higher education institutions (HEIs) and technical-vocational institutions (TVIs) continue to face difficulty accessing TES support, particularly in areas where public institutions are unavailable, limited, or oversubscribed. Moreover, the current statutory language does not fully reflect the actual costs incurred by students in completing their programs, especially those requiring internships, related learning experiences, licensure examinations, and digital learning tools.

This measure seeks to amend Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10931 to clarify and expand the coverage of the Tertiary Education Subsidy in a manner that is student-centered, equitable, and responsive to present educational realities. It expressly affirms that TES may be availed of by Filipino students enrolled in State Universities and Colleges, Local Universities and Colleges, public and private HEIs, and public and private TVIs, subject to a rational prioritization framework based on socioeconomic need and geographic access to public institutions.

The bill refines the prioritization scheme to ensure that students from poor and near-poor households enrolled in public institutions remain the first priority, while also extending TES eligibility to students in private HEIs and TVIs, particularly in areas with no public tertiary or technical-vocational institutions. This approach balances social equity with practical access to education, recognizing that private institutions often serve as the only viable option in many localities.

The proposed amendments further expand the allowable uses of TES to cover legitimate and necessary education-related expenses, including tuition and other

school fees, transportation, learning materials, digital equipment, room and board, disability-related support, internship and related learning experience fees, and one-time costs for professional licensure or certification. These changes are intended to reduce hidden and out-of-pocket costs that often delay completion or force students to discontinue their studies.

Finally, the measure ensures continuity of TES support until program completion, subject to reasonable retention and residency requirements, to promote completion rather than mere access. The determination of subsidy amounts and eligibility requirements remains vested in the UniFAST Board, in coordination with CHED and TESDA, consistent with available appropriations and existing safeguards.

By clarifying coverage, expanding allowable benefits, and refining prioritization, this amendment strengthens the TES as an effective social protection and human capital investment tool, ensuring that financial assistance translates into actual access, retention, and completion of tertiary and technical-vocational education.

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


EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA



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AN ACT
EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY,
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 House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 7 of Republic Act No. 10931 or the "Universal Access to
2 Quality Tertiary Education Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:
3

4 "Section 7. TES for Filipino Students. - To support the cost of tertiary
5 education or any part or portion thereof, a TES is hereby established **IN ALL**
6 **SUCS, LUCS, PRIVATE HEIS AND TVIS** for all Filipino students who ~~[shall]~~
7 enroll in **THE** undergraduate-post-secondary **TERTIARY EDUCATION OR**
8 **TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL TRAINING** program[s] ~~[of SUCs, LUCs, private~~
9 ~~HEIs and all TVIS]~~ **OF THEIR CHOICE**. The TES shall be administered by the
10 UniFAST Board and the amount necessary to fund the TES shall be included in
11 the **RESPECTIVE** budgets of the CHED and the TESDA: Provided, That
12 prioritization shall be given to **QUALIFIED** students in the following order: (a)
13 students **ENROLLED IN SUCS, LUCS AND PUBLIC TVIs** who are part of
14 households included in the **UPDATED OR MOST RECENT** Listahanan 2.0,
15 ranked according to the estimated per capita household income; ~~[and]~~ (b)
16 students **ENROLLED IN SUCS, LUCS AND PUBLIC TVIS WHO ARE** not part
17 of the Listahanan 2.0, ranked according to estimated per capita household
18 income based on submitted documentation of proof of income to be determined
19 by the UniFAST Board ~~[:Provided, further, That such prioritization shall not apply~~
20 ~~to Filipino students in cities and municipalities with no existing SUC or LUC~~
21 ~~campus];~~ **(C) STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN PRIVATE HEIS AND TVIS**
22 **IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE THERE ARE NO ESTABLISHED**
23 **SUC, LUC, OR PUBLIC TVI; AND (D) STUDENTS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN**
24 **PRIVATE HEIS AND TVIS IN CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE THERE**

1 ARE ESTABLISHED SUCS, LUCS, OR PUBLIC TVIS: PROVIDED, FURTHER,
2 THAT THE CHED, IN CONSULTATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT
3 AGENCIES CONCERNED AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS
4 OF THIS ACT, SHALL DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF SUBSIDIES TO BE
5 GRANTED, AND THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR TES
6 BENEFICIARIES.

7
8 TO SUPPORT THE COST OF TERTIARY EDUCATION OR ANY PART OR
9 PORTION THEREOF, [T]he TES may, among others, [~~and to support the cost~~
10 ~~of tertiary education or any part or portion thereof;~~] cover the following:

11
12 (a) **FULL** [~~T~~]uition and other school fees (**TOSF**) in private HEIS, and private or
13 LGU-operated, which shall be equivalent to the tuition and other school fees of
14 the nearest SUC or state-run TVI in their respective areas: **PROVIDED, THAT**
15 **SUCH TOSF SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AVERAGE AMOUNT SPENT BY**
16 **GOVERNMENT PER STUDENT UNDER THE FREE HIGHER EDUCATION**
17 **PROGRAMS IN SUCS AND LUCS: PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT IN CASES**
18 **WHERE THE TOSF EXCEED THIS AVERAGE AMOUNT, THE UNIFAST**
19 **BOARD SHALL ADMINISTER GUIDELINES IN SETTING THE AMOUNT OF**
20 **THE TES;**

21
22 (b) Allowance for books, **SCHOOL** supplies, transportation **TO AND FROM**
23 **SCHOOL**, and [~~miscellaneous personal expenses, including a~~] reasonable
24 allowance for the documented rental or purchase of a [~~personal computer or~~
25 ~~laptop~~] **DESKTOP OR PORTABLE COMPUTERS** and other education-related
26 expenses, **IF APPLICABLE;**

27
28 (c) An allowance for room and board costs incurred by the student **DURING THE**
29 **DURATION OF THEIR STUDIES, IF APPLICABLE;**

30
31 (d) For a student with a disability, an allowance for expenses related to the
32 students disability, including special services, personal assistance,
33 transportation, equipment, and supplies that are reasonably incurred; [~~and~~]

34
35 **(E) INTERNSHIP AND RELATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE (RLE) FEES**
36 **THAT ARE REQUIRED BY THE CURRICULUM, INCLUDING THOSE FOR**
37 **NURSING AND OTHER ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS; AND**

38
39 (e) **(F)** For a student in a program requiring professional license or certification,
40 the one (1)-time cost of obtaining the first professional credentials or
41 qualifications, which may include the following: application fees, notarial fees,
42 review classes fees, insurance premium fees and documentation fees: Provided,
43 That the amount of subsidy shall be based on the guidelines set forth by the
44 UniFAST Board and on the annual budgetary appropriation for this purpose.

45
46 **ALL TES BENEFICIARIES SHALL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SUCH**
47 **BENEFITS OR SUBSIDY UNTIL THE COMPLETION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE**
48 **UNDERGRADUATE, POST-SECONDARY TERTIARY EDUCATION, OR**

1 **TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS: PROVIDED, THAT THE TES**
2 **BENEFICIARIES COMPLY WITH THE RETENTION AND RESIDENCY**
3 **REQUIREMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS**
4 **OF THE SUCS, LUCS, PRIVATE HEIS AND TVIS."**
5

6 **SEC. 2. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within sixty (60) days from
7 the effectivity of this Act, the UniFAST Board, in consultation with the CHED, DepEd,
8 DSWD, TESDA, and other relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the necessary
9 rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.
10

11 **SEC. 3. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
12 unconstitutional, the remainder hereof or any provisions not affected thereby shall
13 remain in force and effect.
14

15 **SEC. 4. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
16 executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions
17 of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

18 **SEC. 5. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete
19 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
20

21 *Approved,*