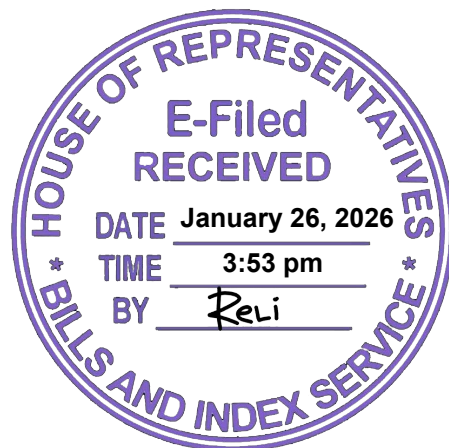


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7329**



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A VOUCHER SYSTEM FOR POOR AND ACADEMICALLY
QUALIFIED STUDENTS OF PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION 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”

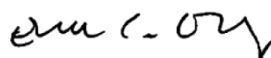
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Education is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The State is mandated to promote equitable access to quality education through scholarships, subsidies, and other forms of financial assistance, particularly for deserving and underprivileged students in both public and private institutions.

Republic Act No. 10931, or the *Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act*, significantly expanded access to tertiary education through free tuition in public institutions and the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES). However, many poor but academically qualified students remain enrolled in private higher education institutions (HEIs) and technical-vocational institutions (TVIs) due to limited public school capacity, geographic constraints, or the absence of comparable academic programs in public institutions.

This bill seeks to address this gap by amending Republic Act No. 10931 to expand TES coverage and establish a targeted, portable voucher system for poor and academically qualified students in private HEIs and TVIs. The proposed measure ensures that financial assistance follows the student and promotes equitable access to tertiary education, regardless of institutional ownership.

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


ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

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

xxx

I) POOR AND ACADEMICALLY QUALIFIED STUDENT REFERS TO A STUDENT WHO BELONGS TO A HOUSEHOLD RANKED AS “POOR” BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT BASED ON PROOF OF INCOME AS PRESENTED TO THE UNIFAST BOARD, AND WHO CONSISTENTLY MEETS THE ACADEMIC RETENTION REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONCERNED HEI OR TVI FOR A 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 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 CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE THERE ARE EXISTING SUCs, LUCs, AND PUBLIC TVIs.”

Section 2. Section 3 (i) and (j) are amended to be denominated as Section 3 (j) and (k) respectively. Section 3 (k) to (u) are amended to be denominated as Section 3 (n) to (x).

Section 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 UPDATED *Listahanan* [2.0] 3, LAUNCHED ON AUGUST 1, 2022 BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT, ranked according to the estimated per capita household income; and (b) students not part of the *Listahanan* [2.0] 3, 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 EQUIVALENT DEGREE PROGRAMS, SHALL BE ELIGIBLE 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] [a] 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 TO BE 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.”

Section 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 ADMINISTERED 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.”

Section 5. Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in coordination with the TESDA and the UniFAST Board shall issue the rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

Section 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.

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

Approved,