

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7374**



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the digital age, connectivity is not a privilege – it is a prerequisite to learning, participation, and opportunity. And yet, millions of Filipino students remain effectively disconnected, not for lack of devices or network coverage, but for lack of economic means. The affordability barrier to mobile data, prepaid load, and basic connectivity services has become a modern expression of structural inequality.

A recent study found a statistically significant link between digital access and poverty incidence in the poorest region of Luzon. Households with electricity and mobile phones but without internet access were found to be significantly more likely to fall below the poverty threshold. The study affirms that the digital divide is not just a matter of infrastructure but a function of cost, access, and economic exclusion.¹

This bill responds to that reality by institutionalizing a twenty percent (20%) discount on mobile load, SMS, call, and internet services for all bona fide elementary, secondary, technical-vocational, and tertiary students enrolled in public or private institutions duly recognized by the State. This measure aims to reduce the economic burden of connectivity for students, particularly those from low-income households, and recognizes that affordable digital access is essential to fulfilling the right to quality education as mandated under the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.²

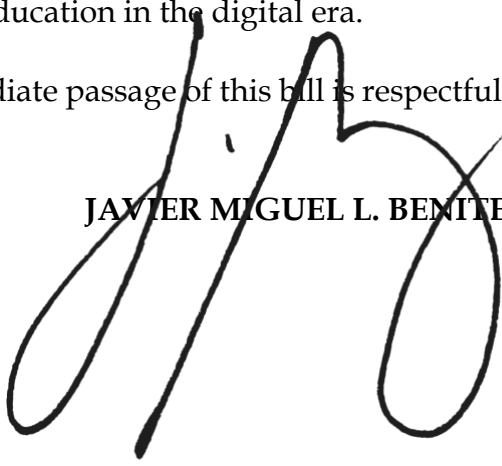
¹ Onsay, E., Baltar, K. (2025). A machine learning approach in predicting poverty in the poorest region of Luzon, Philippines. *International Journal of Population Studies* 4879. <https://doi.org/10.36922/ijps.4879>. (Date last accessed: August 7, 2025).

² 1987 Constitution, Article XIV, Section 1.

Telecommunications entities and internet service providers (ISPs) shall be mandated to implement the discount across prepaid and postpaid platforms. They may claim a tax deduction equivalent to the amount of the benefit extended, consistent with established principles of tax equity and fiscal support for socially beneficial programs. Regulatory oversight shall be exercised by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), to ensure uniform implementation and compliance.

Filed as a counterpart to the Senate version introduced by Senator Paolo Benigno “Bam” Aquino IV, this measure contributes to the broader legislative effort to eliminate economic barriers to learning and to operationalize the State policy of inclusive, equitable, and resilient education in the digital era.

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



JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

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Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING THE GRANT OF STUDENT LOAD
DISCOUNT PRIVILEGE ON MOBILE AND INTERNET SERVICES
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 "*Load4Learners
Act*"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development. It also recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building.

Pursuant to these policies, the State ensures equitable access to education by providing necessary support to students, particularly in their communication and online learning needs.

To achieve this, the State shall:

(a) Establish a mechanism that ensures the mandatory grant of a student load discount privilege;

(b) Enlist the cooperation of telecommunication companies (TELCOs) in extending assistance to students through this privilege; and

(c) Encourage students, particularly the poor and underprivileged, to utilize digital tools for education.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

(a) *Student* refers to any Filipino citizen currently enrolled in a duly authorized elementary, secondary, technical-vocational, or higher education institution, excluding post-graduate degree courses;

(b) Telecommunication Companies (“TELCOs”) refer to companies providing mobile, text, call, and internet services in the Philippines;

(c) Retailers refer to individuals or business establishments, whether physical or online, duly authorized to sell or distribute prepaid mobile load, mobile data, call and text services, and other internet services to consumers on behalf of TELCOs;

(d) Student Load Discount refers to a twenty percent (20%) discount on prepaid and postpaid mobile load, text, call, and internet services availed by eligible students.

SEC. 4. *Coverage.* – This Act shall cover all telecommunication services, including but not limited to:

(a) Prepaid mobile load for text, call, and data;

(b) Postpaid mobile plans; and

(c) Broadband and internet services used for educational purposes.

SEC. 5. *Student Load Discount Privilege.* – A student shall be entitled to a twenty (20%) discount on mobile load, text, call, and internet services, subject to the following conditions:

(a) The discount shall be applied upon presentation of a valid school ID or proof of enrollment;

(b) The discount shall be available year-round, including weekends and holidays; and

(c) The discount shall apply only to personal educational use and may not be transferred.

SEC. 6. *Prohibition on Double Discounts.* - Students cannot avail of multiple discounts at the same time. If a promotional discount from a TELCO is higher than twenty (20%), the student may choose which discount to apply.

SEC. 7. *Tax Deduction for TELCOS.* - TELCOs may claim tax deductions equivalent to the cost of the discount granted, subject to the rules to be promulgated by the Bureau of Internal Revenue ("BIR").

SEC. 8. *Implementation and Monitoring.* - The National Telecommunications Commission ("NTC") and the Department of Information and Communications Technology ("DICT") shall oversee the implementation of this Act. TELCOs shall submit quarterly compliance reports.

SEC. 9. *Penalties.* - The following penalties shall be imposed for violation of this Act:

(a) TELCOs that refuse to grant the discount provided under this Act shall be fined:

i. Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000) for the first offense;

ii. One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000) for the second offense;
and

iii. Two Hundred Thousand Pesos (P200,000) for the third and subsequent offenses.

(b) Retailers who, without justifiable reason, fail or refuse to provide the student load discount, or who impose conditions contrary to the intent of this Act, shall be subject to the following penalties:

- i. Twenty-Five Thousand Pesos (P25,000) for the first offense;
- ii. Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000) for the second offense; and
- iii. One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000) and possible disqualification or blacklisting from being an accredited load or service retailer for the third and subsequent offenses.

Provided, That the Department of Trade and Industry ("DTI"), in coordination with the NTC, shall maintain a list of erring retailers and may issue orders of disqualification for habitual non-compliance.

(c) Any student found using fraudulent documents to avail of the discount shall be disqualified from the privilege without prejudice to the filing of appropriate criminal 5 charges for such act.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the NTC, DICT, Department of Education ("DepEd"), and the Commission on Higher Education ("CHED") shall promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, acts, decrees, executive orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof which are contrary to and inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,