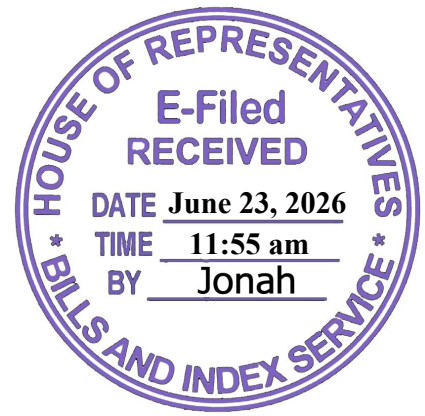


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 9917



Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to mandate the free issuance of essential employment documents and the digitalization of academic records systems in all higher education institutions (HEIs). It aims to facilitate a seamless transition for Filipino graduates from college to the workforce and remove unnecessary financial and administrative barriers that delay employment opportunities for newly graduated Filipinos.

For many fresh graduates, the path to employment is stalled at the very beginning due to high costs of documentation and processing charged by HEIs. While Republic Act No. 11261, otherwise known as the “*First Time Jobseekers Assistance Act*”, covers for the waiving of fees for government clearances, it does not comprehensively cover the costs and processing challenges associated with academic records required by employers. As labor market conditions become increasingly competitive, there is a need to ensure that fresh graduates can promptly access the documents necessary to pursue employment opportunities.

This measure mandates all HEIs, both public and private, to provide fresh graduates with free copies of their transcripts, diplomas, and certificates of graduation. It likewise establishes a Digital Academic Records System to facilitate a more efficient and secure processing of academic records.

The youth represents one of the nation’s greatest assets and a driving force of economic growth and national development. It is a constitutional imperative for the State to protect their social well-being and promote full employment. Through the provisions stipulated in this Act, the State helps unlock opportunities, strengthen productivity, and support inclusive economic progress.

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


HON. ERIC G. YAP

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **9917**

Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

AN ACT

MANDATING THE UNIVERSAL DIGITALIZATION OF ACADEMIC RECORDS AND PROVIDING FREE ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS, STRENGTHENING THE TRANSITION OF FRESH GRADUATES ENTERING THE WORKFORCE, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Fresh Graduate Workforce Transition Act*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall adopt measures that promote gainful employment, equal access to opportunities, and a smooth transition from education to productive participation in the workforce. To this end, the State shall remove financial and administrative barriers, such as high document costs and manual processing delays, that hinder fresh graduates from entering the labor market.

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

a. Fresh Graduate refers to a Filipino citizen who has successfully completed a degree or vocational program from a Higher Education Institution (HEI) or training institution within twelve (12) months of availing the benefits of this Act;

b. Higher Education Institution (HEI) refers to all public and private universities, colleges, and learning institutions offering post-secondary degree programs; and

c. Digital Academic Records System refers to a secure electronic system for the storage, issuance, and verification of academic records, including transcripts, diplomas, and certifications.

SEC. 4. *Universal Access to Free Employment Documents.* – All HEIs shall provide fresh graduates with their employment-related academic documents free of charge. This entitlement shall expand upon the benefits provided under Republic Act (RA) No. 11261, otherwise known as the “*First Time Jobseekers Assistance Act*”, and shall apply to all public and private HEIs. Every fresh graduate shall be entitled to receive, free of any charge, up to five (5) certified true copies each of the following:

a. Transcript of Records (TOR), or a Certificate of Graduation where the or is not yet available; and

b. Diploma.

Within twelve (12) months from the date of graduation, a fresh graduate may request and receive an additional five (5) certified true copies of the documents specified in this Section without the payment of any fee or charge.

Fresh graduates may likewise opt to receive electronic copies of such documents. Electronic copies bearing digital signatures or other authentication mechanisms recognized under RA No. 8792, otherwise known as the “*Electronic Commerce Act of 2000*”, shall have the same validity and evidentiary value as physical copies.

HEIs shall ensure that the issuance of such documents is carried out not later than three (3) working days from receipt of request. Nothing in this Act shall preclude HEIs from charging the applicable fees and charges for requests exceeding the number of copies granted hereunder.

SEC. 5. *Integration with National Digital Infrastructure.* – All HEIs shall establish and maintain a Digital Academic Records System that enables graduates to securely submit requests for academic records through electronic or online platforms to promote timely and efficient issuance.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall issue the necessary guidelines and standards to ensure the effective implementation of this section and may provide technical assistance to HEIs in establishing and maintaining their respective digital academic records systems.

SEC. 6. *Data Privacy and Security.* – All HEIs shall ensure that their Digital Academic Records Systems comply with the provisions of RA No. 10173, otherwise known as the “*Data Privacy Act of 2012*”, and shall implement appropriate technical, organizational, and physical safeguards to protect academic records against unauthorized access, disclosure, identity theft, alteration, loss, and other form

SEC. 7. *Responsibilities of Higher Education Institutions.* – For the effective implementation of this Act, all HEIs shall undertake the following core responsibilities:

- a. Ensure the timely issuance of employment application documents to fresh graduates in accordance with Section 4 of this Act;
- b. Establish and maintain a Digital Academic Records System that allows for the electronic submission, processing, storage, and verification of documentary requirements set forth in Section 5 of this Act, in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by CHED and DICT;
- c. Designate the appropriate office or authorized personnel responsible for the processing, certification, and issuance of academic records covered by this Act;
- d. Maintain accurate, secure, and complete academic records of students and graduates to ensure the integrity and authenticity of documents issued by the institution;
- e. Comply with such additional standards and procedures as may be prescribed by CHED for the effective implementation of this Act; and
- f. Submit periodic compliance reports to CHED in such form and frequency as may be determined in the implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 8. *Oversight by the Commission on Higher Education.* – CHED shall exercise comprehensive regulatory oversight over the implementation of this Act. For this purpose, CHED may require HEIs to submit reports, records and all other relevant documents, conduct compliance reviews and inspections, and issue directives necessary to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Administrative Sanctions.* – Any HEI that fails to comply with the provisions of this Act or its implementing rules and regulations shall, after due notice and hearing, be subject to appropriate administrative sanctions to be imposed by CHED in accordance with its existing powers.

SEC. 10. *Complaints and Redress Mechanism.* – CHED shall establish a mechanism through which fresh graduates may file complaints regarding delays in the issuance of documents, unlawful fees or charges, refusal to issue records, or other violations of this Act. CHED shall promptly act upon such complaints and shall issue appropriate directives to ensure compliance.

SEC. 11. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of CHED and the DICT. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, CHED, in coordination with the DICT, shall promulgate

the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,