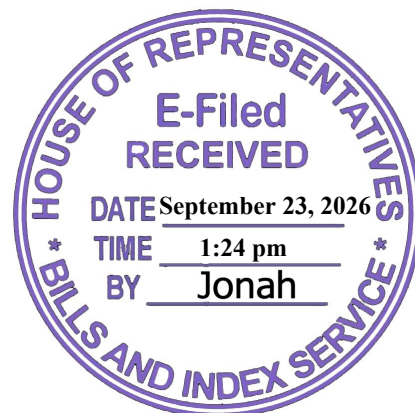




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11446



Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our farmers and fisherfolk remain to be among those with the highest poverty incidence in the country. It is unfortunate that despite their sacrifice and hard work, they struggle to meet the basic needs of their families. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the fisherfolk sector recorded a poverty incidence of 27.4%, while farmers recorded a poverty incidence at 27%.

Their livelihoods are highly susceptible to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, and fluctuating market prices. In the face of these hardships, education serves as the great equalizer and the most sustainable pathway out of poverty.

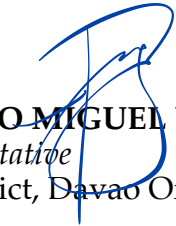
Under Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution, the State is mandated to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, ensuring it is accessible to all. It is our moral and social obligation to make true of this commitment to our agricultural workers. Through extending targeted educational assistance to their children and dependents, we ensure that the youth are not deprived of a brighter future simply due to financial constraints.

To this end, this bill seeks to provide a comprehensive educational assistance, specifically for the children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolk. The proposed measure will cover all the necessary expenses for primary, secondary and tertiary education, which includes tuition fees, miscellaneous fees, learning materials, board and lodging, transportation expenses, clothing allowance, and other similar expenses. By covering these miscellaneous expenses, our farmers and fisherfolk will not be forced to make a difficult choice between financing the next harvest and sending their children to school.

In addition, the bill proposes to establish a special fund to sustain this government assistance. Through this dedicated fund, we can guarantee the program's continuity and wider reach across the country. This, in turn, will empower the next generation of our agricultural sector to break free from the vicious cycle of poverty.

Let us honor the blood, sweat, and tears of our agricultural workers by giving their sons and daughters the fighting chance they deserve. Through this measure, we are saying investing in a brighter and more dignified future for the families who feed our entire nation.

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



CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO
Representative
2nd District, Davao Oriental



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11446

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO**

**AN ACT GRANTING EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO THE CHILDREN
AND DEPENDENTS OF FARMERS AND FISHERFOLKS, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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 “*Educational Assistance for Children and Dependents of Farmers and Fisherfolk Act.*”

Section 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality and accessible education at all levels and to establish and maintain a financial assistance system that shall be available to deserving students, especially the underprivileged.

Section 3. Educational Assistance for Children and Dependent of Farmers and Fisherfolk – The children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolk, as listed in the Registered System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) or as certified by Department of Agriculture, shall be entitled educational assistance from basic education until their completion of tertiary education in public school.

The educational assistance shall include all expenses for primary, secondary and tertiary education, such as but not limited to tuition fees, miscellaneous fees, learning materials, board and lodging, transportation expenses, clothing allowance, and other similar expenses.

Section 4. Special Funds for Educational Benefits – 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 the children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolks; Provided, That not more than 5% of this Fund shall be used for the administration of the Special Fund.

Section 5. Administration of the Fund – The Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education Governing (UniFAST) 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.

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 sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DA, in coordination with DepEd and CHED, shall promulgate and publish the necessary rules and regulations for the effectivity of this Act.

Section 8. Separability Clause. – If any section or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

Section 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,