

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 61**



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Introduced by **HON. TERRY L. RIDON**

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**HOUSE RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT (R.A.) NO. 10931 OR THE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY TERTIARY EDUCATION ACT, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE FREE HIGHER EDUCATION LAW**

**WHEREAS**, in the House of Representatives, the first push for universal tuition-free education in SUCs was in House Resolution No. 2135 filed by this representation during the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress, as then-representative of the Kabataan Party-list, on May 27, 2015.

**WHEREAS**, a part of the resolution said, "The collection of other school fees infringes on the access of the youth to tertiary education and must therefore be abolished."

**WHEREAS**, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress, seven bills were filed in the Senate for free tuition in SUCs which were consolidated in Committee Report No. 28 with the substitute S.B. No. 1304 filed on Jan. 23, 2017.

**WHEREAS**, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress House of Representatives, 59 free tuition-related bills were consolidated in Committee Report No. 227 with the substitute H.B. No. 5633, which was approved on third reading on May 22, 2017. Seventy-two principal authors were listed in the final version of the bill transmitted to the Senate.

**WHEREAS**, R.A. No. 10931 became law on Aug. 3, 2017 when former President Rodrigo Duterte signed the enrolled bill from Congress. It provides for free tuition and other school fees to all students in state and local universities and colleges (SUCs and LUCs), as well as those in technical and vocational institutions under the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

**WHEREAS**, upon signing of the law, this representation, as former chairperson of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor supported the signing of the law despite strong objections by economic managers in the Duterte Cabinet.

**WHEREAS**, upon signing the signing of the law, this representation said in a statement that the free tuition law is "one the most important legacies of the Duterte administration as it ensures state support to the future of the nation." The statement further said, "Millions of urban poor families aspiring for a better future of the children and families will benefit from the new law. In fact, this is a culmination of decades of struggle of the student and youth movement in the Philippines."

**WHEREAS**, on September 10, 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and almost four years after serving the Duterte administration, this representation was invited to Malacanang to witness the presentation of newly enacted laws on various State Universities and Colleges to former President Rodrigo Duterte.

**WHEREAS**, some economists and private sector actors remain concerned with the viability of the free higher education law, with former Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno stating that free access to state university education is unsustainable. He added then that, “A lot of students want to enroll, but drop out after a year in college.”

**WHEREAS**, a relevant Pulse Asia survey, commissioned by Senator Sherwin Gatchalian and released on Oct. 24, 2023, paints a compelling picture: a staggering “98 percent of Filipinos favor free tuition in public universities.”

**WHEREAS**, Ibon Foundation Executive Director Sonny A. Africa said that expanding the program should be a priority of the government, stating that, “Enlarging and multiplying quality public institutions of higher education that are accessible to all students is critical for the country’s social, economic and political future. He added that higher education is not an investment whose returns should ever be reduced to affordability according to perceived fiscal space,” he added.

**WHEREAS**, several measures are being proposed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress expanding financial and non-financial aid to students and learners in both higher and basic education, such as monthly allowances to all students.

**WHEREAS**, this representation remains committed to fully supporting free access to state higher education, more than ten years after this representation made the first action on the matter.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, as it is hereby resolved by the House of Representatives, to urge the House Committee on Higher and Technical Education and other appropriate committees to inquire, in aid of legislation, into:

- a. The continuing fiscal viability of the free state higher education law
- b. The measures undertaken by the government to ensure that the law shall continue to be funded by necessary appropriations
- c. The impact of the free state higher education law on career and life outcomes of program beneficiaries, including both graduates and dropouts.
- d. The fiscal impact of new legislative proposals expanding financial and non-financial aid to students and learners in both higher and basic education, such as monthly allowances to all students.

Adopted.



**HON. TERRY L. RIDON**