



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 4530

BY REPRESENTATIVES DEL MAR, TURABIN-HATAMAN, ROMULO, ESCUDERO, PADILLA, UNGAB, NAVA (J.), ALMARIO, LOBREGAT, BATAOIL, PIAMONIE, VIOLAGO, QUISUMBING, ONG, SY-ALVARADO, ROMAN, TING, TAN (A.), ILAGAN, VILLARICA, TEJADA, ALMONTE, HAGEDORN, RIVERA, BELLO (S.), NOGRALES, ABUEG, GARCIA (G.), RAMOS, GONZALEZ, PAEZ, KHO, ALEJANO, HOFFR, ABU, ALIPING, SUANSING, DELA CRUZ, MACROHON-NUÑO, FORTUNO, GERONA-ROBREDO, ARENAS, PICHAY, CERAJICA AND MAGSAYSAY, PER COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 267

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND PROVIDING FOR FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IN STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as “Free College
2 Information and Communications Technology Act”.

3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to provide
4 quality education to all qualified citizens at all levels of education and to
5 establish a system of grants, subsidies and incentives which shall be available
6 to deserving students, especially the poor and underprivileged, in order to

1 enable them to truly participate in the development of a democratic society and
2 share in the benefits therefrom.

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

4 (a) *Free college education* refers to any college degree course or
5 program in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) offered in or
6 conducted by state universities and colleges (SUCs).

7 (b) *Other school fees* refer to fees which cover the other necessary
8 costs supportive of instruction such as medical and dental, athletic, library and
9 laboratory fees;

10 (c) *Qualified beneficiaries* refer to persons who have completed
11 secondary education in public high schools.

12 (d) *State universities and colleges* refer to institutions of higher
13 learning, including specialized schools, maintained and funded by the national
14 government; and

15 (e) *Tuition fee* refers to the fee representing direct costs of instruction
16 and training facilities.

17 SEC. 4. *Implementation of Free ICT College Education.* – The free
18 ICT College Education program, as provided in this Act, shall commence in
19 the school year following the approval of this Act.

20 Qualified beneficiaries intending to enroll or who are already enrolled in
21 ICT course offerings in SUCs shall be exempted from the payment of tuition
22 and other school fees and shall be entitled to other incentives or subsidies as
23 may be granted in accordance with the rules and regulations to be promulgated
24 to carry out the provisions of this Act. However, fees related to membership in
25 student organizations or college activities may be collected: *Provided*, That
26 nonpayment of these fees shall not in any case prejudice the enrollment or
27 graduation of a qualified beneficiary: *Provided, further*, That nothing in this
28 Act shall cause or authorize the reduction or removal of any benefit which the

1 national or local government may grant to qualified beneficiaries prior to the
2 enactment of this Act.

3 SEC. 5. *Formulation of the ICT Curriculum.* – The Commission on
4 Higher Education (CHED) shall formulate a college curriculum geared to
5 provide students with highly competitive training or skills consistent with the
6 manpower demands of a highly competitive business environment.

7 SEC. 6. *Disqualification* – In case of failure in the majority of the
8 subjects enrolled in during the course of the study for two (2) consecutive
9 semesters, the student-beneficiary shall be disqualified from availment of the
10 free ICT college education.

11 SEC. 7. *Place of Study and Admission.* – The qualified beneficiary
12 shall take the free ICT college education in the chosen SUC situated in the city
13 or province of residence of the student.

14 Should there be no SUC in the city or province where the qualified
15 beneficiary resides, or should the university or college facilities therein be
16 unable to accommodate all qualified beneficiaries, a student may avail of the
17 free college benefit in any SUC within the region. In the absence of SUCs
18 within the region where a qualified beneficiary is residing, enrolment in any
19 SUC in the nearest region may be allowed.

20 SEC. 8. *Penal Provision.* – It shall be unlawful for any SUC to refuse
21 admission of any qualified beneficiary for any reason other than the limitation
22 of funds and facilities. Any higher education institution (HEI) official or
23 employee found violating the provisions of this section shall be subject to
24 suspension.

25 In addition, the CHED may impose disciplinary action or sanctions
26 against an HEI official or employee violating this Act pursuant to Section 13 of
27 Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of
28 1994”.

1 SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to implement the
2 provisions of this Act shall be included in the appropriations of SUCs in the
3 annual General Appropriations Act.

4 SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60)
5 days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED, in consultation with the
6 association of SUCs, shall promulgate the rules and regulations implementing
7 its provisions.

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

11 SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws or parts thereof inconsistent
12 with any provision of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified
13 accordingly.

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

Approved.

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