

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



'22 JUL 13 P4 :29

SENATE
S. No. 531

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

AN ACT
ENCOURAGING YOUTH SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL
SECTOR, ESTABLISHING FOR THE PURPOSE A 'TULONG KABATAAN SA
AGRIKULTURA PROGRAM' AND A 'TULONG KABATAAN SA AGRIKULTURA
TRUST FUND', APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Magkapatid ang kahirapan at kagutuman. According to the 2018 Family Income and Expenditure Survey, the latest from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), 42.6% of all expenditures by Filipino families were on food, which marked a 0.8% increase from 2015. Furthermore, families in the bottom 30% income group spent much higher on food, with a share of 58.2% of their total expenditure compared to families in the upper 70% income group. It is estimated that a 10% increase in food prices would lead to an additional 2.3 million poor Filipinos.

A robust agricultural sector (in addition to prudent Fiscal policy) is necessary to ensure food security. Key indicators would show, however, that our agricultural sector is far from robust. For one, the share of agriculture to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has dropped significantly from 11.6% in 1998 to 7.3% in 2016, and continued to plummet as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Labor productivity has increased but still remains low compared to the industry and services sectors.

However, the most alarming indicator is the average age of the Filipino farmer. In a 2018 article entitled, "Agriculture is Dying in the Philippines", Sara Soliven De Guzman revealed that according to East-West Seeds Philippines General Manager Henk Hermans, farmers represent the second poorest sector in the Philippines, and such fact had led to the "disenchantment" of the youth in pursuing a career in the agriculture.¹ It was also revealed that the average age of Filipino farmers ranges from 57-59 years old.²

¹ <https://www.pressreader.com>

² *Ibid.*

Assuming that the usual age of retirement in the country is 60 to 65, there is a possibility that an overwhelming majority of our farmers will retire in less than a decade. This fact, combined with the 1.5% decrease in enrolment in agriculture courses in State Universities and Colleges from 2005 to 2010, implies that our struggling agricultural sector may soon run out of farmers. It also bears to stress that as of December 2021, the agricultural sector in the Philippines only employs 25.6% of the total Filipino work force.³ Thus, it begs the question: *Who will feed the next generation?*

Immediate and effective intervention is needed to rejuvenate our agricultural sector. As a matter of fact, the Philippine Development Plan for 2017 to 2022 seeks to expand economic opportunities for those who are engaged in agriculture, and increase access to economic opportunities for small farmers, among others.⁴

Given the above, as a first step, this legislative measure proposes the establishment of a *Tulong Kabataan sa Agrikultura* scholarship program. The program shall be a ladderized program in Diploma in Agricultural Technology (DAT), Bachelor in Agricultural Technology (BAT) and Bachelor of Science in Agri-business (BSAgrib). At least 25% of the entire curriculum of the Program shall be in the form of an on-the-job training or related learning experience. The laboratory components of various agricultural subjects shall be in the form of agribusiness ventures, which are defined as business ventures in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and agri-entrepreneurship including but not limited to raising of poultry, goats, corn or rice or crop production.

The program targets senior high school graduates of agricultural and fisheries tracks, and similarly situated students of agriculture and fisheries in tertiary education, who have a general weighted average of at least 80% or its equivalent. Beneficiaries shall be entitled to financial assistance, which shall include tuition and other school fees; an outright grant for prescribed textbooks and essential school supplies; transportation expenses; and a monthly living allowance, among others.

Finally, to ensure the financial sustainability of this fund, this measure proposes the creation of a *Tulong Kabataan sa Agrikultura Trust Fund*, which shall come from the following sources: Fifty Million Pesos (Php50,000,000.00) seed capital; a 10% annual share on the total gross collections of the travel tax and professional registration fee of the Professional Regulatory Commission; grants, donations and endowments from domestic and foreign sources, pursuant to existing laws and regulations; such amounts as may be indicated under the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for the purpose of sustaining the Fund; and all interest income of the trust fund.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

In view of the foregoing, speedy approval of this measure is eagerly sought.

Grace Poe
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Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress Assembled:

ARTICLE 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1 Section 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Tulong Kabataan sa*
2 *Agrikultura Act of 2022*".

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall give priority to education, science
4 and technology to accelerate social progress and promote development. Towards this
5 end, the government shall provide opportunities for all to obtain quality education and
6 for this purpose, scholarships in Agriculture, Agri-Entrepreneurship, Forestry and
7 Fisheries are hereby strengthened. It is also the policy of the State to develop
8 graduates who will become competent agribusiness managers and entrepreneurs.

9 Sec 3. *Objectives.* – The objectives of this Act are to:

- 10 a) Increase youth participation in the agricultural sector;
11 b) Provide opportunities to poor but deserving students to realize their
12 potentials in agribusiness and entrepreneurships;

- 1 c) Develop competency skills and knowledge of students in agricultural
2 technologies and agribusiness;
- 3 d) Increase food production;
- 4 e) Commercialize proven viable technologies to increase food production and
5 income of rural communities through the development of livelihoods and markets;
- 6 f) Provide income to students while doing experiential learning and on-the-
7 job training which form part of their degree programs;
- 8 g) Link young farmer-students with credit, financing, and marketing
9 institutions; and
- 10 h) Contribute to the alleviation of poverty.

11 Sec. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – for the purposes of this Act:

12 a. *Tulong Kabataan sa Agrikultura Program* or *The Program* – refers to the
13 scholarship program established by this Act which targets poor but deserving graduates
14 of agricultural and fisheries tracks in senior high schools and similarly situated students
15 taking up agriculture and related courses in tertiary education;

16 b. *Tulong Kabataan sa Agrikultura Trust Fund* or *The Fund* – refers to the
17 trust fund created under this Act to ensure the achievement of this Act's incentives;

18 c. *Agribusiness Venture Laboratory* – refers to agricultural subjects and
19 classes designed as business ventures in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and agri-
20 entrepreneurship including but not limited to raising of poultry, goats, corn or rice or
21 crop production and counted as satisfying the laboratory requirement of a course.

22 ARTICLE II

23 THE TULONG KABATAAN SA AGRIKULTURA PROGRAM

24 Sec. 5. *Establishment of a Tulong Kabataan sa Agrikultura Program.* – A *Tulong*
25 *Kabataan sa Agrikultura* scholarship program in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and
26 related areas to be administered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is
27 hereby established. The program shall be a ladderized program in Diploma in

1 Agricultural Technology (DAT), Bachelor in Agricultural Technology (BAT) and Bachelor
2 of Science in Agribusiness (BSAgrib). The program shall initially be offered by the
3 University of the Philippines-Los Baños College of Agriculture in the first two (2) years
4 of this Act's effectivity. The program shall be offered in SUCs which provide courses in
5 agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other allied fields.

6 Sec. 6. *Target Beneficiaries.* – The Program shall target senior high school
7 graduates of agricultural and fisheries tracks, and similarly situated students of
8 agriculture and fisheries in tertiary education, who have a general weighted average of
9 at least eighty percent (80%) or its equivalent: Provided, that beneficiaries who
10 complete the agriculture and fisheries tracks of senior high and who enroll in an
11 agriculture, forestry, fisheries, or other similar course in tertiary education shall
12 continue to be covered by the Program.

13 Sec. 7. *Assistance to Grantees.* – Beneficiaries of the Program shall be entitled to
14 financial assistance, which shall include the following:

- 15 a) Tuition and other school fees;
- 16 b) Outright grant for prescribed textbooks and essential school supplies;
- 17 c) Transportation expenses; and
- 18 d) Monthly living allowance.

19 Sec. 8. *Curriculum Formulation.* – There is hereby established a technical
20 committee which shall design the curriculum of the Program. The Committee shall be
21 composed of the following:

- 22 a. The Chairperson of the CHED, or his permanent representative, as Chairperson
23 of the Committee;
- 24 b. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA), or his permanent
25 representative, as the Vice Chairperson;

- 1 c. The Dean of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños College of Agriculture;
2 and
3 d. One (1) representative each from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao from other
4 colleges of agriculture, who shall be appointed by the President, and who shall
5 each serve a term of one (1) year.

6 At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the entire curriculum of the Program shall
7 be in the form of on-the-job training or related learning experience. Laboratory
8 components of various agricultural subjects shall be in the form of agribusiness
9 ventures.

10 *Sec. 9. Strengthening Agri-Fisheries Tracks in Senior High.* – To achieve the
11 objectives of this Act, the Department of Education (DepEd) is hereby directed to
12 ensure that agri-fisheries tracks are offered in as many senior high school programs in
13 appropriate areas nationwide.

14 *Sec. 10. Agribusiness Venture Laboratories.* – Each agribusiness venture shall be
15 under the supervision of a faculty who is also a technology expert in the chosen
16 commodity. The agribusiness venture laboratory to be developed must have short
17 gestation, around three to twelve (3 to 12) months, should be science and technology
18 based agribusiness, the end products should be highly marketable and the facilities
19 needed should be present within the SUC.

20 *Sec. 11. Use of Idle Lands for the Agribusiness Venture Laboratory.* – The
21 Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) shall make available
22 untenured public lands under its jurisdiction for the use of students in their agribusiness
23 ventures under appropriate arrangements with CHED and the participating SUCs.

24 **ARTICLE III**

25 **THE TULONG KABATAAN SA AGRIKULTURA TRUST FUND**

1 Sec. 16. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules or regulations
2 thereof. inconsistent with this Act arc hereby modified or repealed accordingly.

3 Sec. 17. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
4 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
5 circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,