

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
THIRD REGULAR SESSION)

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SENATE

S.B. No. 90

Introduced by **SENATOR LUISA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Special schools and private academic institutions, both elementary and secondary, in which children of wealthy families study, undeniably provide the best quality of education available in the land.

In fact, statistics shows that graduates of these institutions normally meet the admission requirements imposed by respected universities, obtain their undergraduate degrees with honors and end up as successful career individuals.

Further, and perhaps more relevantly, these children, given the wide range of academic and non-academic opportunities given them, are more secure, healthy and confident individuals than their counterparts from ordinary public schools or institutions of academic learning.

There is a need to provide exceptionally brilliant or gifted students from poor families the same educational opportunities, which children from wealthier families have. Albeit special schools already offer existing scholarship programs to indigent students, these are usually sporadic and not institutionalized.

The proposed measure seeks to provide educational opportunities for disadvantaged children by giving them the same choices among all elementary and secondary schools and other academic programs availed of by those of well-to-do families. Hopefully, through this bill, these children shall end up as more productive and critical individuals than what they normally become under the present educational set up.

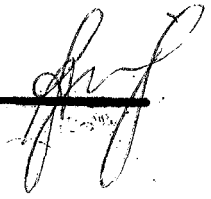
Immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


LUISA "LOI" P. EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

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**AN ACT
TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED
CHILDREN, 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 "Excellence through Choice to Elevate Learning Act."

SECTION 2. *Purposes* - The purposes of this Act are to--

- (a) give children from low-income families the same choices among all elementary and secondary schools and other academic programs as children from wealthier families already have;
- (b) improve schools and other academic programs by giving parents in low-income families increased consumer power to choose the schools and programs that the parents determine best fit the needs of their children; and
- (c) more fully engage parents in their children's schooling; and
- (d) gives parents in low-income families -- choice among public, private, and religious schools for their children; and access to the same academic options as parents in wealthy families have for their children.

SECTION. 3. *Program Authority* - The Department of Education (hereinafter referred to as "department") shall carry out educational choice programs that provide

scholarships, in accordance with this Act, to five (5) deserving students from poor families per region of the country, to any private elementary or high school chosen by such students or their parents, provided that such students shall meet the requirements for admission in said school or institution.

For purposes of this Act, the term "poor families" means families whose aggregate income per year is not more than P40,000.00.

SECTION 4. *Scholarships* –

(a) IN GENERAL-

(1) SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS- The department shall provide scholarships to the parents of eligible children, in accordance with subsections (b). The department shall ensure that the scholarships may be redeemed for elementary or secondary education for the children at any of a broad variety of public and private schools, including religious schools, in the country.

(2) SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT- The amount of each scholarship shall be not less than P50,000.00 or equivalent to expenditure requirements set forth in a school of choice per year. Each selected student shall also be entitled to a stipend of P1,000.00 per month.

(3) TAX EXEMPTION- Scholarships awarded under this Act shall not be considered income of the parents for income tax purposes or for determining eligibility for any other program.

(b) ELIGIBLE CHILDREN- To be eligible to receive a scholarship under this Act, a child shall be selected from a list of aspirants recommended or endorsed by the school such child is currently enrolled in. The Department shall come up with selection standards or criteria which include among others series of examinations and interviews.

SECTION 5. *Continuing Eligibility* – The department shall shall provide a scholarship in each year of the program to each child who received a scholarship during the previous year of the program, unless--

- (a) the child no longer attends school;
- (b) the child's family income exceeds, by 50% percent or more; or
- (c) the child is expelled for failure to meet the educational requirements imposed by the school or institution or convicted of a felony, including felonious drug possession, possession of a weapon on school grounds, or a violent act against an other student or a member of the school's faculty.

SECTION 6. *Uses of Funds* - Any scholarship awarded under this Act for a year shall be used—

(1) first, for—

- (a) the payment of tuition and fees at the school selected by the parents of the child for whom the scholarship was provided; and
- (b) the reasonable costs of the child's transportation to the school, if the school is not the school to which the child would be assigned in the absence of a program under this Act; and

(2) for educational programs that help the eligible child achieve high levels of academic excellence in the school attended by the eligible child, if the eligible child chooses to attend a public school.

SECTION 7. *Funding Requirements* - There shall be authorized to be appropriated, from resources allocated to the department, such sums as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Separability clause*. – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 9 *Repealing clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,