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SENATE
S. No. 1319

RECEIVED BY: *ji*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 14, Section 1 provides that:

SEC. 1. The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

In Section 2 paragraph 3 of the same article, the Constitution further mandates that:

SEC. 2. The State shall:

(3) Establish and maintain a system of scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students in both public and private schools, especially to the underprivileged;

In a letter to the editor published by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* entitled "UP Closed to the Brightest of Poor,"¹ Mr. Noli Reyes highlighted the financial problems besetting our students in our country's premiere state university. The poor student neither able to afford the tuition fee nor figure out how to work through the system to assist him in his education. As a result, he did not pursue the degree program he worked so hard to get into. Without any connections, the poor student was not able to avail in time any of the multitudes of scholarship programs available to our impoverished youth.

By creating a centralized scholarship database online, scholarship information will be easily accessible to both the institutions granting the scholarship and their beneficiaries. It will make the application for scholarship truly competitive instead of being limited to those who have direct access to the information.

¹ Reyes, Noli N., "UP Closed to the Brightest of the Poor," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 20 June 2008.

This bill seeks to democratize the access to scholarship information by making the information available online. This will effectively connect the sponsors to their intended beneficiaries and truly provide support to the less privileged but deserving students.²

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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² This bill was originally filed in the Fourteenth Congress, Second Regular Session



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AN ACT

MANDATING THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A
PUBLIC WEBSITE THROUGH WHICH INDIVIDUALS MAY FIND A COMPLETE
DATABASE OF AVAILABLE SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND OTHER
PROGRAMS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN THE STUDY OF SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* -- This Act shall be known as the "National STEM Scholarship Database Act."

SECTION 2. *Establishment of a Database.* -- The Secretary of Education shall establish and maintain, on the public website of the Department of Education, a database consisting of information on scholarships, fellowships, and other programs of financial assistance available from public and private sources for the study of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics at the post-secondary and post-baccalaureate levels.

SECTION 3. *Presentation of Information.* -- The information maintained on the database established under the preceding section shall be displayed on the website in the following manner:

(A) Separate information shall be provided for each of the fields of study referred to in Section 2 and for post-secondary and post-baccalaureate programs of financial assistance.

(B) The database shall provide specific information on any programs of financial assistance which are targeted to individuals of a particular gender, ethnicity, or other demographic group.

1 (C) If the sponsor of any program of financial assistance included on the database
2 maintains a public website, the database shall provide hyperlinks to the website.

3 (D) In addition to providing the hyperlink to the website of a sponsor of a program of
4 financial assistance as required under paragraph (C), the database shall provide general
5 information that an interested person may use to contact the sponsor, including the sponsor's
6 electronic mail address.

7 (E) The database shall have a search capability which permits an individual to search
8 for information on the basis of each category of the information provided and on the basis of
9 combinations of categories of the information provided, including whether the scholarship is
10 need- or merit-based and by relevant academic majors.

11 (F) The database shall include a recommendation that students and families should
12 carefully review all of the application requirements prior to applying for aid, and a disclaimer
13 that the scholarships presented in the database are not provided or endorsed by the Department of
14 Education.

15 SECTION 4. *Dissemination of Information on Database.* – The Secretary shall take such
16 action as may be necessary on an ongoing basis, including sending notices to secondary schools
17 and institutions of higher education, to disseminate information on the database established and
18 maintained under this Act and to encourage its use by interested parties.

19 SECTION 5. *Encouraging the Provision of Information.* – In carrying out this Act, the
20 Secretary of Education shall consult with public and private sources of scholarships and make
21 easily available a process for such entities to provide regular and updated information.

22 SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as is
23 necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

1 SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain
3 valid and subsisting.

4 SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
5 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent
6 with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

7 SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,