

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



13 SEP 26 P 3 56

SENATE  
S. No. 1736

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

The constitutionally protected freedoms of speech and of association are rights which are primarily exercised in institutions of higher learning. The youth, particularly students in colleges and universities, should be exposed to this right. However, the very institutions which should encourage the exercise of these rights are sometimes their main suppressors.

This bill seeks to provide further safeguards for the exercise of the cherished constitutional rights of free speech and association by students in institutions of higher learning by terminating government financial assistance to certain government funded programs or activities received by such educational institutions for violation of these rights.\*

*Miriam Defensor Santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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\* This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, First Regular Session.

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Senate  
Office of the Secretary

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1 AN ACT  
2 PROTECTING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND OF ASSOCIATION OF  
3 STUDENTS ATTENDING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act may be cited as the "Freedom of Speech and of  
5 Association on Campus Act."

6 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to protect the speech  
7 and association rights of students attending institutions of higher education. Toward this end, the  
8 government shall ensure, within the context of a free and democratic system, the promotion of  
9 the right of every student in the exercise of their freedom of speech and association regardless of  
10 sex, age, creed, socio-economic status, physical and mental conditions, racial or ethnic origin,  
11 political or other affiliation.

12 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For the purposes of this Act, the term:

13 (A) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Education.

14 (B) "Institution of higher education" means institutions offering tertiary degree  
15 programs and post secondary programs.

16 (C) "Tertiary degree programs" refer to courses of study leading to an initial or higher  
17 bachelor's degree, as well as formal graduate studies leading to masteral, doctoral or similar  
18 degrees. It also includes courses of study which by themselves may be only for one-, two-, or  
19 three-year courses of study leading to less than a bachelor's degree program, but which can  
20 subsequently be credited in full bachelor's degrees.

1 (D) "Post-secondary programs" refer to courses of study which cannot be credited  
2 towards a bachelor's degree but which require the possession of a high school diploma for  
3 admission, which are terminal in nature, and which are general for obtaining technical and  
4 vocational skills.

5 (E) "Protected speech" means speech that is protected under the 1987 Constitution.

6 (F) "Protected association" means the right to join, assemble, and reside with others  
7 that is protected under the 1987 Constitution.

8 (G) "Official sanction" (a) means expulsion, suspension, probation, censure,  
9 condemnation, reprimand, or any other disciplinary, coercive, or adverse action taken by an  
10 institution of higher education or administrative unit of the institution; and (b) includes an oral or  
11 written warning made by an official of an institution of higher education acting in his official  
12 capacity.

13 (H) "Student" means those enrolled in and who regularly attend an educational  
14 institution of higher level of a person engaged in formal study.

15 SECTION 4. *Protection of Student Speech and Association Rights.* - No student attending  
16 an institution of higher education on a full or part-time basis shall, on the basis of protected  
17 speech and association, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be  
18 subjected to discrimination or official sanction under any educational program, activity, or  
19 division directly or indirectly receiving financial assistance by the state, whether or not such  
20 program, activity, or division is sponsored or officially sanctioned by the institution.

21 SECTION 5. *Sanctions.* -

22 (A) *In General.* - No funds shall be made available to an educational program,  
23 activity or division of any institution of higher education that the Secretary finds, after notice and  
24 opportunity for a hearing, has violated any provision of this Act.

25 (B) *Inapplicability to Student Assistance.* - Paragraph (A) shall not apply to any funds  
26 that are provided under this Act for student financial assistance.

1           (C) *Exception to Sanctions.* – This section shall not apply to an institution of higher  
2 education that is controlled by a religious or military organization, if the speech or association is  
3 not consistent with the religious teaching or military training of the institution.

4           (D) *Sanctions for Disruption Permitted.* – Nothing in this Act shall be construed to  
5 prevent the imposition of an official sanction on a student that has willfully participated in the  
6 disruption or attempted disruption of a lecture, class speech, presentation, or performance made  
7 or scheduled to be made under the auspices of the institution of higher education.

8           SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or  
9 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law of the provision not otherwise affected shall remain  
10 valid and subsisting.

11           SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive  
12 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent  
13 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,