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OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



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SENATE
S. No. 2330

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING PILOT PROGRAMS
TO EXPAND STUDENT ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE MATERIALS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 14, Sections 1 and 2, para. 1 provide:

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.

SEC. 2. The State shall:

(1) Establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society.

The purpose of this legislative measure is to fund pilot programs of up to ten state universities and colleges (SUCs) to reduce the cost of attendance for undergraduate students in at least two different academic departments by expanding access to digital course materials as part of their academic programs, expand the availability of electronic readers and tablets for low-income students, and encourage college professors to incorporate new learning technologies into their classes.

The bill directs the Chair of Commission on Higher Education to give preference to applications that demonstrate a commitment to serving disadvantaged students. Under the bill, the chosen SUCs may use the grant to:

1. purchase and maintain the electronic equipment or software their pilot programs need;

2. purchase and maintain the digital and online content that instructors or students will use;
3. hire staff to administer their pilot programs, with priority given to hiring enrolled undergraduate students;
4. build or acquire extra storage space for pilot program equipment;
5. revise and adapt academic curricula as needed to implement their pilot programs; and
6. acquire such other goods or services that the Chair determines appropriate¹

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Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

¹ This bill was originally filed by Ms. Suzan DelBene and Mr. Richard Hanna in the U.S. House of Representatives (H.R. 4259; 113th Congress, Second Session).

SENATE
S. No. 2330

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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

1 AN ACT
2 ESTABLISHING PILOT PROGRAMS
3 TO EXPAND STUDENT ACCESS TO DIGITAL COURSE MATERIALS

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Electronic Books
5 Opening Opportunity for Knowledge Act” or the “E-Book Act”.

6 SECTION 2. *Grants to Expand Access to Digital Course Materials.* –

7 (a) *Grants Authorized.* –

8 (1) *In General.* – The Chair of the Commission on Higher Education may
9 award grants on a competitive basis to not more than ten state universities and
10 colleges to reduce the cost of attendance for undergraduate students by providing
11 such students with expanded access to digital course materials.

12 (2) *Amount of Funds to be Awarded.* – The Chair shall determine the
13 amount of funds to be awarded for each grant based on the number of students to
14 be served under the grant.

15 (b) *Application.* – A state university or college desiring to obtain a grant under this
16 Act shall submit an application to the Chair at such time, in such form, and accompanied
17 by such information, agreements, and assurances as the Chair may reasonably require.

1 (c) *Preference.* – In awarding grants under this Act, the Chair shall give
2 preference to applications that demonstrate a commitment to serving disadvantaged
3 students.

4 (d) *Use of Funds.* – Each grant awarded under this Act shall provide to a state
5 university or college funds to support a pilot program for the state university or college to
6 make digital course materials available to undergraduate students in at least two different
7 academic departments. Such funds may be used for any of the following:

8 (1) Purchasing and maintaining electronic equipment or software necessary
9 for the operation of the pilot program, including mobile computer devices and
10 accompanying hardware, software applications, computer systems and platforms,
11 digital and online content, online instruction, and other online services and
12 support.

13 (2) Purchasing and maintaining digital and online content for the state
14 university or college to make available electronically to instructors or students,
15 including paying any copyright fees associated with the digital distribution of
16 physical course materials.

17 (3) Hiring staff for the administration of the pilot program, with priority
18 given to hiring enrolled undergraduate students.

19 (4) Building or acquiring extra storage space dedicated to equipment used
20 for the pilot program.

21 (5) Revising and adapting academic curricula as needed to implement the
22 pilot program.

23 (6) Acquiring such other goods or services as the Chair determines
24 appropriate.

1 (e) *Reporting Requirements.* –

2 (1) *Report to the Chair.* – After a period of time to be determined by the
3 Chair, each state university or college that receives a grant under this Act shall
4 submit to the Chair a report that includes:

5 (A) an assessment of the effectiveness of the pilot program funded
6 by the grant in reducing the cost of attendance for students;

7 (B) an assessment of any impact of the pilot program on student
8 achievement;

9 (C) an accounting of the purposes for which the grant funds were
10 expended; and

11 (D) any additional information the Chair reasonably requires.

12 (2) *Report to Congress.* – Not later than three years after the end of the first
13 fiscal year in which a grant is awarded under this Act, the Chair shall submit to
14 Congress a report on the effectiveness of the grants. Such report shall include:

15 (A) an estimate by the Chair of the amount of money saved by
16 students who participate in the pilot programs;

17 (B) a summary of the best practices developed in the pilot programs;

18 (C) a description of the types of digital course materials used in the
19 pilot programs, including electronic books, interactive and adaptive digital
20 learning tools, and open educational resources; and

21 (D) any recommendations the Chair determines appropriate
22 regarding future congressional action related to student access to digital
23 course materials.

1 (f) *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

2 (1) “Cost of attendance” means:

3 (A) tuition and fees normally assessed a student carrying the same
4 academic workload as determined by the state university or college, and
5 including costs for rental or purchase of any equipment, materials, or
6 supplies required of all students in the same course of study;

7 (B) an allowance for books, supplies, transportation, and
8 miscellaneous personal expenses, including a reasonable allowance for the
9 documented rental or purchase of a personal computer, for a student
10 attending the state university or college on at least a part-time basis, as
11 determined by the state university or college;

12 (C) an allowance (as determined by the state university or college)
13 for room and board costs incurred by the student;

14 (D) for less than part-time students (as determined by the state
15 university or college) tuition and fees and an allowance for only: books,
16 supplies, and transportation (as determined by the state university or
17 college); or room and board costs, except that a student may receive an
18 allowance for such costs under this Act for not more than three semesters or
19 the equivalent, of which not more than two semesters or the equivalent may
20 be consecutive;

21 (E) for a student engaged in a program of study by correspondence,
22 only tuition and fees and, if required, books and supplies, travel, and room
23 and board costs incurred specifically in fulfilling a required period of
24 residential training;

25 (F) for a student enrolled in an academic program in a program of
26 study abroad approved for credit by the student's home state university or

1 college, reasonable costs associated with such study (as determined by the
2 state university or college at which such student is enrolled);

3 (G) for a student with a disability, an allowance (as determined by
4 the state university or college) for those expenses related to the student's
5 disability, including special services, personal assistance, transportation,
6 equipment, and supplies that are reasonably incurred and not provided for
7 by other assisting agencies;

8 (H) for a student receiving all or part of the student's instruction by
9 means of telecommunications technology, no distinction shall be made with
10 respect to the mode of instruction in determining costs; and

11 (I) at the option of the state university or college, for a student in a
12 program requiring professional licensure or certification, the one-time cost
13 of obtaining the first professional credentials (as determined by the state
14 university or college).

15 (2) "Digital course materials" includes electronic books, portable document
16 format and word-processing documents, internet websites, interactive and adaptive
17 digital learning tools, open educational resources, and other digital and online
18 educational resources.

19 (3) "Open educational resources" means digital course materials that are
20 made freely available online to the public with a permanent copyright license
21 granting advance permission for the public to access, distribute, adapt, and
22 otherwise use the work with appropriate attribution to the authors as provided in
23 the materials.

24 (4) "Mobile computer device" means an electronic reader or tablet
25 computer;

1 (5) “Disadvantaged student” means an undergraduate student who is from a
2 low-income family; a part of Indigenous Peoples (IPs); or from an economically or
3 otherwise disadvantaged background.

4 SECTION 3. *Funding.* – Of the funds made available in General Appropriation
5 Acts for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017 for the purpose of making competitive grants
6 to state universities and colleges under this Act, the Chair may make available such sums
7 as are necessary to carry out this Act. No grants may be awarded under this Act after 31
8 December 2017.

9 SECTION 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid
10 or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
11 remain valid and subsisting.

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

16 SECTION 6. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after
17 its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

 Approved,

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