

SENATE
S.B. No. 1703

RECEIVED BY: pu

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill was originally drafted by the participants in the *Summer sa Senado* program, namely: Alfred de Guzman, Karlos Entuna, Deona Laine Figura, Kerwyn Garcia, Michael Pernites, and Sandee Recabar.

The Constitution, Article 14, provides:

Section 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.

Section 2. The State shall:

x x x x x

(2) Establish and maintain a system of free public education in the elementary and high school levels. Without limiting the natural right of parents to rear their children, elementary education is compulsory for all children of school age.

(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 the underprivileged.

However, despite the mechanisms already implemented by the government like the assistance given to students in private education provided in R.A. No. 6728, many Filipinos still cannot afford the rising cost of education. As a result, a substantial number of students take part time jobs to cover the expenses. Others cut their expenses on basic needs such as food, medicine, clothing, and housing.

This bill aims to alleviate the burden of shouldering educational expenses placed on the students. It gives discounts for college students, particularly those who belong to the underprivileged class forced to take part time jobs. The government instituted a similar discount mechanism for assisting senior citizens in R.A. No. 7432.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

AN ACT
GRANTING DISCOUNTS TO UNDERPRIVILEGED COLLEGE STUDENTS ON BASIC
AND EDUCATION SERVICES

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 “Underprivileged College Students Discount Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to prioritize quality education and take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all.

SECTION 3. *Definition.* – As used in this Act:

- (1) “Underprivileged College Students” refer to persons enrolled in the tertiary level who are forced to take part-time jobs to subsidize their education. It shall refer to a student, whose annual gross income combined with the gross annual income of his parents, do not exceed One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00) subject to review by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) every three (3) years;
- (2) “Secretary” refers to the Secretary of Education, Culture and Sports; and
- (3) “Chairman” refers to the Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education.

SECTION 4. *Discounts for the Underprivileged College Students.* –

- (1) On Food Establishments – A five percent (5%) discount shall be granted to the underprivileged college students by food establishments such as food chains, canteens,

restaurants anywhere in the country: Provided, that private food establishments may claim the cost as tax credit;

(2) On Transportation – A five percent (5%) discount shall be granted to the underprivileged college students by any public vehicle operator anywhere in the country;

(3) On Medicines – A five percent (5%) discount shall be granted to the underprivileged college students by pharmacies or drug stores anywhere in the country: Provided, that these pharmacies or drug stores may claim the cost as tax credit;

(4) On Textbooks and School Supplies – A five percent (5%) discount shall be granted to the underprivileged college students by establishments anywhere in the country, who sell reference books for college and school supplies; Provided that these establishments may claim the cost as tax credit; and

(5) On Tuition Fees, Miscellaneous, and Other School Fees. – A five percent (5%) discount on these fees shall be granted to the underprivileged college students by schools where they are enrolled anywhere in the country, without prejudice to their right in availing of the other educational assistance given by the government such as the “Study Now, Pay Later Plan under R.A. 6728; Provided that the schools may claim the cost as tax credit.

SECTION 5. *Limitation.* – The right of any underprivileged college student to avail himself of the discounts under this Act shall not apply:

(1) if he fails for one (1) school year in the majority of the academic subjects in which he has enrolled during the course of his study unless such failure is due to some valid cause beyond his control;

(2) if he fails to finish his course within two (2) years after the year within which he should have graduated;

(3) if he stops schooling for one (1) school year unless such is due to some valid cause beyond his control; and

(4) if he is convicted of any crime.

SECTION 6. *Office for Underprivileged College Student.* – The Secretary and the Chairman shall establish an Office for the Underprivileged College Students in the Commission on Higher Education. The functions of this office are:

(1) to plan, implement, monitor yearly work programs, evaluate, and submit annual reports in pursuance of the objectives of this Act;

(2) to conduct investigation, receive documentary proof, and identify who are the eligible underprivileged college students based on the provisions in this Act;

(3) to maintain and regularly update on a quarterly basis, the list of underprivileged college student to avail of the discounts;

(4) to issue certificates which shall be valid anywhere in the country as proof of the eligibility of the underprivileged college student to avail of the discounts;

(5) to cancel the certificates issued for those covered under section 5.

(6) to provide information with the affected establishments under Section 4 for any questions regarding the eligibility of any underprivileged college students claiming the discounts; and

(7) to perform such other functions as may be determined by the Chairman and the Secretary in the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary and the Chairman, in coordination with the National Economic Development Authority, the Department of Health, Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Budget and Management, and such other agencies concerned with the establishments which may be affected by this Act, shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the objectives of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Penalties.* – The first violation of any provision of this Act shall cause the suspension of the license to operate or the business permit of the establishment or person concerned for not less than one (1) week but not more than four (4) weeks.

SECTION 9. *Appropriation.* – The national government shall appropriate such amounts as may be necessary to carry out the provisions and objectives of this Act.

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

SECTION 11. *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 12. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,