


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

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SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

Senate Bill No. 414

INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Special schools and private educational institutions, both primary and secondary in which children of wealthy families study undeniably provide the best quality of education available in the country.

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 importantly, 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, this measure will enable these children end up as more productive and critical individuals than what they would have normally become under the present educational set up.

Immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


JINGGOY 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***”.

SEC 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 a 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.

SEC 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 One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00).

SEC 4. *Scholarship.* –

(1) In General –

- (a) *Scholarship Awards* – the Department shall provide scholarships to the parents of eligible children, in accordance with subsection (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.
- (b) *Scholarship Amount* – the amount of each scholarship shall not be 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.
- (c) *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.

- (2) *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 where 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.

SEC 5. *Continuing Eligibility.* – The Department 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% 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 of a weapon on school grounds, or a violent act against another student or a member of the school's faculty.

SEC 6. *Uses of Funds.* – Any scholarship awarded under this Act for a year shall be used for:

- (1) the payment of tuition and fees at the school selected by the parents of the child for whom the scholarship was provided;
- (2) 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
- (3) for educational programs that helps 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.

SEC 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.

SEC 8. *Separability 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.

SEC 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

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

Approved,