

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

7 SEP 11 23 53

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: JM

Senate Bill No. 1554

INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Every year, high school graduates join the mass of the ever growing out-of-school youth who find themselves unable to pursue higher studies. Abject poverty has prevented them to pursue their college education and set foot in institutions of higher learning.

Rizal's vision that youth is the hope of the fatherland continues to be an empty saying unless the State starts to seriously adopt a viable program on free education that can assure our deserving and qualified youth to pursue college education.

Hence, the bill seeks to address the perennial problem of high school graduates who find themselves deprived of that opportunity to get a college education.

Free college education on courses leading to degrees in engineering, agriculture, veterinary medicine, education, computer science, nursing or mass communication must be made available to all the deserving students in the sixteen (16) regions of the country.

To carry out the program, the Office of the Regional Subsidized College Education Program (ORSCEP) under the Department of Education headed by the Undersecretary is created.

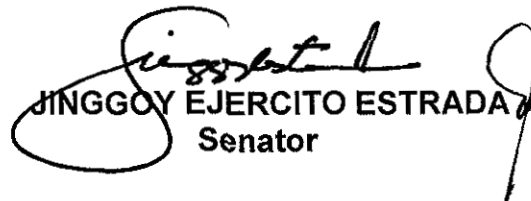
Although the program involves providing higher education, however, it is made an adjunct of the Department of Education rather than of the CHED, because the former has complete facilities, resources and manpower in all the sixteen (16) regions to assist in the successful implementation of the program, unlike the latter whose primary objective is to accredit and exercise continuing supervision on institutions engaged in collegiate education and does not have offices in all the 16 regions.

The program is envisioned to answer for the tuition, books and other expenses covering the cost of education of deserving students.

Students will be assured of constant financial assistance in the form of subsidies, transportation and clothing allowances, because it is not enough that they are provided with financial help for their studies but they likewise need assistance for their sustenance and other basic needs including the medical assistance.

Upon graduation, the fortunate recipients must remain in the country and work here for even half a decade before venturing for better work opportunities in other lands. Undeniably, there is an increasing brain drain today because of growing discontent and dissatisfaction for many reasons. With an assured crop of college graduates under the program, we can provide suitable replacements to fill in the void.

In view of the foregoing considerations, early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

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

7 SEP 11 P3:53

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: JH

Senate Bill No. 1554

INTRODUCED BY SEN. JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE "REGIONAL SUBSIDIZED COLLEGE EDUCATION PROGRAM OF 2007"
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policies.* - (a) It is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, a rising standard of living and an improved quality of life for all (Sec 9, Art II, Constitution).

(b) It is the policy of the State to give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture and sports to foster patriotism, nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development (Sec 17, Art II)

(c) It is the policy of the State to provide subsidized education to the poor and financially handicapped high school graduates or those who had finished their secondary courses but are unable to pursue college education or those who had commenced college studies but had to stop for the same reason.

SEC. 2. *Regional Subsidized College Education Program* – There is hereby established a Regional Subsidized College Education Program (RSCEP) in each of the sixteen (16) regions in the country which shall comprise the following:

- (a) Free tuition and all school expenses in any four (4) year college course leading to degrees in engineering, agriculture, veterinary medicine, education, computer science, nursing or mass communications;
- (b) Sustained provision for books, subsistence, clothing and transportation allowances; and
- (c) Contingent provision for medical or hospitalization expenses.

SEC. 3. Office of the Regional Subsidized College Education Program –

There is hereby created the Office of the Regional Subsidized College Education Program (ORSCEP) under the Department of Education which shall be headed by the Undersecretary for Regional Subsidized College Education with the same qualification, rank and emolument of an Undersecretary of Education, who shall be appointed by the President to serve for a term not exceeding six (6) years and shall have the powers and duties:

- (a) To formulate, administer, manage and implement the subsidized college program envisioned in this Act with the end in view of providing free college education to poor students;
- (b) To determine and designate private colleges or universities in every region which may qualify to participate in the programs as well as the number of student beneficiaries who may be enrolled in such institutions;
- (c) To prepare and submit the budgetary requirements under the program based on the preceding fiscal year with upward adjustment not exceeding ten (10%) percent, *Provided, however,* upon the initial implementation of the program, the budget shall be based on the amount allocated herein;
- (d) To tap, deputize and enlist the services of the regular personnel of the Department of Education, in every region as may be necessary to implement the program and enforce such rules and regulations as he/she may determine;
- (e) To submit monthly operational reports to the Secretary of Education and the Oversight Committee of Congress on the performance of the beneficiaries, their expenses and matters as may aid in ascertaining the effectivity and viability of the program;
- (f) To appoint additional personnel as may be necessary to effectively carry out the objectives of the program in all the regions; provided, however, that they are civil service eligibles and with adequate educational background or training;
- (g) To promulgate such rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act

SEC 4. Program Management and Sectors Involved. - The program shall be managed and administered by the Undersecretary for Regional Subsidized College Education and shall involve private colleges and universities in every region as are duly accredited under the program:

- (a) Any private college and university submitting the lowest bid on the cost to be incurred for a four (4) year course covered by the program shall be accredited;
- (b) Upon accreditation, the school shall allocate 20% of its total enrolment for each year for admission of qualified student beneficiaries;

- (c) Students may be qualified as beneficiaries provided they have passed the admission test; they or their parents do not own any real property; they and their parents do not have a combined total gross income of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00) per annum, and they shall undertake not to leave the country within five (5) years after graduation or passing the government examination, whichever is later;
- (d) The regional office shall, upon admission of the beneficiary students, compute and determine the school fees, costs of textbooks, allowances, transportation and other expenses which must be submitted to the central office and upon approval, distribute or disburse them when due; *Provided* that allowances and transportation shall be disbursed at monthly intervals.

SEC. 5. *Funding and Appropriation.* – The amount of Three Billion Pesos (P3,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated to carry out the purposes of this Act to be taken from funds not otherwise appropriated but included in the proposed 2008 General Appropriations Act.

SEC 6. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,