

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

8 MAY 20 12:04

SENATE
S. No. 2299

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution mandates not only that quality education must be provided by the State to all qualified citizens - the poor and the underprivileged in particular - at all levels of education, but that it must likewise put in place a system of education geared towards establishing and making available a continuing pool of trained manpower for the country's development efforts.

Within the context of this constitutional policy, the Bill seeks to provide free college education in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), a two-year college degree course, to all high school graduates of public schools. These beneficiaries would have the right to choose the public or state college or university of his choice within the city, province or region, as the case may be, for purposes enjoying the free college education benefit. In the same vein, the college authorities are obligated, under pain of administrative sanctions, to admit the qualified beneficiaries.

Given the present business practice that places a premium on formal post-secondary education or college training, and given the sheer number of graduates of our public school system, this proposed legislation is a first concrete step towards providing the deserving graduates of our public high schools with appropriate quality college education keyed to the demands of a highly competitive marketplace.

This is a Senate counterpart bill to one filed in the House of Representatives by Rep. Raul V. Del Mar II.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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1 AN ACT
2 ESTABLISHING AND PROVIDING FOR FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION IN
3 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

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

6 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Free Information and
7 Communications Technology College Education Act of 2008.”

8 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to provide quality
9 education to all qualified citizens at all levels of education and to establish a system of grants,
10 subsidies and incentives which shall be available to deserving students, especially the poor and
11 underprivileged, in order to enable them to truly participate in the benefits of a democratic
12 society.

13 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

14 (A) “Free College Education” shall mean any two-year college degree course or program
15 in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) offered in or conducted by State colleges
16 and universities;

17 (B) “State Colleges and Universities” refers to institutions of higher learning, including
18 specialized schools, maintained and funded by government;

19 (C) “Qualified Beneficiaries” shall mean all graduates of public high schools;

20 (D) “Tuition Fee” shall refer to the fee representing direct costs of instruction and training
21 facilities;

22 (E) “Other School Fees” refers to those fees which cover the other necessary costs
23 supportive of instruction, including, but not limited to medical and dental, athletic, library and
24 laboratory fees.

1 However, fees related to membership in students organizations or college activities may
2 be collected, provided that non-payment of these fees shall not in any case prejudice the
3 enrollment or graduation of a qualified beneficiary.

4 SECTION 4. *Implementation of Free College Education.* – The system of Free College
5 Education as provided in this Act, shall commence in the School Year following approval of this
6 Act. Qualified beneficiaries intending to enroll or already enrolled in ICT course offerings in
7 state colleges and universities shall be free from payment of tuition and other school fees and
8 shall be entitled to such other incentives or subsidies as may be granted in accordance with such
9 rules and regulations to be promulgated to carry out the provisions of this Act: *Provided*, that
10 nothing in this Act shall cause or authorize the reduction or removal of any benefit which the
11 national or local government may be granted to the students prior to the enactment of this Act.

12 SECTION 5. *Formulation of ICT Curriculum.* – The Commission on Higher Education
13 (CHED) shall formulate a two-year college curriculum geared to provide students with highly
14 competitive training or skills consistent with the manpower demands of a highly competitive
15 business environment.

16 SECTION 6. *Limitation.* – The right of any student to avail of free college education
17 shall terminate if he fails for two (2) consecutive semesters in the majority of the subjects in
18 which he is enrolled during the course of his study.

19 SECTION 7. *Place of Study and Admission.* – The qualified beneficiary shall take his
20 free college education in state colleges or universities of his choice situated in the city or
21 province where he resides.

22 Should there be no state college or university in the city or province where he resides or
23 where the university or college facilities cannot accommodate all qualified beneficiaries, the
24 student may take his free college benefit in any college or university within the region nearest to
25 his place of residence. In the absence of public universities or colleges within the region of his
26 residence, the qualified student beneficiary may avail of the privilege in any public or state
27 college or university in any region nearest to the province where he resides.

1 SECTION 8. *Obligation of State Colleges.* – The State colleges or universities have the
2 obligation to admit qualified beneficiaries, subject only to limitation of funding and facilities. A
3 violation of this obligation shall constitute a ground for dismissal of the school authorities
4 concerned.

5 SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The CHED, in coordination with
6 the association of state colleges and universities, shall issue the necessary implementing rules
7 and regulations within one hundred twenty (120) days from effectivity of this Act.

8 SECTION 10. *Funding.* – Adequate funds shall be earmarked by the President from
9 available funds in the National Treasury for the initial implementation of this Act. The President
10 shall likewise utilize for the purpose available funds or savings of the CHED or the Department
11 of Education. Funds needed for the ensuing fiscal years for the implementation of this Act shall
12 be included in the appropriations of State universities and colleges in the General Appropriations
13 Act.

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

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

20 SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
21 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

22 Approved,