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SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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SENATE

S. No. 984

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the information age that we live in, the leaps and bounds achieved by industries associated with information technology have made possible the rapid dissemination of advancements in science, technology, agriculture, engineering, and many other fields of knowledge.

If the Philippine labor force is to catch up with the rest of the world, Philippine policy makers should be cognizant of the fact that today, computer literacy is a skill that is as basic to a student as mathematics, language or reading literacy.

This bill seeks to establish the Board on Computer Education as the government agency that will be tasked to promote the development of computer literacy among Filipino students. It also proposes the establishment of enabling measures and incentives such as tax-free importation of computer hardware by accredited entities in order to facilitate the implementation of a computer literacy program in nineteen of the country's poorest provinces.

Our abundant supply of labor will turn out to be a liability unless our workers are adequately equipped with the skills needed to compete in the global arena. This measure proposes to achieve the goal of a competitive Philippine labor force through computer education.

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



MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID
Senator

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AN ACT
TO INTEGRATE A COMPUTER EDUCATION PROGRAM INTO THE
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION. 1. Declaration of Policy. - It shall be the policy of the State to promote functional computer literacy in all schools, at the earliest possible stage, and in a manner that is most efficient and effective in producing a population that is highly skilled in the creation, use and manipulation of computer software. In this regard, private sector initiative and participation shall always be encouraged to achieve this policy objective.

SEC. 2. Board on Computer Education; Creation, Power and Functions. - A Board on Computer Education, hereafter referred to as Board, is hereby created to implement the provision of this Act and for this purpose shall have the following powers and shall exercise the following functions:

- a) supervise the accreditation of the computer schools which will participate in the program;
- b) assess and provide for the necessary training of the personnel of computer schools on methods of teaching;
- c) prepare the curriculum for computer-aided logic, math and science education in the elementary level;
- d) monitor the performance of the computer schools;
- e) evaluate the abilities of the students enrolled in the program;
- f) issue and implement all rules and regulations provided for in this Act; and
- g) exercise all other powers and functions which may be necessary to carry out the provision of this Act.

SEC. 3. Board Composition. - The Board shall be composed of the following Members:

- a) One (1) representative from the Department of Education (DepEd) to be nominated by the Secretary of Education;
- b) One (1) representative from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to be nominated by the CHED Chairman;
- c) One (1) representative from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to be nominated by the Secretary and Technology to be nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology;
- d) One (1) representative from the duly accredited professional organizations of computer programmers and system analysts to be nominated by the recognized leadership of these organizations;
- e) One representative from the National Economic Development Authority, to be nominated by the Secretary-General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA).

The representative from the DepEd shall serve as Chairman of the Board. The Chairman and the Members shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of the Philippines for a term of five (5) years and shall have the rank and compensation of a Bureau of Director.

SEC. 4. Promotion of the Build-Operate- Transfer (BOP) Scheme and other similar arrangements. - The provision of Republic Act No. 6957, as amended, shall be applied to the construction, operation and servicing of computer education and its facilities: *Provided, That any contractual arrangement that will be utilized for this purpose shall additionally provide for the following:*

- a) A training program for teachers not only on computer literacy but also on the maintenance and servicing of computer education facilities; and
- b) An apprenticeship program for interested students of the public school being serviced whereby they may be employed as apprentices for the education component or for the facilities maintenance component of computer education.

The build-operate-transfer arrangement or any other similar arrangements provided for in Republic Act No. 6957, as amended, may be bidded out and awarded at the school district level or at the school level, in accordance with the implementing rules and regulations to be issued by the Board.

SEC. 5. Institutionalization of the Voucher System for Specialized Computer Education in the Nineteen (19) Poorest Provinces. - In addition to whatever contractual arrangements which may be utilized under the provisions of Section 4 hereof, there shall be created a voucher system for specialized computer education in the country's nineteen (19) poorest provinces whereby each of these provinces shall be given the amount of Five Million Pesos (Php 5,000,000.00) each year from the annual budget allocated for the implementation of the specialized computer education program, or such amount as may be latter on provided by law.

Students in these provinces who have completed secondary education shall be allowed to take competitive aptitude examinations in specialized computer education.

Students who have passed such qualifying examinations, or as many of those who may be provided funds from the annual budget, shall be given a voucher worth Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00) each, or such amount as may be later on provided by law, to enroll in a computer school of his or her choice, to finish advanced and specialized computer courses such as, but not limited to, advanced programming, computer-aided design, hardware design, networking, or such other courses that may be identified by the Board.

Each student shall be entitled to only one voucher. The Board shall issue the implementing rules and regulations to ensure that students do not enroll in more than one school, or that enrollment figures reflect actual enrollment. Student found guilty of violating this one-voucher-per-student rule shall be subject to the penalties provided hereunder.

SEC. 6. Accreditation of Computer Education Service Providers. – All entities participating the activities described in Section 4 and 5 hereof must be accredited by the Board as *bona fide* participants. The accreditation must be renewed for every period of not less than one year but not more than five years. Accreditation shall be based on the following criteria:

- a) The curriculum meet the standards provided for by the Board;
- b) The quality of the computers and other peripherals to be provided and the other peripherals to be provided and the other physical infrastructures to be built, operated or used which must ensure quality of education and minimum health and safety standards;
- c) The capability of the service provider's instructors. The Board will issue minimum standard for evaluating teaching ability; and
- d) With respect to renewal of applications, the performance of the students on performance measures to be designed by the Board.

SEC. 7. Curriculum of Publicly-funded Computer Education. – The computer literacy program acknowledges the vital participation of the private sector in the scheme, but the curriculum shall be prepared by the Board.

The curriculum should make use of computer-assisted education to teach elementary students the basic courses of math, science and logic. These courses will prepare the student for the demands of computer programming and system analysis, as well as strengthen the learning the student receives from the formal educational system.

The Board will also prepare the curriculum for computer programming and popular software utilization, which will be taught at the high school level.

SEC. 8. Monitoring and Incentives on Performance. - Monitoring of the program shall be done to maintain the quality of education being given to the students. Performance measures shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) Periodic renewal of accreditation or license to operate;
- b) Testing;
- c) National competitions; and
- d) Unannounced visits to participating schools.

The Board shall formulate or commission the formulation of a performance index which will be used in assessing the performance of the participating schools. The latest results of the evaluation of all schools shall be published before the start of every school year.

The Board shall formulate a system of rewards and incentives to promote excellence among the service providers.

SEC. 9. Tax-free Importation of Computer Hardware and Software. - All entities who have been accredited, or who have obtained contracts as participants in the activities provided for in Sections 4 and 5 hereof shall be given fiscal incentives.

These incentives shall include the tax-free importation of all computer hardware, software, peripherals and documentary materials. However, these incentives shall be limited to imports that are intended for the schools. These incentives shall last for a period of not more than ten years from the effectivity of this Act.

The Board shall issue the implementing rules and regulations for the availment of the incentives described herein.

SEC. 10. Phased Implementation. - The computer education program shall be implemented in phases to ensure that program and infrastructure requirement shall be met, to prepare the private sector for the demand for computer schools and equipment, and to prime-up the local demand for computer-literate workers.

The implementation shall be done in accordance with the following objectives:

(a) the graduation, one year from the effectivity of this Act, of a corps of high-school students who can manipulate the most popular computer application programs in the areas of word processing, database encoding and spreadsheets;

(b) the graduation, three years from the effectivity of this Act, of a corps of high school students who are not only literate in the applications described in paragraph (a) herein, but also in basic programming and system analysis; and

(c) the immediate use of computer-aided education which will complement the academic instructions in math, science and logic.

SEC. 11. Community Linkages. - Other software and computer programming may be taught by the schools and service providers under a community link-up system whereby additional training on the use of special software can be paid for by interested business or manufacturing firms in the community. The business community will also be encouraged to expand and update their manufacturing procedures to achieve efficiency through computerization or computer-controlled processes.

SEC. 12. Budget and Funding. - An initial budget of One Hundred Million Pesos (Php 100,000,000.00) to be disbursed from the earnings of the lotteries conducted by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office is hereby appropriated for the payment of the services to be provided under Sections 4 and 5 of this Act as well as for the expenses related to the establishment and operation of the Board. Thereafter, the funds necessary for the continuous implementation of this Act shall be included in the yearly General Appropriations Act.

The administrative expenses related to the implementation of this Act shall not be more than three percent (3%) of the annual appropriations for this Computer Education Program.

SEC. 13. Penalties. - Any person found guilty of violating the provisions of Section 5 hereof shall be meted the following penalties:

a) The student shall pay the full cost of tuition, with interest thereon. The payment may be in cash, or in its equivalent in terms of community service.

b) The accreditation of the service providers found guilty of padding their enrollment figures, or for knowingly permitting a student to violate the provisions of Section 5 hereof shall be suspended, for the first offense; and cancelled for the second offense, without prejudice to the payment of twice the amount of reimbursement resulting from the padded enrollment as fine.

SEC. 14. *Rules and Regulations.* - Within forty five (45) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Board shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 15. *Separability Clause.* - In the event that any provisions of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected by such declaration.

SEC. 16. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders regulations, or portions thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby rules and repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 17. *Effectivity Clause.* - This law shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,