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SENATE

S. B. No. 2272

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(In substitution of SB Nos. 141 and 2154, taking into consideration H. No. 3575)

Prepared Jointly by the Committees on Education, Arts and Culture; and Finance
with Senators Villar, Recto, Angara, and (P.) Cayetano as authors

**AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE LADDERIZED INTERFACE
BETWEEN TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING
AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

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

- 1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** - This Act shall be known as the "Ladderized
- 2 Education Act of 2014."
- 3 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - In line with the Constitutional guarantee for
- 4 the State to promote the right of all citizens to quality and accessible education at
- 5 all levels and to establish, maintain and support a complete, adequate and
- 6 integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and
- 7 contributory to national development, it is hereby declared the policy of the State
- 8 to institutionalize the ladderized interface between technical-vocational education
- 9 and training (TVET) and higher education to open the pathways of opportunities
- 10 for career and educational progression of students and workers, create a
- 11 seamless and borderless education, empower students and workers to
- 12 exercise options or to choose when to enter and exit in the educational ladder,
- 13 and provide job platforms at every exit as well as the opportunity to earn income.

1 The State likewise recognizes and supports the promotion and protection of
2 the inherent academic freedom enjoyed by all institutions of higher learning. For
3 this purpose, the government shall uphold the academic standards, equity
4 principles, promptness and consistency of the applications/admissions and
5 equivalency policies of higher education institutions (HEIs).

6 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms
7 are hereby defined:

8 a. *Articulation* refers to a process which allows students to make the
9 smooth transition from one course, program or educational level to the next
10 level of qualification, between providers or sectors, without experiencing
11 duplication of learning. The guiding principle of articulation is that no student
12 should repeat the same course content for which credit has already been
13 received. Articulated programs provide multiple entry and exit points and ladders
14 of learning opportunities.

15 b. *Credit* refers to the value given to a course or subject,

16 c. *Credit Transfer* refers to the recognition and carrying forward of
17 credits that constitute overlapping learning, from TVET to a degree program;

18 d. *Embedded Tech-Voc Qualification in a Ladderized Degree Program*
19 refers to the process of determining the TVET competencies or qualifications that
20 lead to job platforms in the relevant higher education or bachelor's degree
21 program. Full TVET qualification can still be earned even if a student of a
22 ladderized degree program chooses to exit from the program and get a job;

23 e. *Equivalency* refers to a process that involves assigning equivalent
24 academic credits to the competencies demonstrated by a student through
25 assessment tests, thereby providing entry points to the next higher level
26 qualification, the purpose of which is to provide opportunities to the student to
27 continue to learn and to re-enter the educational program at a higher level without
28 having to unnecessarily retake courses which a student has already
29 demonstrated competence and knowledge;

1 *f. Job Platform* refers to the gateway in the ladderized curriculum which
2 one reaches upon acquiring enough skills and knowledge to seek and find
3 employment;

4 *g. Ladderized Education* refers to the harmonization of all
5 education and training mechanisms that allow students and workers to progress
6 between technical-vocational and college courses and programs, or vice-versa. It
7 opens opportunities for career and educational advancement to students and
8 workers. It creates a seamless and borderless education and training system
9 that will allow mobility in terms of flexible entry and exit between technical-
10 vocational and college degree programs in the post-secondary school educational
11 system;

12 *h. Qualification* refers to a formal certification that a person has
13 successfully achieved specific learning outcomes relevant to the identified
14 academic, industry or community requirements;

15 *i. Recognition of Prior Learning* refers to the acknowledgment of a
16 person's skills and knowledge through previous training, work or life experience,
17 which may be used to grant status or credit for acquired competencies.

18 **SEC. 4. Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF).** The PQF,
19 established by virtue of Executive Order No. 83, series of 2012, has the following
20 objectives:

21 a. Adoption of national standards and levels for outcomes of
22 education;

23 b. Supporting the development and maintenance of pathways and
24 equivalencies, which provide access to qualifications and assist people to move
25 easily and readily between the different education and training sectors and
26 between these sectors and the labor market; and

27 c. Alignment with international qualifications framework to support
28 the national and international mobility of workers through increased recognition of

1 the value and comparability of Philippine qualifications.

2 The PQF National Coordinating Committee (PQF-NCC) is composed of the
3 Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills
4 Development Authority (TESDA), the Department of Education (DepED) the
5 Department of Labor (DOLE) and the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC)
6 and is chaired by DepED.

7 The following working groups are established to pursue the implementation of
8 the PQF:

- 9 1. Qualifications Register headed by TESDA;
- 10 2. Pathways and Equivalencies headed by CHED;
- 11 3. Quality Standards headed by CHED;
- 12 4. Information and Guidelines headed by DepEd; and
- 13 5. International Alignment headed by the PRC.

14 In the development of ladderized education, CHED, TESDA, and DepED are
15 hereby mandated to closely coordinate and effectively implement a unified PQF
16 that establishes equivalency pathways and access ramps allowing for easier
17 transitions and progressions between TVET and higher education. The framework
18 shall include qualifications and articulation mechanisms, such as, but not
19 necessarily limited to the following: credit transfer, embedded TVET
20 qualification in ladderized degree programs, post-TVET bridging programs,
21 enhanced equivalency, adoption of ladderized curricula/programs, and
22 accreditation and/or recognition of prior learning.

23 For this purpose, CHED, TESDA and DepED shall design harmonized
24 guidelines and equivalency competency courses to enhance the delivery of
25 high-quality technical-vocational and higher education courses, synchronize
26 standards and upgrade curriculum design per discipline and adopt a strategic
27 implementation scheme, including a massive consultation and information
28 dissemination scheme. In so doing, CHED, TESDA and DepED shall continue

1 exploring and developing other mechanisms and systems that will allow the
2 interface between TVET and higher education with the end in view of
3 creating a seamless and borderless education system.

4 **SEC. 5. *Priority Disciplines.*** As a preliminary approach to the
5 implementation of the ladderized program and to ensure its more focused
6 implementation, CHED, TESDA and DepED, in consultation with the industry,
7 DOLE, PRC, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the National Economic
8 and Development Authority (NEDA), the Department of Science and
9 Technology (DOST) and other related agencies, are directed to identify priority
10 disciplines and programs for ladderization, taking into account labor market
11 realities. The CHED, TESDA and DepED shall implement the ladderization of
12 other disciplines, other than those presently being implemented, should these be
13 found necessary and beneficial, based on a comprehensive study of their
14 viability.

15 **SEC. 6. *Enhancement of the Ladderized Education Program (LEP).*** -
16 CHED, TESDA and DepED, in consultation with the PRC, are directed to jointly
17 devise systems, procedures, and mechanisms, as well as to issue, amend and
18 update existing implementing guidelines, as necessary, for the efficient and
19 effective implementation of LEP and to ensure that the objectives of the
20 program are met. Incentives may be given to HEIs and technical-vocational
21 institutions to further encourage wider participation in the LEP.

22 The CHED, TESDA and DepED shall ensure that there are designated
23 personnel at the regional and provincial levels responsible for the implementation,
24 monitoring and evaluation of LEP nationwide.

25 **SEC. 7. *Support from Other Government Agencies.*** PRC, DOLE, DOST,
26 DTI, NEDA, Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and other related
27 agencies are hereby mandated to extend the necessary support and provide
28 relevant inputs towards the effective implementation of the ladderized system of
29 education.

1 **SEC. 8. Scholarships, Grants and Loans.** CHED, TESDA and DepED
2 shall include in their respective budgets the provision of scholarships, grants
3 and loans to deserving students and workers availing themselves of the
4 ladderized system of education, in addition to the present scholarship programs
5 being implemented by CHED and TESDA.

6 **SEC. 9. Enabling Clause for HEIs.** To encourage the widest enjoyment of
7 the benefit of ladderized education, HEIs whose curricula have been recognized
8 by the CHED may avail of the ladderization program: *Provided, That,* the
9 minimum curricular requirements under the relevant guidelines of CHED, TESDA
10 and DepED are complied with and duly certified by these agencies prior to the
11 formal offering of the program;

12 For this purpose, the HEI shall be required to submit to the CHED Regional
13 Office a copy of the curriculum for the proposed ladderized program for
14 monitoring, compliance and for potential objective inputs from their technical
15 experts. Failure to submit this requirement shall be subject to administrative
16 sanctions to be imposed by CHED.

17 **SEC. 10. Academic Freedom.** Nothing in this bill shall be construed as
18 restricting the HEI in the exercise of its academic freedom. The HEI shall retain the
19 right to assess the level and standard of previously completed TVET programs by
20 an applicant-student in a manner that is transparent and objective, incorporating
21 therein its own admission requirements. The applicant-student must gain
22 admission to the HEI's undergraduate program by meeting the prescribed criteria
23 and program requisites and such other requirements by the HEI.

24 **SEC. 11. Appropriations.** The amount necessary for the initial
25 implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the current budgets and
26 development funds of CHED, TESDA and DepED. Thereafter, the funds
27 necessary for the continuous implementation of this Act in the ensuing years shall
28 be included in the respective annual appropriations of CHED, TESDA and DepED

1 in the General Appropriations Act.

2 **SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** The CHED, TESDA
3 and DepED, in consultation with relevant stakeholders in higher and technical-
4 vocational education shall issue within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this
5 Act, the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

6 **SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act or any part thereof
7 shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions, as far as they are
8 separable, shall remain in force and effect.

9 **SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations
10 or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby
11 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

12 **SEC. 15. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
13 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
14 circulation

Approved,