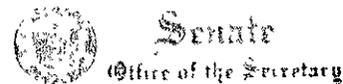


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



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SENATE
S. No. 2839

RECEIVED BY: Y

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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

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.

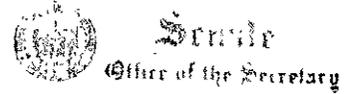
Given the present business practice that places a premium on formal post-secondary education or college training, and given the sheer number of graduates of our public school system, this proposed legislation is a first concrete step towards providing the deserving graduates of our public high schools 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 11.¹


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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¹ This bill was originally filed in the Fourteenth Congress, First Regular Session.

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AN ACT
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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 “Free Information and
2 Communications Technology College Education Act.”

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

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

9 (A) “Free College Education” shall mean any two-year college degree course or
10 program in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) offered in or conducted
11 by Stat colleges and universities;

12 (B) “Other School Fees” refer to those fees which cover the other necessary costs
13 supportive of instruction, including, but not limited to medical and dental, athletic, library
14 and laboratory fees;

15 (C) “Qualified Beneficiaries” refer to all graduates of public high schools;

1 (D) "State Colleges and Universities" refers to institutions of higher learning,
2 including specialized schools, maintained and funded by government; and

3 (E) "Tuition Fee" refers to the fee representing direct costs of instruction and
4 training facilities;

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

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

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

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

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

4 Should there be no state college or university in the city or province where he
5 resides or where the university or college facilities cannot accommodate all qualified
6 beneficiaries, the student may take his free college benefit in any college or university
7 within the region nearest to his place of residence. In the absence of public universities or
8 colleges within the region of his residence, the qualified student beneficiary may avail of
9 the privilege in any public or state college or university in any region nearest to the
10 province where he resides.

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

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

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

1 SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other
3 provisions hereof.

4 SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or
5 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
6 repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

7 SECTION 13. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
8 after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
9 circulation.

Approved,

/fdp9June2015