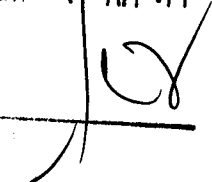


SENATE

P. S. RES. NO 383

20 MAY -4 (A11 :11  
RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

**RESOLUTION**  
**DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER AND TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING ACT**

**WHEREAS**, Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that “the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all;”

**WHEREAS**, according to the UNDP Human Development Report 2018, the gross enrollment ratio in tertiary education in the Philippines is only 35%, which, although counts as an improvement from the previous years, remains to be lower than our ASEAN neighbors like Thailand (46%) and Malaysia (44%);<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, completion rate in higher education in the country is equally low; conservative estimate on senior student population in higher education institutions averaged to 604,463 to 755,578<sup>2</sup> from 2003 to 2017, but graduates averaged to only 516,483 students, resulting in a completion rate that ranges from only 68% to 85%;

**WHEREAS**, open distance learning (ODL), which espouses a student-centered and independent education through flexible access to well-designed learning materials, was promoted under Republic Act No. 10650 or the Open Distance Learning Act of 2014, as a tool to expand and democratize access to quality tertiary education for the benefit of learners in special circumstances (e.g. working students and/or “school leavers”);

<sup>1</sup> Gross enrollment ratio is defined as the number of students enrolled in a given level of education as a percentage of the number of people within the official age for that level of education.

<sup>2</sup> CHED Higher Education Statistics; Academic Years 2014 to 2017; 2018 excluded due to impact of K12 on HEI enrollment.

**WHEREAS**, more than five years since its enactment, there are only 22 higher education institutions that are offering 76 distance education programs;

**WHEREAS**, with the need for continuous implementation of the social distancing measures brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the shift to online and other alternative modes of learning for most, if not all, higher education institutions (HEIs), the importance of strengthening the implementation of the Open Distance Learning Act is emphasized, and made all the more urgent;

**WHEREAS**, an investigation is crucial to discuss the various aspects of the implementation of the Open Distance Learning Act, including, but not limited to, (i) the range of undergraduate and graduate programs and courses offered by all ODL HEIs in the country, (ii) the quality of design and mode of delivery of curriculum or programs implemented by HEIs, (iii) the costs incurred by both students and faculty, (iv) the completion or graduation rates of students from the said degrees, (v) the quality and adequacy of support from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Skills and Development Authority (TESDA) and other concerned agencies to HEIs, and (vi) the links of ODL HEIs to academic, research, and government institutions, among others;

**WHEREAS**, one of the scarce resources on ODL in the country, "Issues and Challenges in Open and Distance e-Learning (ODEL): Perspectives from the Philippines" (Arinto, 2016), explains that much can be done to further improve the planning and faculty support for ODeL in the University of the Philippines Open University, which is the university mandated to assist other HEIs in developing, testing and utilizing innovative instructional materials and technology, and sharing these with other colleges and universities through cooperative programs;

**WHEREAS**, assessing the impact of the Open Distance Learning Act on the quality, costs, accessibility, and availability of higher education, especially to certain demographics such as working students, businessmen, people with disability, and senior citizens and other students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, on the national level can help identify and address the physical and financial barriers that limit the effectiveness of the law, as well as identify best practices in ODL;

**RESOLVE BY THE SENATE**, to direct the Senate Committee on Higher and Technical and Vocational Education to inquire, in aid of legislation, the status of the implementation and the achievements of the Open Distance Learning Act.

Adopted,

  
**SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA** 