

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE]
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES]
Second Regular Session]

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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 1007

Introduced by SENATOR WIN GATCHALIAN

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED SALE OF DEGREES TO FOREIGN STUDENTS IN CAGAYAN PROVINCE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE VERACITY OF THE SAID ALLEGATIONS AND THE NECESSITY OF PROPOSING RECOMMENDATIONS ON EXISTING POLICIES OR CRAFTING COMPLEMENTARY OR AMENDATORY LEGISLATION

1 **WHEREAS**, it is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution that the State shall
2 establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system
3 of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. It is likewise
4 declared that academic freedom shall be enjoyed in all institutions of higher
5 learning;

6

7 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to these State policies, Republic Act (R.A.) No.
8 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994",¹ created the
9 Commission on Higher Education (CHED), independent and separate from
10 the Department of Education (formerly the Department of Education, Culture
11 and Sports), and attached to the Office of the President solely for
12 administrative purposes. The CHED shall cover both public and private

¹ Enacted on May 18, 1994.

1 institutions of higher education as well as degree-granting programs in all
2 post-secondary educational institutions, public and private;

3
4 **WHEREAS**, in R.A. No. 11448, otherwise known as the “Transnational
5 Higher Education Act”,² the State shall endeavor to modernize the Philippine
6 higher education sector, and bring international quality standards and
7 expertise into the country, with a view to making higher education globally
8 competitive, attracting a flow of talented students, faculty, and staff and
9 improving the country’s human resource base;

10
11 **WHEREAS**, the entry and stay of foreign students in the Philippines are
12 governed by Executive Order No. 285, s. 2000³ and its Implementing Rules
13 and Regulations, and Joint Memorandum Order No. 01, s. 2017⁴ of the Inter-
14 Agency Committee on Foreign Students (IACFS);

15
16 **WHEREAS**, on April 17, 2024, news broke out that some of the mainland
17 Chinese students in the Province of Cagayan are reportedly shelling out P2
18 million to obtain their degrees, as reported by Professor Chester Cabalza of
19 the University of the Philippines. Some of these students allegedly do not even
20 bother to attend their classes;⁵

21
22 **WHEREAS**, Cagayan Governor Manuel Mamba said that these Chinese
23 students in the province entered the country legally to pursue their studies
24 under a partnership between Chinese learning institutions and the CHED;⁶

25
26 **WHEREAS**, CHED clarified that the involved university in this issue,

² Enacted on August 28, 2019.

³ Amending the Guidelines Governing the Entry and Stay of Foreign Students in the Philippines and the Establishment of an Inter-Agency Committee on Foreign Students for the Purpose, signed on September 4, 2000.

⁴ Consolidated Implementing Guidelines on the Entry and Stay of Foreign Students in the Philippines Pursuant to Executive Order No. 285, s. 2000.

⁵ <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/232308/some-chinese-students-in-cagayan-allegedly-pay-p2-million-to-get-degrees#ixzz8XzeX7a2W>, April 17, 2024.

⁶ *Ibid.*

1 particularly Saint Paul University Philippines (SPUP) – Tuguegarao City, was
2 granted autonomous status by CHED since 2002 and has an Authority to
3 Accept Foreign Students by the Bureau of Immigration (BI).⁷ SPUP also has
4 the authority, among others, to establish linkages with recognized foreign
5 higher education institutions (HEIs);⁸

6
7 **WHEREAS**, CHED claimed that it has not received complaints as to any
8 violation of SPUP of the IACFS Joint Memorandum, which shall be forwarded
9 to IACFS for its appropriate action;⁹

10
11 **WHEREAS**, the BI data shows that a total of 1,516 Chinese were granted
12 student visas in Cagayan in 2023. All the Chinese students were endorsed by
13 a major Philippine university. However, BI received reports that only 400
14 Chinese students are onsite because of the implementation of distance
15 learning;¹⁰

16
17 **WHEREAS**, in the April 19, 2024 statement of CHED, it strongly urged
18 Professor Cabalza to formalize his complaint with the necessary evidence
19 against SPUP with CHED. CHED will not hesitate to start an investigation and
20 ensure that due process is observed for all involved parties. In parallel, CHED
21 reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that academic institutions under its
22 purview operate within the bounds of Philippine laws and regulations and in
23 concern with the nation’s interests;¹¹

24
25 **WHEREAS**, while the State strongly supports the internationalization in
26 education, any practice allowing the proliferation of diploma mills in the

⁷ <https://ched.gov.ph/statement-on-the-influx-of-chinese-students-in-cagayan/>, April 18, 2024

⁸ As provided under Section 13 of CHED CMO 19, s. 2016, “Benefits and Responsibilities of Autonomous and Deregulated Private Higher Education Institutions”.

⁹ *Supra* note 7.

¹⁰ <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/bureau-immigration-report-chinese-secured-student-visas-cagayan-2023/>, April 19, 2024.

¹¹ <https://ched.gov.ph/statement-on-the-allegations-of-degree-purchases-by-chinese-students-in-cagayan/>, April 19, 2024.

1 country must not be allowed. The sale of said degrees undermines the
2 government efforts to improve the quality of education in the country,
3 diminishes the credibility of our HEIs, and tarnishes the integrity of the
4 diplomas granted to local or foreign students graduating from these
5 institutions;

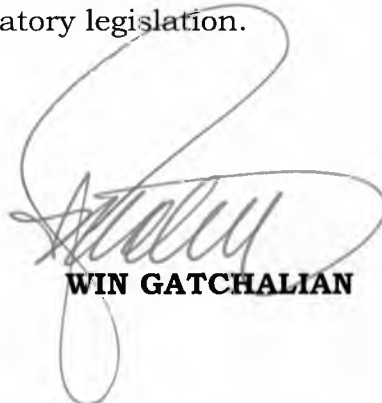
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7 **WHEREAS**, it is within the powers and functions of the CHED to impose
8 appropriate penalties or sanctions on HEIs and their officials who condone
9 such practices. The message must be clearly sent to the international
10 community that Philippine diplomas are not, and never will be, for sale;

11

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE**
13 **PHILIPPINES**, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an
14 inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the alleged sale of degrees to foreign students
15 in Cagayan Province, for the purpose of determining the veracity of the said
16 allegations and the necessity of proposing recommendations on existing
17 policies or crafting complementary or amendatory legislation.

Adopted,



WIN GATCHALIAN