

S. No. 2441

H. No. 5001

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines

Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress

Second Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-fourth day of July, two thousand twenty-three.

[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 12005]

AN ACT MANDATING PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO WAIVE COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION FEES AND CHARGES OF CERTAIN STUDENTS QUALIFIED TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE ADMISSION

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “Free College Entrance Examinations Act”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to democratize access to quality tertiary education. In line with this declared policy, and in cognizance of the need to assist disadvantaged students that show potential for academic excellence, the State shall exempt qualified graduates and graduating students from

payment of entrance examination fees administered by private higher education institutions (HEIs).

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purposes of this Act:

(a) *College entrance examinations* shall refer to examinations administered by private HEIs that serve as one of the criteria in the selection of prospective students for admission;

(b) *Graduates and graduating students* shall refer to learners who have completed or are about to complete the Enhanced Basic Education Program as provided under Republic Act No. 10533, otherwise known as the “Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013”; the Accreditation and Equivalency Assessments and Certifications for Senior High School Level under the Alternative Learning System as provided under Republic Act No. 11510, otherwise known as the “Alternative Learning System Act”; and other similar educational programs or accreditation and equivalency assessments and certifications as may be identified by the Department of Education (DepEd);

(c) *Higher education* shall refer to the stage of formal education, or its equivalent, requiring completion of secondary education and covering programs of study leading to bachelor and advanced degrees, including associate degrees; and

(d) *Private higher education institutions* shall refer to HEIs duly recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) which are owned or operated by private persons, natural or juridical, whether sectarian or non-sectarian.

SEC. 4. *Waiver of Entrance Examination Fees.* – All private HEIs are hereby mandated to waive the college entrance examination fees and charges imposed on qualified graduates and graduating students who are applying for college admission.

SEC. 5. *Eligibility Requirements.* – A graduate or graduating student shall be eligible for the waiver of college entrance examination fees and charges upon the satisfaction of the following qualifications and requirements:

(a) The graduate or graduating student must be a natural-born Filipino citizen;

(b) The graduate or graduating student must belong to the top ten percent (10%) of his or her graduating class;

(c) The graduate or graduating student must belong to a family whose combined household income falls below the poverty threshold as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority or cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide for their minimum basic needs of food, health, education, housing and other essential amenities of life duly certified as such by the Department of Social Welfare and Development;

(d) The graduate or graduating student must apply for college entrance examination to any private HEI within the country; and

(e) The graduate or graduating student must satisfy all other requirements as specified by the private HEI concerned.

SEC. 6. Penalties. – The CHED is hereby authorized, in accordance with Section 8(e) of Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the “Higher Education Act of 1994”, to determine and impose appropriate sanctions against responsible officials or employees of private HEIs for failure or refusal to comply with the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED shall, in coordination with the DepEd and in consultation with the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations of the Philippines, or its equivalent institution, promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

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

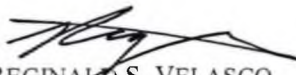
SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect immediately following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

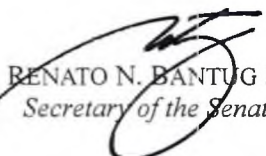
Approved,


 FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
*Speaker of the House
 of Representatives*


 JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI
President of the Senate

This Act was passed by the Senate of the Philippines as Senate Bill No. 2441 on December 11, 2023 and adopted by the House of Representatives as an amendment to House Bill No. 5001 on March 19, 2024.


 REGINALD S. VELASCO
*Secretary General
 House of Representatives*


 RENATO N. BANTUG JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: ~~Lapsed into law on~~ **JUN 14 2024**
 without the signature of the President, in accordance with Article VI, Section 27 (1) of the Constitution

FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
President of the Philippines