



Senate
Office of the Secretary

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

'22 AUG -2 A8 :56

SENATE

S. No. 991

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR SCHOLARSHIP TO CHILDREN AND DEPENDENTS OF
FARMERS AND FISHERFOLKS, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is primarily an agriculture - dependent country; about one-third of the land area of 30 million hectares is categorised as agricultural lands. However, it has been a clear irony that farmers in this country remain marginalised. Those who should have been the strongest and probably the richest sector are those who have less in life. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the farmers and fisherfolks have the highest poverty incidences among the basic sectors.

Despite them comprising more than sixty percent (60%) of the country's workforce, their welfare remains the least priority. The unfortunate reality is that they remain neglected. While other sectors in the workforce continuously enjoy various kinds of benefits, farmers experience incessant indigence.

In a country that depends so much on the agriculture sector for our sustenance, focused and palpable programs that would come to the refuge of our dear farmers are long overdue. They till the lands they do not own, only for their crops to be ravaged by calamities. This is the struggle of their day-to-day lives which continuously threatens their livelihood and profit.

At the receiving end of much of their woes are their families – many of whom endure long seasons of drought and hunger, and their children who cannot seem to escape the cycle of poverty because even education has come at a price too high.

This proposed measure therefore attempts to give farmers a kind of assistance that has not yet been afforded to them – which would, on one hand, allow society pays its debt of gratitude to the farmers who have toiled under the heat of the scorching sun; and on the other hand, ensure that doors of opportunities are opened to their families. This bill seeks to give full scholarship to dependents of farmers. The hope is for education to help in freeing them from the bondage of poverty. This is anchored on our view that education is a tool to address poverty, and a tool for economic improvement.

This bill is a huge step – one of many. For it is high time we give back to the sector that has given so much and yet received so little. In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.



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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as "*Educational Scholarship for*
2 *Children and Dependents of Farmers and Fisherfolks Act.*"

3 Sec. 2. *Full scholarship for Children and Dependents of Farmers and Fisherfolks.*
4 – Children and dependents of farmers and fisherfolks listed in the Registry System for
5 Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) shall be entitled to full scholarship from basic
6 education until their completion of tertiary education subject to rules and regulations
7 as mandated by this Act.

8 The benefits shall include all expenses for education, whether in public or
9 private school, such as but not limited to tuition fees, miscellaneous and other fees
10 and other, board and lodging, transportation expense, clothing and food and other
11 similar expenses.

12 Sec. 3. *Special Fund for Educational Benefits.* – In order to carry out the
13 provisions of this Act, there is hereby established a Special Fund, to be known as the
14 "Educational Benefits for Farmers and Fisherfolks Fund," in the amount of Fifty Million
15 Pesos (P50,000,000.00). Such fund shall be perpetually maintained and used
16 exclusively for the benefit of children and dependents of farmers; *Provided that* not
17 more than 5% of this Fund shall be used for the administration of the Special Fund.

1 Sec. 4. *Administration of the Fund* – The Unified Student Financial Assistance
2 System for Tertiary Education Governing (UniFAST) Board in consultation with the
3 Department of Agriculture and three (3) representatives from the farmers and
4 fisherfolks selected from a verified procedure of selection as agreed upon by the
5 farmers and fisherfolks, shall have the primary responsibility of managing and
6 supervising the Fund. It shall also formulate policies, implement rules and regulations,
7 guidelines and other related functions to oversee, manage and supervise the
8 operations of the Fund. It shall also be responsible in formulating the mechanics,
9 scope and limitations, and requirements for the scholarship program.

10 The UniFAST Secretariat shall serve as the Secretariat providing administrative
11 support to the Board and shall perform functions as authorised by the UniFAST Board.

12 Sec. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. – Within sixty (60) days from the
13 effectivity of this Act, the UniFAST Board in consultation with the Department of
14 Agriculture shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations for this act.

15 Sec. 6. *Separability Clause*. – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
16 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
17 remain valid and subsisting.

18 Sec. 7. *Repealing Clause*. – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
19 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or
20 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended
21 accordingly.

22 Sec. 8. *Effectivity Clause*. –This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days
23 following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
24 circulation.

Approved,