

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



23 JAN 16 P6:17

SENATE

S. No. 1679

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Introduced by Senator MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID

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**AN ACT**  
**MANDATING PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS TO WAIVE THE**  
**COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATION FEES TO UNDERPRIVILEGED**  
**GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution mandates the State to protect and promote the rights of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. Section 2(3) of the same further mandates the State to establish and maintain a system of scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives which shall be available to deserving students in both public and private schools, especially to the underprivileged.

It is thus proper to take appropriate steps to make education, which is an inalienable right, accessible to all, especially the underprivileged who consider education as a tool to liberate themselves from poverty. In order to do so, prohibitive costs and barriers must be removed. One such barrier is the entrance examination fee for private higher educational institutions (private HEIs). Many deserving high school graduates are intelligent enough to qualify for entrance and scholarships in universities but are unfortunately unable to prove their mettle because they are unable to afford applying to private HEIs.

This bill seeks to waive the college entrance examinations fees to underprivileged graduating high school students. Not only does this provide for truly deserved opportunities to many of our high school graduates, it also affords the private HEIs the opportunity to welcome among their ranks brilliant and promising youths, who are otherwise unable to apply. This can only raise the quality of their studentry and, ultimately, the prestige of their institutions.

In view of the foregoing, early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID**  
*Senator* 



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

5 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Free College Entrance  
6 Examinations Act.

7 Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State  
8 to expand and further democratize access to quality college education in private higher  
9 education institutions by instituting mechanisms that promote the rights of the  
10 underprivileged graduating high school students.

11 The exemption from the imposition of entrance examination fees is one such  
12 mechanism that shall give adequate assistance and equal opportunity to these  
13 students to pursue their dreams of obtaining a college education.

14 Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

15 (a) *College entrance examinations* – refer to the examinations required and  
16 administered by higher education institutions on college entrants that is a  
17 criterion for determining admission to a college degree program;

1 (b) *Higher education institution* – refers to an educational institution recognized  
2 by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and is duly authorized to  
3 offer a program of education leading to the conferment of a degree;

4 (c) *Private Higher Education Institution (Private HEI)* – refers to a higher  
5 education institution not owned or controlled by the government or its  
6 instrumentalities and may be sectarian (usually non-stock, non-profit, duly  
7 incorporated, owned and operated by a religious organization) or non-  
8 sectarian (not affiliated to any religious organization, duly incorporated,  
9 owned and operated by private entities); and

10 (d) *Underprivileged graduating high school students* – refers to graduating high  
11 school students or high school graduates entering college, whose  
12 households have a combined income that falls below the poverty threshold,  
13 as determined by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)  
14 and the National Household Targeting System of the Department of Social  
15 Welfare and Development (DSWD).

16 Section 4. *Waiver of Fees.* – All private HEIs are hereby mandated to waive  
17 college entrance fees to underprivileged graduating high school students who are  
18 applying for college admission.

19 Section 5. *Eligibility.* – A student shall become eligible as beneficiary under this  
20 Act when the following qualifications are met:

21 (a) Must be a Filipino citizen;

22 (b) Must be a graduating high school student of their graduating class and seeks  
23 to be admitted to a private HEI within the country; and

24 (c) Must belong to a family whose combined income falls below the poverty  
25 threshold, as determined by the NEDA and the DSWD.

26 Section 6. *Sanctions.* – The CHED shall reprimand any official or employee of a  
27 private HEI or other individuals who violate Section 4 of this Act, and impose  
28 disciplinary sanctions for a repetition of the same offense, pursuant to its powers

1 under Section 8 (e) of Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher  
2 Education Act of 1994."

3 The CHED shall establish an office which shall address the concerns of eligible  
4 students who are prevented by any private HEI from availing of the benefits provided  
5 under this Act.

6 Section 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from  
7 the effectivity of this Act, the CHED shall, in coordination with the Department of  
8 Education and the Coordinating Council of Private Educational Associations of the  
9 Philippines, issue the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

10 Section 8. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any part or provision of this  
11 Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not  
12 affected shall remain in full force and effect.

13 Section 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions,  
14 rules and regulations contrary or inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby  
15 amended, repealed or modified accordingly.

16 Section 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
17 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

18 *Approved,*