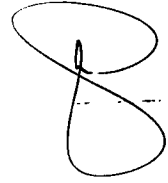


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

24 OCT 28 24 05



SENATE

S. No. 2858

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

**AN ACT
MANDATING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS TO ESTABLISH, MAINTAIN
AND OPERATE HANDOG NA OPORTUNIDAD PARA SA EDUKASYON (HOPE)
CENTERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Finishing a degree remains to be a big challenge to the Filipino youth primarily because of the financial requirements not only for paying the school fees but also for sustaining the needs of the students such as food, accommodation and transportation. At present, various government agencies, organizations and individuals are offering scholarships, educational assistance, student loan programs, subsidies, incentives, and other forms of financial support. However, information on these opportunities is often not widely disseminated to students. In the case of national government agencies that offer scholarships, their local offices are usually until regional levels only, thus limiting the access to information of certain cities municipalities, and barangays.

For instance, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) implements the Tulong Dunong Program (TDP). The Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFast) provides the overall management and guidance to the program and they coordinate with the CHED Regional Offices to reach the state universities and colleges, higher educational institutions and the students. While

they have nationwide and local coordination, it is still inconvenient for students in regions where students have to personally submit the documentary requirements to the CHED Regional Office. In the case of Region III, the CHED Regional Office is in Pampanga. Students from Bulacan, Zambales, and other provinces have to travel all the way to Pampanga at one time to submit their documents and another time to claim their allowances. They do this every semester of all the school years that they are studying. This not only costs them time and money, but also makes it difficult for them to squeeze in their busy class schedules the time to visit CHED office during working days and hours.

The "*Handog na Oportunidad Para sa Edukasyon (HOPE) Center Act*" seeks to establish a HOPE Center in all cities and municipalities in the country. HOPE Center will be the venue for information dissemination, assistance to students, facilitation of documentary submissions and other support services that will make accessible to the students, especially those who are in most need, the scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives granted by various national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs), state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges (LUCs), private higher educational institutions (HEIs), private and non-government organizations, public and private individuals.

This serves as the counterpart measure of House Bill No. 9675 filed by Congresswoman Ma. Victoria Co-Pilar, Representative of the 6th District of Quezon City.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

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AN ACT
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CENTERS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Handog na*
2 *Oportunidad Para sa Edukasyon (HOPE) Center Act*”.

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to
4 protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality and accessible education at all
5 levels, and to take appropriate steps to make scholarship programs and
6 opportunities available and accessible to all interested students, especially to the
7 underprivileged.

8 Sec. 3. *Establishment of Handog na Oportunidad Para sa Edukasyon Center*
9 *or HOPE Center.* – To carry out the declared policy of this Act, there shall be
10 established in all cities and municipalities a *Handog na Oportunidad Para sa*
11 *Edukasyon Center*, hereinafter referred to as HOPE Center, which shall be operated
12 and maintained by the local government units (LGUs): *Provided, That in highly*
13 *urbanized cities (HUCs), a HOPE Center may be established in every congressional*
14 *district.*

1 The HOPE Centers shall be linked to the regional offices of the Commission on
2 Higher Education (CHED) for coordination and technical supervision, and to the
3 CHED central office to constitute the national scholarship program network.

4 The HOPE Center shall be under the office of the city or municipal mayor.
5 The HOPE Center shall be initially organized by and composed of a HOPE manager
6 and may be assisted by a HOPE officer (HO) as may be determined by the LGU.

7 *Sec. 4. Objectives of the HOPE Center.* – The HOPE Center shall ensure the
8 prompt, timely, and efficient delivery of scholarship programs and opportunities, and
9 provision of information of the same. Specifically, the HOPE Center shall:

- 10 a) Provide a venue where people could simultaneously explore various
11 scholarship programs and opportunities available for students in the
12 tertiary level;
- 13 b) Serve as referral and information center for the various scholarship grants,
14 student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives granted by various
15 national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs),
16 state universities and colleges (SUCs), local universities and colleges
17 (LUCs), private higher educational institutions (HEIs), private and non-
18 government organizations, public and private individuals;
- 19 c) Provide the public with adequate information on available scholarship
20 programs and opportunities; and
- 21 d) Network with other HOPE Centers for additional scholarships or
22 scholarship exchange purposes.

23 *Sec. 5. Functions of the HOPE Center.* – The HOPE Center shall have the
24 following functions:

- 25 a) Create a repository of all available scholarship grants, student loan
26 programs, subsidies, and other incentives granted by various national
27 NGAs, LGUs, SUCs, LUCs, HEIs, private and non-government
28 organizations, public and private individuals;
- 29 b) Set up an integrated system of scholarship applications and maintain a
30 registry of application and ensure that underprivileged are registered
31 therein;

- 1 c) Assist the scholarship applicants in the preparation and submission of
2 necessary documents as may be required by the national NGAs, LGUs,
3 SUCs, LUCs, HEIs, private and non-government organizations, public and
4 private individuals offering scholarship grants, student loan programs,
5 subsidies, and other incentives;
- 6 d) Conduct communication and information caravan for scholarship
7 applications, programs and opportunities; and
- 8 e) Deliver other functions incidental to the foregoing as may be necessary for
9 the effective and efficient implementation of this Act.

10 *Sec. 6. Role of CHED.* – It shall be the responsibility of CHED to:

- 11 a) Provide technical supervision, coordination and capacity-building to the
12 HOPE Centers;
- 13 b) Establish and maintain an electronic registry of scholarship programs and
14 opportunities, and name of scholarship applicants as part of the overall
15 scholarship program network;
- 16 c) Set standards for the establishment and operation of the HOPE Centers,
17 and qualification standards for the HOPE Center personnel;
- 18 d) Extend other services of the HOPE Center to the LGU including the
19 conduct of scholarship caravans, seminars, and other activities; and
- 20 e) Monitor, assess, and evaluate the performance of the HOPE Centers.

21 *Sec. 7. Role of LGUs.* – The LGUs, in coordination with CHED, shall establish
22 the HOPE Centers. It shall be the responsibility of the concerned LGU to:

- 23 a) Operate and maintain the HOPE Center;
- 24 b) Ensure compliance with the operational standards set by CHED;
- 25 c) Extend such assistance and services as may be necessary in the promotion
26 of scholarship programs and opportunities within the area of jurisdiction;
27 and
- 28 d) Submit to CHED a periodic performance and accomplishment reports.

29 *Sec. 8. Ministerial Duty to Receive Scholarship Applications.* – The HOPE
30 Center shall have the ministerial duty to receive all of the scholarship applications
31 which have substantially complied with the requirements, subject to the limitations
32 prescribed by the applicable scholarship provider.

1 Students may apply for more than one scholarship program or opportunity,
2 unless it is proscribed by one of the scholarship providers.

3 *Sec. 9. Information Campaign for Scholarship Programs.* – The CHED, in
4 partnership with the LGUs, shall intensify its communication and information
5 campaign for scholarship programs and provide the public with the latest available
6 scholarship grants, student loan programs, subsidies, and other incentives granted
7 by various national NGAs, LGUs, SUCs, LUCs, HEIs, private and non-government
8 organizations, public and private individuals.

9 The CHED, in collaboration with the Department of Information and
10 Communications Technology, shall make full use of the latest technology to
11 disseminate information to reach every Filipino. The awareness caravan must
12 increase the number of scholarship applicants and successful beneficiaries of various
13 scholarship programs and opportunities.

14 *Sec. 10. Appropriations.* – The funding for the operation and maintenance of
15 the HOPE Center shall be provided by the LGU from its National Tax Allotment and
16 other internally-generated income of the LGU concerned.

17 Funds for the provision of technical assistance, training and supervision of the
18 HOPE Center shall be included in the budget of CHED in the annual General
19 Appropriations Act.

20 The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall
21 be charged against the current Fiscal Year appropriations of the concerned offices.
22 Thereafter, the amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be
23 included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

24 *Sec. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days after
25 the approval of this Act, CHED shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules
26 and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

27 *Sec. 12. Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid
28 or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise
29 affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

30 *Sec. 13. Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
31 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation

1 contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed,
2 modified, or amended accordingly.

3 Sec. 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
4 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,