

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 33

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduced by: **REP. RAUL V. DEL MAR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution mandates not only that quality education must be provided by the State to all qualified citizens – the poor and the underprivileged in particular – at all levels of education, but that it must likewise put in place a system of education geared towards establishing and making available a continuing pool of trained manpower for the country's development efforts.

Within the context of this constitutional policy, the Bill seeks to provide free college education in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), a two-year college degree course, to all high school graduates of public schools. These beneficiaries would have the right to choose the public or state college or university of his choice within the city, province or region, as the case maybe, for purposes enjoying the free college education benefit. In the same vein, the college authorities are obligated, under pain of administrative sanctions, to admit the qualified beneficiaries.

Given the present business that places a premium on formal post-secondary education or college training, and given the sheer number of graduates of our public school system, this proposed legislation is a first concrete step towards providing the deserving demands of a highly competitive marketplace.

In this context, approval of the Bill is earnestly sought.


RAUL V. DEL MAR

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HOUSE BILL NO. 33

Introduced by: **REP. RAUL V. DEL MAR**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING AND PROVIDING FOR FREE COLLEGE EDUCATION IN INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY IN STATE UNIVERSITIS AND COLLEGES AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Free College Information and Communications Technology Act".

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to provide quality education to all qualified citizens at all levels of education and to establish a system of grants, subsidies and incentives which shall be available to deserving students, especially the poor and underprivileged, in order to enable them to truly participate in the development of a democratic society and share in the benefits therefrom.

SEC. 3. Definitions. - As used in this Act:

(a) **Free college education** refers to any college degree course or program in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) offered in or conducted by state universities and colleges (SUCs);

(b) **Other school fees** refer to fees which cover the other necessary costs supportive of instruction such as medical and dental, athletic, library and laboratory fees'

(c) **Qualified beneficiaries** refer to persons who have completed secondary education in public high schools;

(d) **State universities and colleges** refer to institutions of higher learning, including specialized schools, maintained and funded by the national government; and

(e) **Tuition fee** refers to the fee representing direct costs of instruction and training facilities.

SEC. 4. Implementation of Free ICT College Education. - The free ICT College Education program as provided in this Act, shall commence in the school year following approval of this Act.

Qualified beneficiaries intending to enroll or who are already enrolled in ICT course offerings in SUCs shall be exempted from the payment of tuition and other school fees and shall be entitled to such other incentives or subsidies as may be granted in accordance with the rules and regulations to be promulgated to carry out the provisions of this Act. However, fees related to membership in student organizations or college activities may be collected: *Provided*, That nonpayment of these fees shall not in any case prejudice the enrollment or graduation of a qualified beneficiary: *Provided, further*, That nothing in this Act shall cause or authorize the reduction or removal of any benefit which the national or local government may grant to qualified beneficiaries prior to the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. Formulation of ICT Curriculum. - The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall formulate a college curriculum geared to provide students with highly competitive trainings or skills consistent with the manpower demands of a highly competitive business environment.

SEC. 6. Disqualification. - In case of failure in the majority of the subjects enrolled in during the course of the study for two (2) consecutive semesters, the

student-beneficiary shall be disqualified from availment of the free ICT college education.

SEC. 7. *Place of Study and Admission.* - The qualified beneficiary shall take the free ICT college education in the chosen SUC situated in the city or province of residence of the student.

Should there be no SUC in the city or province where the qualified beneficiary resides, or school the university or college facilities therein be unable to accommodate all qualified beneficiaries, a student may avail of the free college benefit in any SUC within the region. In the absence of SUCs within the region where a qualified beneficiary is residing, enrollment in any SUC in the nearest region may be allowed.

SEC. 8. *Penal Provision.* - It shall be unlawful for any SUC to refuse admission of any qualified beneficiary for any reason other than the limitation of funds and facilities. Any higher education institution (HEI) official or employee found violating the provisions of this section shall be subject to suspension.

In addition, the CHED may impose disciplinary action or sanctions against an HEI official or employee violating this Act pursuant to Section 13 of Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994".

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be included in the appropriations of SUCs in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED, in coordination with the association of SUCs, shall promulgate the rules and regulations implementing its provisions.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or the provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. Effectivity. - The Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,