

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
QUEZON CITY, METRO MANILA

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 290

Introduced by Honorable Michael Odylon L. Romero

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Agriculture has always been the backbone of our food security. Without the expertise of the personnel in our agricultural sector, the country's food program and security is in peril. Decades ago, the Philippines is a stalwart of food production – particularly rice – unfortunately, our status as such was not sustained and we are reduced to food importers.

We educated our Asian neighbors with the best technology and agricultural practices only for us to buy the produce of the technology and practices we have taught them. There is shortage of would-be agricultural experts from our youth mainly because of the prohibitive cost of tertiary education.

Nevertheless, it is believed that there is no shortage of interested and qualified youth for the study of agricultural advances, practices and technology if only the State can grant them the access for agricultural education. Given the access and priority, these interested individuals will be the vanguard of any food shortage or crisis that we hope will never come. These individuals will improve their lives as well as the lives of every Filipino when it comes to agricultural produce.

It is high time that theses individuals, the students of agricultural courses, be given the opportunity to pursue their interest in agriculture. Now is also the time to address the looming issue of food security that is really pressing than apparent. Let us produce food, improve food production and attack poverty. This simple step of incentivizing our interested and qualified youth gears toward achieving that objective.



MICHAEL ODYLON L. ROMERO

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Introduced by Honorable Michael Odylon L. Romero

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AGRICULTURAL SCHOLARSHIP GRANT TO
QUALIFIED STUDENTS**

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Agricultural Scholarship Grant Act of 2013”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – Agriculture is the backbone of food security. The State shall give priority to research and development, invention, innovation and their utilization for the promotion and development of the agricultural sector. Priority shall also be given to science and technology education, training and services related to agriculture.

In line with the above, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote the research and development of the country’s agricultural sector and manpower in line with economic development and to provide the capability required in the areas of research, development, innovation as well as their utilization. As such, it is important that the State provide for financial grants and aids to Filipinos interested in the pursuit of agricultural knowledge, research and development.

Therefore, the State shall provide for scholarships to deserving students and other specially-gifted citizens to enable them to pursue higher education or training in the area of agriculture.

SEC. 3. General Objectives. – To carry out the measure, this Act shall strengthen the agricultural sector by prioritizing students of agricultural sciences in the distribution of scholarship grants. Towards this end, scholarships shall be provided to finance the education of talented and deserving students in their whole years in college pursuing a degree or training in the area agriculture.

SEC. 4. Eligibility. – The following are the qualifications to be prioritized in the scholarship grant of the State. Applicants must:

- (a) Be a Filipino citizen;
- (b) Be an incoming first year college, regular-second year college, regular third-year college, or regular-fourth year college student at the time of award;
- (c) Be currently enrolled in any of the state universities or colleges, or in private universities, especially in Commission on Higher Education (CHED)-compliant programs, under any of the identified priority agricultural courses;

(d) Have a general weighted average (GWA) as may be prescribed in the implementing rules and regulations of this Act; and

(e) Qualify in the Agricultural Science Scholarship Examination.

SEC. 5. Award Amounts. – Recipients are entitled to an annual award for full-time study equal to the complete financial assistance package offered under Republic Act No. 7687, for students attending an approved undergraduate program at quality schools, such as CHED-compliant programs and DOST Network Institutions, public or private, with minimum slots awarded in private schools to offset differences in tuition costs.

SEC. 6. Duration. – Recipients shall be entitled to an award for the whole four (4)-year courses in agriculture, while matriculating in an approved program.

SEC. 7. Approved Courses and Priority Programs. – Recipients shall pursue degrees in agriculture, as identified and approved by the DOST and DAR as priority courses. Applicants who are currently enrolled under such courses under the CHED-compliant programs will be given priority.

SEC. 8. Terms and Conditions. – Applicants for the scholarships must execute a service contract in which they:

(a) Agree to teach as their return of service (ROS) to be determined by the Department of Agriculture;

(b) Agree to any of the approved ROS conditions; and

(c) Agree to repay the amounts disbursed plus interest pursuant to the terms of their service contract.

Failure to comply with the terms of the service contract will result in the full repayment of all award or monies received within a specified time.

SECTION 9: *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Science and Technology, Department of Agriculture and the Commission on Higher Education shall jointly issue within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 10: *Separability Clause.* — If any provision or part hereof is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 11: *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 12: This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.