

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4026



Introduced by Representative Salvador B. Belaro, Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The declining enrollment in agricultural courses is a serious threat to the country's food security. There are actually more than a hundred state universities and colleges (SUCs) led by the University of the Philippines Los Banos (UPLB) that are offering agriculture and related courses, as well as a number of private institutions of higher learning. But Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) confirmed that Philippine enrollment in agriculture and related courses has been declining by an average of 1.5 percent every year.

Today's students are losing interest in agriculture and instead flock to other popular courses. Even UPLB, the country's premiere university in agriculture experiences such a decline in enrollment in agricultural courses. UPLB records show that in 2012, the university saw a sharp decline with only 4.7% out of 9,300 undergraduate students were enrolled in agriculture and related courses, as compared to 51% in 1980 and 43% in 1995.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has confirmed a similar trend in other universities. For the past ten years, the decline in enrollment in agriculture, along with related courses such as forestry, fisheries and veterinary medicine has been glaring. For example, CHED noted that enrollment in said courses took a plunge from 63,913 in SY 2005-2006 to only 61,901 in SY 2012-2013, and the trend appear to have been consistent up to the present.

The government has to make a drastic move to abate this downward trend in agriculture course enrollment otherwise our agricultural sector and food security shall be seriously threatened.


SALVADOR B. BELARO, JR.
Representative
1-Ang Edukasyon Party List

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**AN ACT
MAKING AGRICULTURE AND RELATED COURSES MORE
ATTRACTIVE TO ABATE THREATS TO PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURAL
SECTOR AND FOOD SECURITY**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Agricultural Course Attraction Act of 2016.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. The State shall establish means to protect the agricultural sector and ensure the country’s food security.

SEC. 3. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in consultation with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the various agricultural state universities and colleges (SUCs) as well as private higher learning institutions offering agriculture and other related courses shall develop an enrollment program that will attract students to enroll in agricultural courses. The same shall be coupled by a serious review of agricultural courses to incorporate attractive, interesting and high paying subjects and expertise such as information communication technology (ICT) and data analytics in agricultural courses.

SEC 4. The CHED in coordination with private and public higher learning schools shall develop and offer a scholarship for those who will decide to enroll in agricultural courses in schools designated by the CHED.

SEC. 5. The Department of Education (DepEd) shall develop a career orientation program to be extended to all graduating high school students (K12) so that they can be enticed to take agricultural courses. Available scholarships for those taking agricultural courses shall likewise be made known to all graduating high school students so they can align their dreams and aspirations towards serving the agricultural sector.

SEC. 6. The funds necessary to carry out the provision of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriation Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

SEC. 7. All laws, orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved.