



Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

**Seventeenth Congress**  
**First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 3707

---

Introduced by **Representative Geraldine B. Roman**

---

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Education is considered as one of the vital instruments for national development. More importantly, it has been the catalyst for the growth of human potential. The broadening of the horizons for humanity will not be possible if our youth's access to education will be hindered.


It comes as a sad reality now that while most citizens of our country have the potential to master their skills and craft through education, they are not able to do so due to a variety of reasons. The lack of finances and also the lack of awareness on the existence of scholarship programs can be counted as the main reasons. Our citizens are not aware of the many government scholarship opportunities that exist both here and abroad. Aside from that, there's an issue that the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the highest policy-making body and regulator of higher education institutions, is having a hard time doing its extra job as the handler of the majority of government scholarships for tertiary students.

According to an ABS-CBN Report dated August 31, 2016 entitled "CHED admits difficulty with huge scholarship funds," CHED Chairperson Dr. Patricia Licuanan said to members of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee that her agency has a weak absorptive capacity and cannot cope up with the huge amounts of funds it has been given for scholarships. She further stated that the problem started when the task of processing the scholarship funds from the former Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) were given to them. Their problem is the scholarships for tertiary students alone. How about the proper management and timely releasing of scholarships for the primary, secondary, & post-graduate levels including the processing of foreign scholarships, grants, and exchange programs for the Filipino People?

It is at this juncture that the National Government must step in by creating a new agency that can implement, disburse, monitor, & promote all government scholarships to qualified recipients and grantees, not only in the tertiary level but for all levels. An agency under the Office of the President that can also coordinate with foreign counterparts for them to easily access scholarships abroad. With the

establishment of the National Scholarship Agency, we can make sure that there is a government office that will focus in processing all the available scholarship opportunities for the Filipino People.

I earnestly call on my colleagues to support the passage of this important legislative measure for our Filipino Students.

  
**HON. GERALDINE B. ROMAN**  
Representative  
**First District, Bataan**



Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Constitution Hills, Quezon City



**Seventeenth Congress**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3707

---

Introduced by **Representative Geraldine B. Roman**

---

**AN ACT**  
**ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AGENCY,**  
**PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE**  
**REPUBLIC ACT 10687 ALSO KNOWN AS THE UNIFIED STUDENT**  
**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION**  
**(UNIFAST) ACT**

*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 *National Scholarship Agency Act of 2016*.

**Section 2. *Declaration of Policy*** – The State hereby declares that it shall strengthen its commitment to democratize access to quality education for all deserving students, particularly those of whom educational opportunities have been deprived of due to socio-economic constraints. It is thus essential for the State to fully develop and realize the potentials of its citizens especially the students, by allowing the widest access to education by making them aware of all available scholarship opportunities and immediately processing their applications to the said scholarship programs.

**Section 3. *Objective*** – The main objective of this Act is to transform the existing organization of the UniFAST or the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education, into a more powerful agency that will handle all government scholarships not only for tertiary level students but for all levels including primary, secondary, and post-graduate levels. The agency can also evaluate and recommend candidates for local private scholarship programs and for foreign scholarship, grant, and exchange programs.

**Section 4. Establishment of the National Scholarship Agency** – The National Scholarship Agency under the Office of the President is hereby established. To immediately carry out the purposes of this Act, the UniFAST Secretariat, established pursuant to Republic Act 10687, otherwise known as “the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Act,” is hereby reconstituted as the interim officials of the National Scholarship Agency, herein referred to as the *Agency*.

**Section 5. Powers and Functions of the National Scholarship Agency**– The National Scholarship Agency shall have the following duties and functions:

- a) Disseminate information regarding all available foreign and domestic scholarship opportunities for the Filipino People;
- b) Evaluate and process all government scholarship applications of current and potential students;
- c) Evaluate and immediately recommend qualified scholarship applicants to local private scholarship programs and to foreign scholarship, grant, & exchange programs;
- d) Monitor all government scholars if they are following the conditions of their scholarship programs and provide the agency the power to warn and pursue legal remedies for scholars or former scholars who have taken advantage of government scholarships but are not following the said conditions of their programs;
- e) Create divisions within the agency and with corresponding manpower, that will focus on (1) Primary Education Scholarships, (2) Secondary Education Scholarships, (3) Tertiary Education Scholarships, (4) Post-Graduate Education Scholarships, & (5) Foreign Scholarship, Grant, & Exchange Programs;
- f) Invite and educate private sector leaders on how to create their own scholarship programs;
- g) Accept donations that will be vital in the operations of the Agency and in increasing the funds for government scholarship programs
- h) Perform other vital functions of the defunct UniFAST Secretariat;
- i) Perform such other powers and functions as may be determined by the National Scholarship Coordinating Council.

**Section 6. Executive Director of the National Scholarship Agency** – There shall be an Executive Director who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines and shall have the rank of Undersecretary. The Executive Director shall have a minimum of seven (7) years managerial experience, be a holder of at least a Master’s degree, and be a Career Executive Service eligible. The Executive Director shall perform the following functions:

- a) Serve as the primary coordinator of all scholarship programs being implemented by various government agencies, branches, and instrumentalities;
- b) Manage relationships with partner agencies;
- c) Exercise leadership, supervisory, and administrative functions over the Agency;
- d) Ensure accurate and timely technical inputs and feedback to the Council to guide it in its policy-making functions;
- e) Ensure proper dissemination and implementation of Council decisions;

- f) Submit an annual report on the operations, status of funded programs, and financial conditions of the Agency, including recommendations for the budget of the Agency for the following year; and
- g) Perform such other duties and functions as may be determined by the Council.

***Section 7. Organization of the National Scholarship Agency*** – The Agency shall operate and be directly under the Office of the President through the Cabinet Secretary. All the additional manpower requirements of the Agency shall be recommended by the National Scholarship Coordinating Council.

***Section 8. Establishment of the National Scholarship Coordinating Council*** – The National Scholarship Coordinating Council is hereby established. To immediately carry out the purposes of this Act, the UniFAST Board, established pursuant to Republic Act 10687, otherwise known as “the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Act,” is hereby reconstituted as the National Scholarship Coordinating Council.

***Section 9. Cabinet Secretary as Council Chairman*** – The Secretary to the Cabinet is hereby designated as the Chairperson of the National Scholarship Coordinating Council.

***Section 10. DFA Secretary as Ex-Officio Member*** – To strengthen the composition of the incoming National Scholarship Coordinating Council from the current UniFAST Board, the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs is hereby made an Ex-Officio Member due to his department’s vital role in coordinating foreign scholarship, grant, & exchange programs for the Filipino People.

***Section 11. Dissemination of Information*** – The Agency shall have a website where notices on the availability of scholarship opportunities shall be posted regularly. The Agency can be assisted by all government offices in publishing and posting scholarship program announcements relevant to those government offices, its jurisdictions and areas.

***Section 12. Strict Compliance to Government Scholarship Conditions*** – The strict compliance of current and former scholars to their government scholarship conditions shall be consistently monitored and if not followed shall be liable to penalties provided for by the Government.

***Section 13. Priority to Government Employment*** – Graduates and beneficiaries of Government Scholarship Programs shall be given priority in Government employment opportunities.

***Section 14. Tax Provisions*** – All donations to the Agency shall be exempt from any and all forms of taxation.

***Section 15. Implementing Rules and Regulations*** – The Secretary to the Cabinet, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Education (DepEd), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall have joint responsibility over the formulation of the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within one hundred and eighty (180) days from the approval of this Act.

**Section 16. Appropriations** – The funds provided for in the UniFAST Law shall be transferred to the National Scholarship Agency and the necessary additional funds for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following the approval of this Act, and every year thereafter.

**Section 17. Repealing Clause** –Relevant sections of Republic Act 10687, otherwise known as the Unified Student Financial Assistance System for Tertiary Education (UniFAST) Act”, and all laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**Section 18. Separability Clause**– If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act, or any portion thereof, or the application of such section, provision, or portion to any person, group, or circumstance is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or the application of such section, provision, or portion thereof to other persons, groups, or circumstances shall not be affected by such declaration.

**Section 19. Effectivity** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

**Approved,**