

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **3149**



Introduced by **MAGDALO Party-List Representative**
HON. GARY C. ALEJANO

Explanatory Note

In 2012, the government predicted that the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector is set to provide around \$50 billion in annual direct revenues to the Philippine economy by 2016. Aside from the direct revenues, a projected amount of \$150 billion in indirect investments are also expected to fuel the economy. To realize these projections, the government is considering on investing significantly in programs, policy development, marketing, research and talent development, needed by the ICT sector.

One way of further enhancing the country's ICT capability is through the promotion of ICT programs and courses in the higher education system. A more accessible ICT educational program or system will ensure a continuous pool of manpower meant to address the development efforts of the country. Further, access to these courses will promote social progress and development of every Filipino.

By ensuring that the Philippines has enough supply of graduates who have the proper knowledge and training in ICT, we will be able to fully harness the economic advantages that the ICT sector has to offer. This proposed measure, therefore, seeks to provide free ICT college education in all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to ensure the availability of qualified graduates to support the labor requirements of the ICT sector.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


HON. GARY C. ALEJANO

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

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title.** - This Act shall be known as "Free College Information
2 and Communications Technology Act of 2016".
3

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - It is the policy of the State to provide quality
5 education to all qualified citizens at all levels of education and to establish a system
6 of grants subsidies and incentives which shall be available to deserving students
7 especially the poor and underprivileged in order to enable them to truly participate in
8 the development of a democratic society and share in the benefits therefrom.
9

10 **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms** - As used in this Act:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14

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

19

20 **SEC. 6. *Disqualification.*** - In case of failure in the majority of the subjects
21 enrolled in during the course of the study for two (2) consecutive semesters, the
22 student-beneficiary shall be disqualified from availment of the free ICT college
23 education.

24

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

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

34

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

1 In addition, the CHED may impose disciplinary action or sanctions against an
2 HEI official or employee violating this Act pursuant to Section 13 of Republic Act
3 No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994".
4

5 **SEC. 9. Appropriations.** - The amount necessary to implement the provisions
6 of this Act shall be included in the appropriations of the annual General
7 Appropriation Act.
8

9 **SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within sixty (60) days
10 from the effectivity of this Act, the CHED, in consultation with the association of
11 SUCs, shall promulgate the rules and regulations implementing its provisions.
12

13 **SEC. 11. Separability Clause.** - If any provision of this Act is declared
14 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or the provisions not affected thereby shall
15 remain in full force and effect.
16

17 **SEC. 12. Repealing Clause.** - All laws or parts thereof inconsistent with any
18 provision of this Act shall be deemed repealed or modified accordingly.
19

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

Approved,