

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

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REGISTRATION UNIT BILLS AND INDEX SERVICE	

HOUSE BILL NO. 2984

Introduced by Honorable Michaelina M. Antonio

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Food is a basic human need. Without food to eat, we would all be unable to live. Without nutritious food, we would all be living unhealthy lives. Hence, we owe abundantly our farmers, most of whom live a hand-to-mouth existence, and who toil all their lives to give us the nutritious food sustenance that makes us strong to be able to work hard and earn income for ourselves and our families.

Agriculture accounts for 10.3% of Filipino GDP as of 2015, according to the World Bank.¹ It also employs a third of the Filipino workforce.² However, agricultural workers remain the poorest in the labor sector. It is for this reason that Filipinos do not view farming to be a lucrative endeavor and are discouraged from engaging in farming and fishing activities. For the sector to achieve its full potential, participation in this line of work must be encouraged by improving the Filipino farmer and fisherfolk's quality of life.

Taking the foregoing into consideration, this bill aims to increase the participation of Filipino workers in the agricultural sector by taking appropriate steps to uplift the standard of living of small farmers and fisherfolk, and to alleviate their poverty. One of the primary problems poor farmers and fisherfolk are faced with is the education of their children. Because of the meager income they receive from farming and fishing, they tend to have difficulty sending their kids to college. These agricultural workers are in dire need


¹"Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)." (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.AGR.TOTL.ZS?locations=PH>). Retrieved August 3, 2016

²"Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)". (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS>). Retrieved August 3, 2016

of assistance from the government to help ease some of their burdens. Helping them by giving their children free education will also give them the opportunity to live better lives.

In this light, this bill intends to make quality education accessible to small farming and fishing families who fail to send their children to school because of financial constraints. In particular, this bill seeks to institutionalize scholarship grants to the children of small farmers and fisherfolk.

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



MICHAELINA M. ANTONIO

Republic of the Philippines
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HOUSE BILL NO. 2984

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**AN ACT GRANTING SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CHILDREN OF SMALL
FARMERS AND SMALL-SCALE FISHERFOLK**

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

SECTION. 1. **Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Scholarship for Children of Small Farmers and Small-Scale Fisherfolk Act.*”

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to promote comprehensive rural development and agrarian reform as well as give priority to education and science and technology to accelerate social progress and promote development in the country. Towards this end, the government shall provide qualified children of small farmers and fisherfolk opportunities to obtain quality education through the grant of scholarships.

SEC. 3. *General Objectives.* – This Act promotes the development of agriculture throughout the country by financing the college education of deserving children of small farmers and fisherfolk, and provide incentives for them to pursue a career in the field of agriculture, especially in their home regions.

SEC. 4. *Children of Small Farmers and Small-Scale Fisherfolk Scholarship Fund.* – There is hereby created a Children of Small Farmers and Fisherfolk Scholarship Fund to be administered by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in financing the college education of deserving children of small farmers and fisherfolk.

For purposes of this Act and in accordance with Republic Act No. 7607, otherwise known as the “*Magna Carta of Small Farmers,*” small farmers shall refer to natural persons dependent on small-scale subsistence farming as their primary source of income and whose sale, barter or exchange of agricultural products do not exceed a gross value of one hundred eighty thousand pesos (P180,000.00) *per annum* based on 1992 constant prices.

Small-scale fisherfolk shall refer to natural persons belonging to individual fishing households who are undertaking low-technology, low-capital, fishing practices. Their produce is usually not processed and is mainly for local consumption. They use traditional fishing techniques such

as rod and tackle, fishing arrows and harpoons, cast nets, and small traditional fishing boats (if any).

SEC. 5. *Children of Small Farmers and Small-Scale Fisherfolk Scholarship Grant.* – The scholarship grant awarded under this Act shall be applied to any chosen course of deserving children of small farmers and small-scale fisherfolk and shall cover the entire tuition and miscellaneous fees of the grantee. The grantee may enroll in any public or private university or college throughout the country.

In addition, CHED shall be tasked to identify priority courses, which are those that fall under the field of agriculture or science and technology. Eligible grantees who enroll in these priority courses shall be entitled to an additional stipend of P10,000 per semester to cover book allowance, housing costs, and miscellaneous expenses.

SEC. 6. *Qualifications.* – To be eligible for the scholarship grant under this Act the applicant must:

- (a) Be a Filipino citizen of good moral character;
- (b) Be a high school graduate;
- (c) Be a child of a small farmer or small-scale fisherfolk;
- (d) Be not more than thirty (30) years of age at the time of the award of the grant;

(e) Be qualified as an incoming college student in any curricular year level at the time of the award; and

(f) Have complied with such other requirements that may be established by the CHED.

SEC. 7. **Conditions of the Grant.** – The grantees of the scholarship must maintain a general weighted average (GWA) grade of eighty percent (80%) or better, with no failing grade in any subject. The grantee must also carry a full semestral or trimestral load as prescribed in the course curriculum and finish within the normal duration of the course. Failure to meet any of these conditions shall be a ground for the termination of the grant.

SEC. 8. **Appeal.** – Upon receipt of a written notice of termination of scholarship due to non-compliance or violation of the terms and conditions of the scholarship, a grantee may, not later than fifteen (15) days from receipt of the notice, file an appeal for reconsideration and reinstatement of the scholarship with the CHED. Upon the lapse of the fifteen (15) days wherein a grantee may file an appeal and no appeal is made, the termination of scholarship shall become final and executory.

SEC. 10. **Service Obligation.** – After graduating, the grantees who enrolled in priority courses and received stipend must render return service in the Philippines on a full-time basis, preferably in the grantee's home region and along

the grantee's field of training, for a period equivalent to one-half (1/2) of the length of time that the grantee enjoyed the scholarship. Return service may be done by being employed within the Philippines in a government agency. The proof of employment, such as, certificate of employment, business permit, income tax return and other documents evidencing the grantee's completion of the required number of years of return service must be submitted to the CHED before being issued a final clearance.

A grantee that is unable to render the return service obligation imposed under this section shall be liable to reimburse the Government the amount equivalent to the scholarship funds received under this Act.

SEC. 11. ***Implementing Agency.*** – The CHED shall be the main implementing agency of the provisions of this Act. It shall be responsible for the evaluation, awarding and monitoring of the scholarship grants and scholars. The CHED is also tasked with coordinating with other relevant agencies in the fulfilment of the goals of this Act.

SEC. 12. ***Review and Monitoring.*** – The CHED shall report to the President of the Philippines and to Congress after the first year, and annually thereafter, on the implementation of the provisions of this Act and submit recommendations for its improvement.

SEC. 13. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the CHED shall promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 14. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be included in the appropriations of the CHED in the annual General Appropriations Act of the year the following the effectivity of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the effective and continuous implementation of the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 15. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provisions not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 16. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations and administrative regulations or parts thereof inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 17. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

APPROVED