**OFFICE OF SENATOR CHIZ ESCUDERO**

SPONSORSHIP SPEECH | SB NO. 1360, CR NO. 7

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TRANSCRIPT  

SB NO. 1360, COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 7: EXPANDING THE COVERAGE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION SUBSIDY

Mr. President, Honorable Colleagues of this august Chamber:

​As Chairperson of the Committee on Higher, Technical and Vocational Education, I rise to sponsor Committee Report No. 7, which recommends the approval of Senate Bill No. 1360, entitled, “An Act Expanding the Coverage of the Tertiary Education Subsidy, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 10931, Otherwise Known as the “Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act”.

Laws are like apps: they have to be updated to retain their effectiveness when such has been degraded by developments, either new or unforeseen at the time the laws were passed.

This is so because while Congress writes laws with clarity of vision, they do not, however, use crystal balls.

It is only when laws are being implemented when their shortcomings emerge, or untapped potentials become apparent.

Some laws, on the other hand, are victims of their own success, that the demand to expand the benefits they provide surge, putting pressure on Congress to amend them so that more people gain from the social good they create.

The Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act is one of those.

This bill responds to the pleas of those who have been left out and left behind by the promise of this good law.

They have argued that if the law truly lives up to its banner billing as “universal” in scope, then amendments proposed in this measure I am sponsoring should be passed.

This bill could be the 2.0 version of the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) component of Republic Act 10931.

It provides a raft of provisions whose common denominator is expansion – of putting more beneficiaries, putting more financial help for students, putting more schools under the state program.

It expands the TES coverage to students in private higher educational institutions (HEIs) and private technical-vocational institutes (TVIs).

It establishes a system of prioritization in identifying TES beneficiaries in which no one, for as long as they are deserving and dedicated, will be left behind.

It brings under the program students who are enrolled in private HEIs and TVIs in cities and municipalities where there is no established SUC, LUC, or public TVI.

It also brings under the program those who are studying in private HEIs and TVIs in towns and cities where there are existing SUCs, LUCs, or public TVIs.

This effectively ends the embargo of granting TES to students of private colleges or vocational schools in towns where state-funded schools exist.

We, however, have assigned to the CHED the power to determine the amount of subsidies to be granted, and the eligibility of TES beneficiaries.

But what we have also enumerated in this bill are benefits the CHED may grant, and these are:

Tuition and other school fees, to include those in private HEIs, and private or LGU-operated TVIs.

Allowances for books, school supplies, transportation to and from school, and reasonable allowance for the documented rental or purchase of computers and other education-related expenses, if applicable.

Allowances for student room and board, if applicable.

Allowances for students with disability, which may include special services, transportation, equipment, and supplies reasonably incurred.

One-time cost of obtaining the first professional credentials, which may include application fees, notarial fees, review class fees, insurance premium fees.

This bill also allows TES beneficiaries to continually receive assistance under the program until the completion of their respective undergraduate, post-secondary tertiary education, or technical-vocational programs, subject of course to rules.

As I close, let me reiterate one salient provision of this bill, and that is to put students of private technical vocational schools at par with other tertiary students.

This bill ends this class discrimination, where schools are stratified like cruise ships, with many lodged in suites, while others sweat in steerage, such as tech-voc students.

Our economy is reeling from skills shortage, lacking proficient craftsmen, short of professional technicians, that it is said to be easier to find an abogado than hire the services of a maestro karpintero.

Let us pass this bill, Mr. President.