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SENATE

Ps. Res. No. **908**

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Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

RESOLUTION

URGING THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO SUSPEND ANY INCREASE IN TUITION AND OTHER FEES FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2009-2010 AND PROMOTE THE GRANTING OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND SIMILAR PROGRAMS SPECIALLY TO POOR BUT DESERVING STUDENTS

WHEREAS, the preservation of a democratic state and the institutions that it comprises depend largely on its learned citizenry;

WHEREAS, pertinent provisions of the 1987 Constitution declare as State policies the utmost importance of the availability and accessibility of education vis-à-vis the right to education of its constituents without distinction. Thus, Article II Section 17 provides:

"The State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development."

WHEREAS, Article XIV Section 1 further obligates the State to:

"... protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all."

WHEREAS, the recognition of the right to quality education imposes upon the State the corresponding duty to promote and protect it and must make steps to make quality education at all levels generally accessible or available to all;

WHEREAS, accessibility to education may not at all be fully realizable at present times due to the unrestrained rise in the cost of education, particularly in private colleges and universities, which have been experiencing a declining trend in enrollment figures for the past decade;

WHEREAS, this situation may lead to the influx of enrollees to State-run universities and colleges (SUCs) but even so, the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) reported that SUCs are also experiencing a drastic percentage downfall in their enrollment;

WHEREAS, this trend indicated that more and more families were failing to send their children to school due to poverty and their growing incapacity to cope with the continuous rise in the cost of education;

WHEREAS, at present, parents are spending a minimum average of P450.00 per unit or around P10,000.00 per semester for their children taking a 21-unit load in a state college but this amount is doubled or tripled if enrolled in private schools;

WHEREAS, according to recent reports, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) confirmed that two-hundred fifty-eight (258) tertiary institutions including four (4) state universities have signified their intention to increase their tuition fees at an average of nine percent (9%) but could go to as high as fifteen percent (15%) for the coming 2009-2010 school year;

WHEREAS, considering the world economic slump that resulted into the closing of several business establishments and the laying off of thousands of Filipino local and overseas employees; the rice crisis; the skyrocketing price of LPG due to a record shortage of supply; the just ERC-approved power rate hike of the NAPOCOR which would mean higher electricity bills, MWSS-approved water rate hikes of the Maynilad Water Services and Manila Water Co. among others, the approval by CHED of the proposed tuition fee increases for the upcoming school year as abovementioned, would already be too much for Filipino families to endure;

WHEREAS, given due consideration to the country's current economic plight, it is obligatory upon the Commission, as mandated by Republic Act No. 7722 or the Higher Education Act of 1994 and Batas Pambansa Blg. 232 or the Education Act of 1982 and other pertinent laws, to regulate and at this juncture, to freeze any proposed increase in tuition and other fees for the coming school year;

WHEREAS, the Commission is also urged to intensify its local scholarship programs specifically: (i) State Scholarship Program; (ii) Private Education Student Financial Assistance Program (PESFA) which was established under R.A. No. 6728 and; (iii) Study Now-Pay-Later Plan, among others;

WHEREAS, the Commission is also directed to monitor compliance of both private and state-run universities and colleges on the grant of scholarship privileges equivalent to five percent (5%) of its annual student population embodied under Republic Act No. 6728 and amended by R.A. 8545 otherwise known as the "Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE) Act."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, to urge the Commission on Higher Education to suspend any proposals of increase in tuition and other fees by private and state-run universities and colleges and intensify the granting of scholarship programs to poor but deserving students amid the high cost of education as mandated by the Constitution and other pertinent laws.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR