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HONORABLE ROMAN T. ROMULO
Chairperson
Committee on Higher and Technical Education
3/F Annex Bldg., House of Representatives
Quezon City

Dear **Congressman Romulo:**

The Department of Social Welfare and Development supports **House Bill No. 5004**, entitled: *"An Act Granting Discounts on Basic Education Services to Underprivileged Students in All Level, Including Those Enrolled in Technical-Vocational (Tech-Voc) Institutions"* or the **"Underprivileged Students' Discount Act of 2014,"** introduced by Rep. Bellaflor J. Angara-Castillo.

Relative thereto, we are recommending to **review and assess the following existing laws and scholarship program,** for a better policy that ensures equal opportunity and access to education of underprivileged children and youth:

1. **Republic Act No. 6655**: Free Public Secondary Education Act of 1988;
2. **Republic Act No. 6728:** Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act; and
3. The **scholarship programs of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority** (TESDA)

Likewise, to contribute to the bills' enhancement, we are recommending the following:

1. **Sec. 4 – Discounts for Underprivileged Students**

   The perks of being a card holder should not just be limited to availing discounts but be considered as the top priority to avail educational scholarship services/programs of all government agencies and its stakeholders.

2. **Sec. 6 – Roles of DepEd and CHED**

   - **On letter (c): DSWD's "Listahanan"** formerly the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) should be used as additional reference on the identification of potential applicants for the discount card, given that it is being used by other agencies in identifying clients/beneficiaries who are classified poor.

Further, the **Bill should also promote and support the plight of the Out-of-School Youth (OSY) who belong to the poor families** through scholarship programs and other related activities.

For consideration of the Committee.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN
Secretary

*Cc: **SEC. MANUEL N. MAMBA, MD***
Presidential Adviser on Legislative Affairs and Head
PLLO, Malacañang, Manila