AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ‘ONE TABLET, ONE STUDENT’ PROGRAM FOR ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Explanatory Note

The pandemic brought about a modification in our educational system all over the country. Presently, while educational institutions are given the flexibility to adopt different modalities in delivering lessons and conducting classes, most of them utilize distance or online learning as face-to-face classes are still mostly suspended. As this mode of learning requires both a stable internet connection and a reliable gadget, this has thus made school requirements even more challenging to already financially-distressed students.

According to a study done by International Data Corp. (IDC), tablet computers (“tablets”) are the electronic devices that were chosen by the Philippine LGUs as the device to be acquired for their respective constituencies who are students currently enrolled. This is primarily because of the tablet’s relatively lower cost compared to the prices of laptops and desktop computers. Moreover, tablets have the capacity to operate various educational applications and other educational productivity tools.¹ Based on reports, a number of local government units (LGUs) with access to the internet have also shifted from self-learning modules (SLMs), or printed learning modality, to online learning to lessen the burden of printing numerous modules for students by the schoolteachers.²

Despite the effort of LGUs, the private sector and other concerned parties to provide tablets for all of the students, there is still an overwhelming number of students who

¹https://business.inquirer.net/332686/tablet-the-device-of-choice-of-lgus-racing-to-ease-remote-learning-dilemma
²https://www.idc.com/getdoc.jsp?containerId=prAP48289121
do not have gadgets and have difficulties keeping up with the academic requirements. In extreme cases, this has posed even more serious problems on students’ mental health.

According to the Department of Education, there are approximately twenty-seven million elementary and high school students currently enrolled in the current academic year. On the other hand, there are approximately 1.6 million enrolled in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) and Local Universities and Colleges (LUCs), based on the data given by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). This staggering number of students who are in need of tablets does not even include their teachers themselves who are likewise in need of such devices.

This proposed measure, therefore, aims to provide assistance to students by giving them tablets, or similar learning devices, to help them cope with the current challenges in line with the national government’s thrust to provide quality education for all Filipino students.

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

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “One Tablet, One Student
Act of 2021.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State shall protect and promote the right of
all citizens to quality education at all levels. Further, the State shall take appropriate
measures to make education accessible to all particularly in the midst of the ongoing
COVID-19 pandemic.

SECTION 3. One Tablet, One Student Program. – The One Tablet, One Student
program is hereby established to provide each public elementary and secondary
student as well as students enrolled in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) a
tablet computer (“tablet”) each to enable them to effectively participate in online
learning; Provided, that students who already have their own personal learning
gadgets shall be given educational assistance in the form of an internet allowance to
cover the cost of connectivity.

SECTION 4. Implementing Agencies. – The Department of Education (DepEd) and
the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are hereby tasked to implement the
One Tablet, One Student Program and shall:
1. develop a comprehensive system to determine the eligibility of students who will qualify under the said program;
2. develop an efficient and expeditious distribution system; and,
3. formulate guidelines on usage, maintenance and accountability for the tablets.

SECTION 5. Appropriations. — An amount of two hundred billion pesos (P200,000,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury for the initial implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be appropriated in the succeeding General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The DepEd and CHED, in coordination with the local government units through the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall promulgate all the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation not later than thirty (30) days upon the effectivity of this Act. The DepEd and CHED shall publish such rules and regulations once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks in two newspapers of general circulation.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. Separability Clause. — If any part, section or provision of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, no other part, section or provision thereof shall be affected thereby.

SECTION 9. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication either in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,