

**TWENTY-THIRD NORTHERN MARIANAS COMMONWEALTH**

**LEGISLATURE**

**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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Session, 2023

H. B. 23- **32**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

To establish a scholarship for residents attending international colleges/universities or technical education programs.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE 23<sup>RD</sup> NORTHERN MARIANAS  
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1           **Section 1. Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that almost every  
2 country around the world possess their own educational systems and/or vocational  
3 technical training programs. Each system contains their own forms of sophisticated  
4 teachings, methods, practices, and trainings that are intended to provide a great  
5 opportunistic benefit to all who undergo such instruction. The Legislature finds that  
6 despite their systematic differences, the respective colleges/universities and  
7 technical training programs provide unique perspectives on how to undertake  
8 various occupations in various fields. The Legislature further finds that such  
9 exposure to foreign countries' perspective in different fields can be highly  
10 beneficial for future development for the CNMI. Cognizant of the aforementioned  
11 systematic differences, such perspectives may be applicable to the CNMI in the  
12 near or distant future. This would be a great opportunity for any eligible resident of

1 our island to learn with hopes to one day return to our islands and become a better  
2 contributor to our society.

3         The Legislature further finds that the Study-Abroad Program is a program  
4 offered by various colleges to give chances to college students to pursue college  
5 studies in a foreign country. Upon embarking on this journey, students are given a  
6 newer perspective on life and gain invaluable amounts of knowledge that they can  
7 take with them back to their home country. The Legislature finds that this would be  
8 a great opportunity for CNMI residents to expand their horizons from either an  
9 educational or technical training standpoint. Cognizant of such opportunity, it will  
10 be highly pertinent to provide a scholarship to such eligible individuals provided  
11 that they return back to our islands and convey all that they learned from such  
12 foreign country. The Legislature finds that our Commonwealth will extremely  
13 benefit from the exposure and will be allowed to implement such knowledge for  
14 the betterment of our Commonwealth. In today's day and age, where advancements  
15 are taking place at a rapid pace, the Legislature finds that the Commonwealth must  
16 adjust with the times and stay updated on newer developments going on around the  
17 world.

18         Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to establish a scholarship for residents  
19 attending international colleges/universities or technical education programs.

20         **Section 2. Amendment.** Subject to codification by the CNMI Law Revision  
21 Commission, Title 3, Division 1, Chapter 6 of the Commonwealth Code is hereby

1 amended by adding a new article 3 to read as follows and the CNMI Law Revision  
2 Commission shall renumber remaining subsections accordingly:

3 **“Article 3. Study-Abroad Scholarship.**

4 §1621. Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship.

5 (a) There is hereby established a Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship  
6 for the purpose of awarding scholarships to students who are attending an  
7 international university/college or international technical training program  
8 to pay for costs directly related to the student's educational needs, including  
9 but not limited to tuition, textbooks and school supplies, transportation, and  
10 housing.

11 (b) The amount allocated for each scholarship shall be up to \$6,000 for  
12 students attending any international institution or technical training program  
13 for a period of up to one year.

14 (c) Criteria and Requirements. To be eligible for this scholarship program  
15 an individual shall:

- 16 (1) Be a United States citizen.
- 17 (2) Be a CNMI resident for at least three consecutive years prior to  
18 enrollment in a college/university or technical training program.
- 19 (3) Furnish an acceptance letter from an international institution or  
20 technical training program.

- 1           (4) Transfer Equivalency Certification. Students participating in an
- 2           education or training program abroad must be enrolled in the
- 3           appropriate credit related to their degree or training plan, during the
- 4           semester or their travel. Instruction must be from institutions
- 5           accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of
- 6           Education and/or the Council for Higher Education
- 7           Accreditation (CHEA), or an accepted foreign equivalent.
- 8           (5) Agree to train and work in the CNMI.
- 9           (6) Agree to work in the CNMI either in the public or private sector
- 10          for one year for or if fails or refuses to complete this obligation,
- 11          agree to remit all the scholarship funds received through this
- 12          scholarship program back to the CNMI government.
- 13          (7) Agree to reimburse the CNMI of all moneys received if the
- 14          student does not complete their respective course of study.
- 15          (8) Sign a fully executed Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship
- 16          Agreement, or successor agreement.
- 17          (d) As a condition of receiving Study-Abroad Scholarship assistance, a
- 18          recipient shall do the following:
- 19               (1) Maintain a score of average or better.
- 20               (2) Enroll as a full-time student in the international institution or
- 21               technical training program.

1           (3) Submit a certified copy of their grades/progress for each  
2           semester to the CNMI Scholarship Office and a class schedule for  
3           the next semester.

4           §1622. Conditions of Scholarship Award.

5           (a) The recipients of the Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship under  
6           this article shall not enroll in an “on-line” program. An “on-line” program  
7           is a program that requires participation solely through the use of the Internet  
8           and does not require physical presence in a classroom or laboratory setting  
9           or other setting that provides practical experience.

10          (b) Graduate or postgraduate applicants or students shall qualify for the  
11          scholarship under this article provided that such applicant did not obtain  
12          their respective degree and/or certification from the same respective  
13          institution they are applying for. Furthermore, such institution shall not be  
14          located within the same country.

15          §1623. Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship Funding.

16          The Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship awards will be funded from  
17          CNMI scholarship educational/assistance funds as set forth in the annual  
18          appropriations of the CNMI Scholarship Office. The scholarship  
19          administrator shall set aside sufficient funds to meet the needs of  
20          participants in the Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship program.

21          §1624. Program Administration.

1           The CNMI Scholarship Office shall administer the Commonwealth Study-  
2           Abroad Scholarship. The CNMI Scholarship Office may promulgate rules  
3           and regulations to effectively implement this article.

4           §1625. Reporting.

5           The CNMI Scholarship Office shall submit an annual report to the presiding  
6           officers of the Legislature, the Governor, and the Department of Labor  
7           reporting, among other things, the number of students participating in the  
8           Commonwealth Study-Abroad Scholarship program, the number of  
9           students that have successfully completed their respective education  
10          journey/technical training program, the number of student participants that  
11          subsequently work in the CNMI.”

12          **Section 3. Severability.** If any provisions of this Act or the application of  
13          any such provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court  
14          of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its  
15          provisions to persons or circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid  
16          shall not be affected thereby.

17          **Section 4. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein  
18          shall not be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or  
19          acquired under statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation, or order adopted  
20          under the statutes. Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding  
21          instituted under or pursuant to prior law. The enactment of the Act shall not have


1 the effect of terminating, or in any way modifying, any liability, civil or criminal,  
2 which shall already be in existence on the date this Act becomes effective.

3 **Section 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by  
4 the Governor, or it becoming law without such approval.

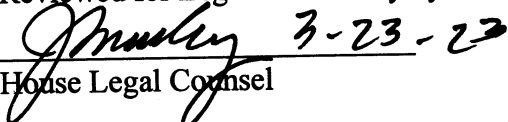
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Date: 3/23/23

Introduced by:

  
Rep. Manny G. T. Castro

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:

  
House Legal Counsel

