



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Department of Budget and Management
Malacañang, Manila

MAY 03 2011

The OFFICERS and MEMBERS

Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP)
No. 7 Road 16, Bagong Pag-Asa,
Quezon City

Dear CEAP Officers and Members:

This has reference to your letter dated January 27, 2011 seeking suspension of the President's Direct Veto of the second paragraph of Special Provision (SP) No. 16 of DepEd's FY 2011 Budget per RA No. 10147 – on Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE), quoted as follows:

- - -
"The DepEd and Fund Assistance to Private Education (FAPE) shall give priority to graduates of public elementary schools and those coming from areas where there are congested public secondary schools in the implementation of Education Service Contracting (ESC). For this purpose, the DepEd shall issue the necessary guidelines to ensure that ESC grantees are qualified and deserving students not only at the time of admission to the Program but also during the continued availment thereof"

As represented, the exclusivity of the GASTPE program to graduates of public elementary schools will deny private elementary school graduates of the equal protection of the law.

Please be informed that under the Conditional Implementation portion of the same Veto Message for the said program, the DepEd was tasked to issue the necessary guidelines to ensure that ESC grantees are qualified and deserving students not only at the time of admission to the Program but also during the continued availment thereof.

In a similar request of the DepEd Secretary, he made representations that the issuance of DepEd Order No. 2 dated January 10, 2011 declaring January 29, 2011 as early registration day for School Year (SY) 2011-2012 to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in education shed light and gave new meaning to the beneficiaries, i.e. those coming from areas where there are congested public secondary schools, in a way that it will help determine the magnitude of **graduates from private elementary schools who have registered for**

enrolment in public secondary schools for reason that their parents cannot support their pursuance of secondary education in a private high school and that should these students be subsequently certified as excess or "aisle" students, they will be contributing to the congestion of public secondary schools, opposing the main purpose of the GASTPE Program.

Considering the foregoing representation of Secretary Luistro, we interposed no objection to his suggested implementation of the ESC program (that of taking in the program, graduates of private elementary schools who have subsequently been certified as excess or "aisle" students in public high schools). We have, however, emphasized, per our letter for the purpose dated March 10, 2011 (copy attached), the need for DepEd and FAPE to impose all necessary safeguards so as not to abuse the implementation of the program.

In view of the foregoing, we suggest that coordination be made with DepEd regarding the matter.

Please be guided accordingly.

Very truly yours,

By Authority of the Secretary:


MARIO L. RELAMPAGOS
Undersecretary 



cc: **BR. ARMIN A. LUISTRO FSC**
Secretary
Department of Education
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue
Pasig City



Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines

27 January 2011

HIS EXCELLENCY SIMEON BENIGNO C. AQUINO, III
President
Republic of the Philippines

Office of the President of the Philippines
In Reply, Please Cite: L00002912
Received On: _____ By: LEGAL OFFICE

Dear Mr. President

We do not want to overdramatize our dismay, nor exaggerate our hurt. After all, even before your election, **we cheered for you as our Education President**. We rejoiced in your appointments of enlightened leaders to the CHED, the DepEd, and the TESDA. We have come out in full support of your administration's K+12 educational reforms.

And why not? It was you who said, we are your Boss. With you, we have been happy, not to boss, but to partner. It was good to feel the truth of what the law (RA 8545) acknowledges: **"the complimentary roles of public and private educational institutions."** How pleased we were when the education officials were consulting us, respecting us! As private education leaders, we felt recognized in **"the invaluable contribution that the private schools have made and will make to education" (Sec. 2).**

These were, indeed, the principles we treasured behind the Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (EGASTPE): the complementary roles of public and private schools; the objective contribution private schools make to Philippine education. We were happy that the efforts of many of our schools to bring basic education to the most remote of areas were recognized and supported by the monies of the Filipino people. We were happy that while Government spent taxpayers' money to support public schools, it also spent taxpayers' money to support private schools. **It was neither the public nor the private character of the school that was foremost; paramount was the fact that basic education was delivered - often under the most difficult of situations. And that basic education could continue to be delivered in remote areas because of EGASTPE.**

Things were going well. What happened? Somebody tried to fix something that wasn't broke. Somebody must have suggested that EGASTPE was only or primarily about decongesting public high schools, and that it was imperative that EGASTPE monies be used only for that purpose. Then someone said, since indeed EGASTPE must decongest public high schools, beneficiaries of EGASTPE from private schools must first enroll in public high schools, congesting them further, then be declared an "aisle student" – a student beyond the carrying capacity of the public school - in order to qualify for EGASTPE. In this manner, the efficacy of EGASTPE decongesting public schools would be documented.

What is dismaying here, is that we, partners of the State in providing basic education to the people, were not consulted. All of a sudden, the news was there of our Education President

vetoing the time-tested policy of private schools determining who would fill their EGASTPE slots, and now declaring:

“Consistent with the core mandate of the ESC System to decongest public secondary schools through scholarship grants in private institutions, I hereby direct the implementation of the ESC System under DepEd-OSEC, Special Provision No. 16, ‘Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education’; page 65 to be made exclusively to graduates of public elementary schools and those coming from congested public secondary schools. Otherwise the intended purpose of the ESC will not be achieved and our public secondary schools will remain congested....” (Veto Message of Pres. Aquino.)

But why was EGASTPE program, already succeeding in delivering basic education to the poor, now being regarded as a system whose “core mandate” was to decongest congested secondary schools? The DepEd itself states that only some 85% of Filipino youth get to elementary school at all. Working together, the public and private schools already fail to reach 15% of the population. Isn’t the core mandate of EGASTE the better delivery of basic education to our people? Where then could the wisdom be in making it ridiculously difficult for EGASTPE schools to fill their allocated slots? Where is the wisdom in virtually disqualifying graduates of private elementary schools from direct EGASTPE benefits in private secondary schools? Is the intention that parents shun private schools and send their students to public schools to crowd them even more? Or is the intention to exalt the congested public schools, empower their administrators with discretion over whether a child is a chair student or an aisle student, regardless of the distance of the school from the home and regardless of the expense that would be incurred by the child in being told to stay in public school?

In our view, the EGASTPE law was not enacted primarily for the benefit of decongesting secondary public schools. It was not enacted for public schools. The public schools have their budgetary allocations in public money. The EGASTPE law was enacted for private students and teachers. After all, that’s the meaning of EGASTPE – the Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education. Those who care may please consult Section 3 of this law, entitled, Criteria of Assistance. There is no statement prescribing that the beneficiaries of the EGASTPE provisions be graduates of public elementary schools nor be first enrolled in congested public secondary schools!

In a national situation where public and private schools are working together to educate, and not doing enough of it, we do not understand why you are virtually disqualifying graduates of private elementary schools from EGASTPE benefits? Have you not here overstepped your executive prerogatives, since there is no original disqualification of the private elementary school graduate from EGASTPE benefits? **Does this not deny private school students who are not declared aisle students equal protection of the law, since they become hapless victims of “unwarranted partiality and prejudice” (cf. I. Cruz, Constitutional Law, pg 117).**

Mr. President, we are happy that you are letting the EVS, with all of its political baggage, die. We are grateful that you are continuing to support the salaries of many of our teachers. But on this matter of the EGASTPE, we ask you to suspend your veto. Allow us as your partners to work out with you a policy consensus for the implementation of EGASTPE. Let us continue to serve our poor, as we have before you came into power. Please do not allow our people to complain that with our Education President and your appointment of a Christian Brother from our ranks to be DepEd Secretary, public policy has become grossly prejudicial to our private elementary schools.

Count on us as your partners. We count on you.

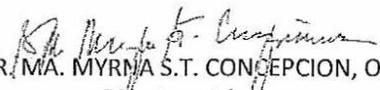
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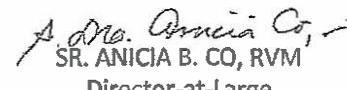

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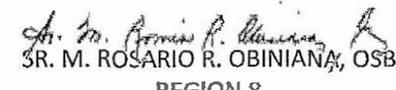

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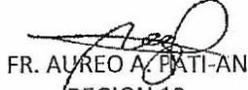

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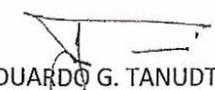

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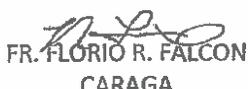

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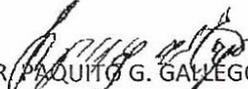

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