

# *Chilean Activist Burns \$500 Million Worth of Student Loan Files*

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Santiago de Chile, May 19 (RHC) – A Chilean activist campaigning for free education burned documents representing \$500 million worth of student debts at Universidad del Mar in a one-man protest.

Francisco Tapia, otherwise known as “Papas Fritas,” said that he had burned the documents to free students of their debt in a video posted on YouTube last week which had now gone viral with over 55,000 views.

According to Santiago Times, Tapia said “You don’t have to pay another peso [of your student loan debt]. We have to lose our fear, our fear of being thought of as criminals because we’re poor...this is my act of love for you.”

Although the act was done without the knowledge of the students, the university may now consider taking each student to court to get a repayment of the loans.

“Papas Fritas,” which means “French Fries,” said he was going to turn the ashes of the documents into a work of art - and that he did - placing them in a molded fashion into a plastic container. He now faces five

years in prison.

Chilean President Michelle Bachelet had promised drastic reforms for the education system amid ongoing student protests since 2011, but two months after taking office, no steps have been taken to make a change.

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