

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

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23 JAN 31 A9:12

SENATE

RECEIVED BY:

S. No. 1807

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

**AN ACT
PROMOTING PHILIPPINE INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL
WRITING SYSTEMS AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR PROTECTION,
PRESERVATION, AND CONSERVATION**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In the pervading influence of Western societies and with the highly multicultural atmosphere of society it can get so easy to forget our heritage and our culture. But to forget our past, our heritage and our culture is to limit or corrupt our development. Former National Commission for Culture and the Arts Chairperson Felipe M. de Leon, Jr. once said, "Ignorance of our cultural strengths and positive qualities as a people results in lack of pride in being Filipino. Lack of pride in being Filipino causes lack of commitment to the nation, a low level of achievement or even mediocrity."

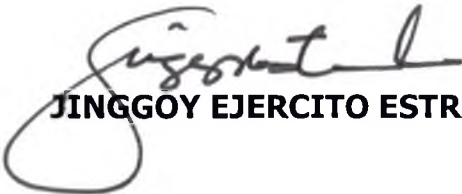
In *Relacion de las islas Filipinas*, Pedro Chirino, S.J., a Spanish priest who served in the Philippines for 12 years during the early years of the Spanish conquest, wrote of the pre-Spanish writing: "So accustomed are all these islanders to writing and reading that there is scarcely a man, and much less a woman, who cannot read and write in letter proper to the island of Manila, very different from those of China, Japan, or India".

Chirino was referring to *Baybayin*, just one of at least 16 writing systems present in the Philippines prior to Spanish colonization. In recent

years, there has been a resurgence in the appreciation and use of the *Baybayin*. But fervor to promote, protect, and conserve must be extended to other indigenous writing systems as well such as the *Hanunó'o* and *Buhid* of the *Mangyans*, the *Tagbanua* of the Tagbanuas, the *Kulitan* the *Kapampangan*, the *Basahan* of the *Bicolanos*, *Badlit* of the Visayans, and the *Jawi* of the *Tausugs*.

The many indigenous writing systems in the country is a reflection of our participatory and highly warm society. This step to protect and preserve a part of our culture to pass on to younger generations will help instill a sense of pride in being Filipino, cognizant of their cultural development.

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



JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Philippine*
2 *Indigenous and Traditional Writing Systems Act*".

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared policy of the State
4 to foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino
5 national culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free
6 artistic and intellectual expression. Towards this end, the State shall promote,
7 protect, preserve, and conserve the Philippine indigenous and traditional
8 writing systems to inculcate patriotism and social consciousness among its
9 citizens.

10 Sec. 3. *Promotion of Philippine Indigenous and Traditional Writing*
11 *Systems.* – To generate greater awareness of indigenous and traditional
12 scripts of the Philippines and engender wider appreciation of their significance
13 and beauty, the promotion of the writing systems is hereby recognized as
14 part of our cultural treasures.

15 As expressions of Philippine tradition and symbols of the national
16 identity, the country's indigenous writing systems shall be promoted through
17 the following:

- 1 a) Inclusion of these writing systems in relevant subjects of basic and
2 higher education such as elective or specialized courses in higher
3 education on the study of the same;
- 4 b) Conduct of activities to be spearheaded by the Department of
5 Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED),
6 and local governments that promote awareness of the writing
7 systems, particularly during *Buwan ng Wika* and similar occasions
8 and events;
- 9 c) Conduct of seminars, conferences, conventions, symposia, and
10 other relevant activities on Philippine writing systems, taking into
11 consideration the writing system that is indigenous to a particular
12 region;
- 13 d) Ensure proper record-keeping of relevant documents and
14 preservation of oral evidence on the writing systems; and
- 15 e) Other applicable measures, as may be adopted by the concerned
16 government agencies.

17 *Sec. 4. Protection, Preservation, and Conservation of Indigenous*
18 *Philippine Traditional Scripts.* – The National Commission for Culture and the
19 Arts (NCCA) shall be the lead agency in promulgating policy guidelines on the
20 promotion of the writing systems.

21 Accordingly, the NCCA is hereby mandated to protect, preserve, and
22 conserve the writing systems as national cultural treasures in accordance with
23 Republic Act No. 10066, otherwise known as the “National Cultural Heritage
24 Act of 2009”. The NCCA shall coordinate with the *Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino*
25 (KWF) for technical assistance on the development of the Philippine
26 languages and writing, and with the DepEd and CHED, and other relevant
27 government agencies for the proper implementation of this provision.

28 *Sec. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days
29 from the effectivity of this Act, the NCCA shall, in coordination with the
30 DepEd, CHED, and KWF, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for
31 the effective implementation of this Act.

1 Sec. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision, section, or part of this
2 Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such judgement shall not affect,
3 invalidate, or impair any other provisions, sections, or parts hereof.

4 Sec. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances,
5 circulars, rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with
6 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

7 Sec. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
8 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general
9 circulation.

Approved,