

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5132



Introduced by **ANG PROBINSYANO**
Party-List Representative Alfred Delos Santos

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Filipino culture is a rich and colorful mixture of many different regional and indigenous identities that have evolved and interacted throughout time. Due to the geographical characteristics of our country, every locality is unique and filled with its own cultural gems that are waiting to be appreciated.

One way in which the richness of our culture manifests is through the multiplicity of writing systems in the country. From the very well-known Baybayin, to the Hanunuo script of the Mangyan, to the esoteric Eskaya of Bohol, the Philippines has a laundry list of writing systems matched only by the list of spoken languages. Thus, it is regrettable that most of these systems are dying out, with much of the general population not even knowing that they exist.

At his juncture, we must make swift and decisive efforts to preserve these languages - while there are still people and documents that could tell the story of these writing systems. To this end, the present bill seeks to establish a compendium of indigenous writing systems and develop programs and elective classes aimed at teaching it in basic and higher education. It is our hope that through this measure, the story of the Filipino people will be preserved to the fullest extent possible for generations to come.

It is for the foregoing reasons that the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS
Representative, Ang Probinsyano Party-List

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

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known henceforth as the “Philippine Indigenous and Traditional Writing Systems Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to inculcate, propagate and preserve the cultural heritage and treasures of the Philippines as a means to foster patriotism and social consciousness among the citizenry. To this end, there is a need to promote, protect, preserve, and conserve the Philippine indigenous and traditional writing systems, using these as tools for enhancing cultural development, instilling national pride and identity, and safeguarding Filipino cultural heritage and identity.

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

The writing systems as an expression of Philippine traditions and national identity shall be promoted through the following:

- (a) Mandate the Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to develop appropriate programs for promoting traditional writing systems in basic and higher education and offer an elective or specialized course in higher education on the study of the same;
- (b) Creation and support of activities that promote awareness of the writing systems, particularly during Buwan ng Wika and similar occasions and events;
- (c) Conduct seminars, conferences, conventions, symposia, and other relevant activities on the study of the writing systems, taking into consideration of the writing system that is indigenous to a particular region;

- (d) Ensure proper record-keeping of relevant documents and preservation of oral evidence on the writing systems; and
- (e) Other applicable measures, as may be adopted by the concerned government agencies.

SEC. 4. *Protection, Preservation, and Conservation of Indigenous or Traditional Scripts of the Philippines.* – The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) shall be the lead agency in promulgating policy guidelines for the promotion of the writing systems.

Accordingly, the NCCA is hereby mandated to protect, preserve, and conserve the writing systems as a national cultural treasure as provided in Republic Act No. 10066, otherwise known as the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009”. The NCCA shall coordinate with the DepEd, CHED, and other relevant government agencies for the proper implementation of this provision.

SEC. 5. *Creation of a Traditional Writing Systems Compendium.* – The NCCA, in coordination with the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), shall create a compendium of all known traditional writing systems in the Philippines. Such compendium shall, as far as practicable, include the characters and rules of writing of such system.

To this end, the involved agencies may enlist the help of the academe and other subject-matter experts in such a manner as may be prescribed by this Act’s implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act, the NCCA shall, in coordination with the DepEd, CHED, and NHCP promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section, or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts, sections, and provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,