

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**HOUSE BILL No. 3592**

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**Introduced by REPRESENTATIVES LANI MERCADO-REVILLA,  
BRYAN B. REVILLA AND RAMON “JOLO” B. REVILLA III**

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

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Indigenous writing systems have long existed in the Philippines, long before Western colonizers invaded our country. Historical records reveal that early Filipinos were already literate, and proficient in reading and writing indigenous scripts. Among the traditional writing systems used for communication, trade, and cultural expression during the pre-colonial era were the Baybayin (Katagalugan), Buhid (Mindoro), Kulitan (Pampanga), Tagbanwa (Northern Palawan) and Jawi (Greater Sulu).

With the arrival of the Spaniards, the Roman/Latin alphabet was introduced, primarily as a tool for Christianization, which gradually displaced the use of these native scripts. As colonization progressed, the use of local scripts further waned, eventually leading to their marginalization and erasure from mainstream cultural memory.<sup>1</sup>

In modern times where technological advancements have made leaps and bounds, the dominance of major world languages and writing systems in all aspects of human living have further endangered the survival of these indigenous writing systems. Without deliberate and sustained government intervention, there is a real risk that these vital expressions of our cultural identity will fade into oblivion.

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<sup>1</sup> (Norman de los Santos, 2015, *Philippine Indigenous Writings in the Modern World*, [http://ical13.ling.sinica.edu.tw/Full\\_papers\\_and\\_ppts/July\\_21/P4-1.pdf](http://ical13.ling.sinica.edu.tw/Full_papers_and_ppts/July_21/P4-1.pdf)).

As an essential part of our national cultural heritage, Philippine indigenous writing systems must be preserved, propagated and protected. They are not only symbolic of our people's creativity and linguistic diversity but also serve as living connections to our ancestral knowledge and traditions.

While the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) is mandated under Republic Act No. 7104 to promote and preserve Philippine languages and writing systems, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is empowered under Republic Act No. 10066 to safeguard cultural heritage, this proposed measure seeks to strengthen and institutionalize an inter-agency framework that will enhance the promotion, protection, preservation, and conservation of these scripts. This shall be accomplished through education, policy development, documentation, and community engagement.

By mobilizing educational institutions, cultural agencies, local governments, and other relevant stakeholders, this Act aims to elevate indigenous writing systems into national consciousness and ensure their transmission to future generations.

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



**REP. LANI MERCADO-REVILLA**  
Representative  
2<sup>nd</sup> District of Cavite



**REP. BRYAN B. REVILLA**  
Representative  
AGIMAT Partylist



**REP. RAMON "JOLO" REVILLA III**  
Representative  
1<sup>st</sup> District of Cavite

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PROMOTING PHILIPPINE INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL WRITING  
SYSTEMS AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR PROTECTION, PRESERVATION AND  
CONSERVATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

Section 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known henceforth as the “Philippine  
Indigenous Writing Systems Promotion Act.”

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to recognize,  
preserve, and promote the richness and diversity of Philippine cultural heritage,  
including indigenous and traditional writing systems that reflect the historical,  
linguistic, and artistic traditions of the Filipino people. These writing systems are vital  
expressions of Filipino identity and serve as essential instruments for cultural  
empowerment, inclusive education, and social cohesion.

The State shall therefore ensure the promotion, protection, preservation, and  
conservation of these indigenous and traditional scripts as part of the national  
patrimony.

Sec. 3. *Institutional Responsibilities.* – To ensure the meaningful implementation of this Act, the following government agencies and institutions shall undertake the following responsibilities, consistent with their respective mandates:

(a) Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF)

- Shall take the lead in the study, promotion, development, standardization, and teaching of indigenous and traditional writing systems, in accordance with Republic Act No. 7104, or “An Act Creating the Commission on the Filipino Language, Prescribing its Powers, Duties and Functions, and For Other Purposes.”
- Shall coordinate the documentation, digitization, and linguistic development of these scripts, and produce instructional and education materials.
- Shall maintain a national inventory of traditional scripts and their respective regions of origin, in collaboration with other cultural and academic institutions.
- Shall initiate awareness campaigns and cultural activities in coordination with other cultural agencies, particularly during Buwan ng Wika, National Indigenous Peoples Month, and other relevant observances.

(b) National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA)

- Shall recognize and declare traditional scripts as Important Cultural Property, or National Cultural Treasure, as appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10066, or the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009.”
- Shall formulate policy guidelines and implement strategic cultural programs to promote and safeguard traditional scripts.
- Shall provide grants and technical assistance to support the revitalization and transmission of indigenous scripts in cultural communities.

(c) Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED)

- Shall integrate the study and appreciation of indigenous and traditional writing systems in the basic and higher education curricula.
- CHED shall encourage the offering of elective or specialized courses focused on these writing systems in tertiary institutions.

(d) National Museum of the Philippines (NMP)

- Shall lead in the conservation, exhibition, and scholarly research of artifacts bearing indigenous scripts.
- Shall support museum-based educational programs on Philippine traditional writing systems, in partnership with the KWF and NCCA.

(e) National Archives of the Philippines (NAP) and National Library of the Philippines (NLP)

- Shall ensure the long-term preservation, secure archiving, and public accessibility of documents, records, and cultural materials in both physical and digital formats.
- Shall assist in the documentation, digitization, and preservation of oral histories, manuscripts, inscriptions, and records related to indigenous and traditional writing systems.

(f) Local Government Units (LGUs)

- Shall support local initiatives to promote and safeguard traditional writing systems, particularly those historically and culturally rooted in their jurisdictions.
- Shall work in coordination with schools, community organizations, and cultural offices to strengthen awareness and transmission at the grassroots level.

(g) Academic and Research Institutions

- Shall conduct interdisciplinary studies, develop localized educational materials, and contribute to capacity building, cultural mapping, and community-based script revitalization programs.

Other concerned agencies may adopt appropriate complementary measures to ensure the sustained advancement and revitalization Philippine traditional scripts.

*Sec. 4. Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the implementing agencies. Thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

LGUs are likewise encouraged to allocate funds from their local budgets to support the implementation of relevant programs and activities under this Act.

*Sec. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the NCCA and the KWF, in coordination with the DepEd, CHED, and other concerned agencies, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

*Sec. 6. 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. 7. 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 and amended accordingly.

*Sec. 8. Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*