



Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session



**HOUSE BILL NO. 3671**

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**Introduced by Reps. Alfelito “Alfel” M. Bascug, Ysabel Maria J. Zamora and Laarni Lavin Roque**

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**AN ACT**

**DECLARING THE LAST FULL WEEK OF SEPTEMBER OF EVERY YEAR AS THE “NATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF” AND SEPTEMBER 23 AS “FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE DAY”**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The proposed measure seeks to formally recognize the cultural and linguistic identity of the Filipino Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community by declaring the last full week of September as the **National Week of the Deaf** and **September 23 as Filipino Sign Language (FSL) Day**. This legislative initiative affirms the State's obligation to promote, protect, and fulfill the rights of all persons with disabilities—particularly Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Filipinos—by fostering awareness, acceptance, and inclusion in all aspects of public life.

In line with the Philippines’ commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which the country is a State Party, this bill promotes a rights-based approach to disability. It recognizes that Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing persons are not merely individuals with hearing loss, but members of a distinct cultural and linguistic minority whose primary mode of communication is sign language.

Filipino Sign Language (FSL), as officially recognized under Republic Act No. 11106 or the “Filipino Sign Language Act,” is the natural visual language of the Filipino Deaf community. It is a vital expression of identity, culture, and heritage. Beyond its functional role as a medium of communication, FSL symbolizes the Deaf community’s right to self-determination, equality, and inclusion.

By institutionalizing a National Week of the Deaf and Filipino Sign Language Day, this measure seeks to deepen public understanding of the Deaf culture and promote positive societal

attitudes. It provides a national platform for advocacy, education, and celebration of the contributions of Deaf Filipinos in various fields—from the arts, education, and media to governance and community development.

Moreover, the bill mandates the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, in partnership with relevant government agencies such as the Department of Education, Commission on Human Rights, National Council on Disability Affairs, and others, to formulate rules, campaigns, and guidelines to ensure effective implementation. These efforts are essential to mainstreaming the use of FSL in schools, media, government services, and workplaces, and to dismantling systemic barriers that prevent Deaf persons from fully enjoying their human rights.

This measure does not create new privileges but rather strengthens the full recognition of rights already enshrined in existing laws, including the Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (RA 7277), the FSL Act (RA 11106), and various national and international commitments.

In recognizing Deaf identity and Filipino Sign Language through national observances, we move closer to building a society that values diversity, fosters equity, and guarantees that no Filipino is left behind.

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

  
**REP. ALFELITO “ALFEL” M. BASCUG**  
Agusan Del Sur, First (1<sup>st</sup>) District

  
**REP. ISABEL MARIA J. ZAMORA**  
San Juan City, Lone District

  
**REP. LAARNI LAVIN ROQUE**  
Bukidnon, Fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) District

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

**SECTION 1.** The State, in adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRDP), shall promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities, including Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing persons, and shall respect their inherent dignity, individual autonomy, and independence.

The State shall uphold the right of Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing persons to full accessibility and inclusion, eliminating all forms of discrimination in public and private spheres. The State recognizes that Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing persons are a cultural and linguistic minority and therefore affirms their right to freedom of expression, including the right to use and access sign language in all domains of life.

Accordingly, the State acknowledges and promotes the use of Filipino Sign Language as the natural language of the Filipino Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing community, embodying their unique cultural and linguistic identity.

The State also recognizes the importance of promoting awareness of the rights of and sign language as essential to eliminating barriers, ensuring inclusivity, and fostering the full participation of Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing Filipinos in all aspects of life.

**SEC. 2.** The last full week of September of every year is hereby declared as the National Week of the Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing, to promote public awareness, understanding, and respect for the rights, identity, and contributions of Deaf persons in Philippine society.

**SEC. 3.** September twenty-three (23) of every year is hereby declared as Filipino Sign Language Day, to promote the recognition, acceptance, and continued development of

Filipino Sign Language as a visual language of the Filipino Deaf and/or Hard-of-Hearing community, and as a symbol of their right to inclusion, equality, and cultural identity.

**SEC. 4.** The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino shall, in coordination with the Council for the Welfare of Children, the Philippine Commission on Women, the Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the National Council on Disability Affairs, and the Presidential Communications Office, formulate the necessary rules, guidelines, and awareness campaigns for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 5.** If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SEC. 6.** Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish, impair, or repeal any rights or privileges already recognized under existing laws, especially those pertaining to marginalized, disadvantaged, or vulnerable sectors.

**SEC. 7.** All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof that are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,