



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4263



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Culture and language are inextricably linked together, such that writing systems can be used to trace one’s roots and connect with one’s culture.

In the Philippines, there is an abundance of writing systems which have been existing since the pre-colonial era. One of them is the *Baybayin*, which comes from the word *baybay*, which means “to spell”. Although this system of writing was eventually set aside due to the widespread use of the Latin alphabet during the Spanish colonization¹, scientists from the University of the Philippines Diliman College of Science Institute of Mathematics (UPD-CS IM) believe that the *Baybayin* was living proof that Filipinos already had their own “technically-sophisticated traditions”².

¹ Solon, K. G. (2022, August 18). *How Baybayin’s Legacy Lives On*. Humanist Alliance Philippines International. Retrieved June 26, 2025, from <https://hapihumanist.org/2022/08/18/baybayin-legacy/>

² Patron, E. J. (2024, September 9). *AI-powered baybayin translator being developed by mathematicians*. Daily Tribune. Retrieved June 20, 2025, from <https://tribune.net.ph/2024/09/08/ai-powered-baybayin-translator-being-developed-by-mathematicians>

Over the past two decades, *Baybayin* became popular among young people for aesthetic purposes. However, while these writing systems are being revived again, it remains vulnerable and in danger of misrepresentation and alteration due to technological advancements. Proper standardization, publication, and documentation must be established in order for the writing systems to sustain its intrinsic characteristics.

Thus, this bill seeks to promote, protect, preserve, and conserve the Philippine indigenous and traditional writing systems. Through the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), policy guidelines on the promotion of the writing systems shall be institutionalized, thereby enhancing cultural development, instilling national pride and identity, and safeguarding Filipino cultural heritage and identity.

Through this bill, the State will be able to fulfill its duty to recognize, respect, and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions and to consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies³.

This measure was also filed during the 19th Congress and was primarily referred to the Committee on Basic Education and Culture, where it was approved on third and final reading by the House of Representatives.

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



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE

³ Article XIV, Section 17 of the 1987 Constitution



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

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

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual

expression. To this end, the State shall promote, protect, preserve, and conserve the Philippine indigenous and traditional writing systems as a means to inculcate patriotism and social consciousness among the citizenry.

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

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

- (a) Inclusion of these writing systems in relevant subjects of basic and higher education such as elective or specialized courses in higher education on the study of the same;
- (b) Conduct of activities to be spearheaded by the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and local governments that promote awareness of the writing systems, particularly during Buwan ng Wika and similar occasions and events;
- (c) Conduct of seminars, conferences, conventions, symposia, and other relevant activities on Philippine writing systems, taking into consideration 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.

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

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

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

SECTION 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.

SECTION 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 or amended accordingly.

SECTION 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,