

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

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1588

Introduced by GABRIELA Women's Party List
Representative LIZA LARGOZA-MAZA, Bayan Muna Party List
Representatives Satur C. Ocampo, Teodoro A. Casino and Joel G. Virador, and AnakPawis Representatives Crispin B. Beltran and Rafael V. Mariano

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Explanatory Note

February 4, 2002 marks the 103rd anniversary of the start of the Philippine-American War—the long and bloody conflict in which the United States of America, by force of arms, imposed its authority on the Filipino people and Philippine territory as its newly acquired colony.

The Philippine-American War began on February 4, 1899 with heavy fighting in the suburbs of Manila and officially ended in 1913, although pockets of resistance continued thereafter. This war of colonial conquest is therefore the longest war in US history. This testifies to the courageous and indomitable spirit of the Filipino people, who fought the American colonizers and refused to be conquered even in the face of overwhelming odds.

Filipino resistance was so popular and widespread that at its peak the United States deployed over 100,000 of its troops to fight the war. The United States fought the war in a manner that was notable for its brutality. This was exemplified by Gen. Jake Smith's infamous order to turn Samar into a "howling wilderness," resulting in the death of 50,000 Samareños, Gen. Franklin Bell's 1902 Batangas campaign against Gen. Miguel Malvar which killed 200,000, and the massacres of hundreds of Muslim men, women and children in Bud Dajo in 1906 and in Bud Bagsak in 1913.

It is estimated that over one million Filipinos died as a result of the war. This surpasses the Filipino death toll in World War II, making the Philippine-American War the bloodiest in our history.

The victorious American colonizers made effective use of the educational system to obliterate all knowledge of the Philippine-American War from our people's collective memory.

A nationalist historian such as Renato Constantino has described this as part of the "miseducation" which continues to produce a pervasive "colonial mentality" among Filipinos. The vast majority of Filipinos today—young and old—know little about the Philippine-American War.

The Philippine-American War has not been given acknowledgement in the same degree as the struggles against Spain and Japanese imperial forces.

As a result, to this day the countless Filipino patriots who lost their lives in the heroic struggle to defend their hard-won freedom against the new colonial masters remain unremembered and unmourned.

Government itself has neglected its obligation to honor the heroes and martyrs of the Philippine-American War. In 1998, the Ramos Administration spent billions to celebrate the June 12 Sentenaryo; in contrast, the Centenary of the Philippine-American War on February 4, 1999 came and went with hardly an official acknowledgement.

It is therefore the duty of every Filipino to remember, honor, and pay respect to our heroic but forgotten ancestors who fought and died in the Philippine-American War.

It is important for every Filipino to appreciate the continuous struggle against direct foreign occupation by the Spanish, British, American and Japanese forces.

This piece of legislation seeks to rectify the historic injustice which has been perpetrated against our heroic forebears. Declaring February 4 to be **"ARAW NG PAGDAKILA SA MGA PILIPINONG NAGBUWIS NG BUHAY NOONG DIGMAANG PILIPINO-AMERIKANO"** an annual regular National Holiday (similar to April 9, "Bataan Day") will provide Filipinos the opportunity to remember and honor them, as well as to learn valuable lessons in patriotism which are extremely relevant in our society today.

The historical truth must come out.

The support of this bill is earnestly sought.

LIZA LARGOZA-MAZA
GABRIELA Women's Partylist

SATUR C. OCAMPO
Bayan Muna Party List

TEODORO A. CASINO
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CRISPIN B. BELTRAN
Anak Pawis Party List

RAFAEL V. MARIANO
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AN ACT
DECLARING FEBRUARY FOUR OF EVERY YEAR AS "ARAW NG PAGDAKILA SA MGA PILIPINONG NAGBUWIS NG BUHAY NOONG DIGMAANG PILIPINO-AMERIKANO", PROVIDING FOR SUPPORT PROGRAMS, AND REQUIRING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS THEREFOR.

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

SECTION 1. February 4 of every year is hereby declared as a regular national holiday in commemoration of the "ARAW NG PAGDAKILA SA MGA PILIPINONG NAGBUWIS NG BUHAY NOONG DIGMAANG PILIPINO-AMERIKANO".

SECTION 2. The following activities shall be done in observance of this day:

a. Heads of government agencies and instrumentalities, government-owned and controlled corporations, local government units, employers in the private sector and the Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) shall encourage and allow sufficient time and opportunities for their employees to engage and participate in any ceremony or activity to commemorate the "ARAW NG PAGDAKILA SA MGA PILIPINONG NAGBUWIS NG BUHAY NOONG DIGMAANG PILIPINO-AMERIKANO."

b. Television and radio stations nationwide shall allocate a minimum of one (1) hour airtime for programs exclusively about major battles, incidents, sites and participants of the Philippine struggle against the Americans.

c. The Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education, in coordination with the National Historical Institute, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, National Museum and other appropriate agencies and entities, shall lead public and private school communities at all levels in the commemoration of the "ARAW NG PAGDAKILA SA MGA PILIPINONG NAGBUWIS NG BUHAY NOONG DIGMAANG PILIPINO-AMERIKANO".

SECTION 3. The Commission on Higher Education, National Historical Institute and National Commission for Culture and the Arts shall undertake or support researches, specially on the effects and aftermath of the Philippine-American War, in order to make

the annual commemoration of the "ARAW NG PAGDAKILA SA MGA PILIPINONG NAGBUWIS NG BUHAY NOONG DIGMAANG PILIPINO-AMERIKANO" more relevant and meaningful.

SECTION 4. Funds shall be allocated in the national budget for the implementation of the above activities, programs and projects.

SECTION 5. If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is held to be unconstitutional or invalid, the validity of other sections herein shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,