

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 66

Introduced by HONORABLE LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In our IT-based and economy-driven society it is unquestionably of enormous advantage that a country's student population and workforce are globally wired to the World's Lingua Franca.

The most widely spoken and written language today for international trade, e-commerce; and communications is indisputably English: More than half of the world's books are printed in English; sixty (60%) percent of TV and radio programs are broadcast in English; more than seventy (70%) percent of international mail are in English; more than seventy (70%) percent of major treatises in all fields of knowledge are in English; eighty (80%) percent of computer text and Websites are stored and presented in English; and that English has acquired the largest vocabulary of all the languages in the World.

The Philippines is fortunate that where English is only generally phonics-based the eight major languages in the country are purely phonetic; and so with the other 161 Philippine dialects "*wika nga, kung ano ang bigkas siya ang baybay*". As a consequence, Filipinos compared to its Asian neighbors find learning the English language relatively easier and with very much less compared to, say the Japanese and Chinese who have to patiently labor to speak and write in English.

While long before, and immediately after the Second World War the Philippines was proudly Number One in Asia in proficiency in English, because the medium of instruction then was in English then, the policy was abandoned in favor of bilingual Filipino-English instruction, and as a consequence we unwittingly gave away the proficiency in English of our young students.

Whether it was merely coincidental or an unexpected result, the fact remains that since the introduction of Bilingual Instruction under Department of Education Order No. 25 in 1974, the proficiency in English

of our students and teachers alike seriously suffered and began to slide helplessly down and with it, the quality of Philippine Education.

As a language is best learned through listening, speaking, reading and usage, this bill respectfully seeks to prescribe again by law; and not simply by administrative fiat, the use of English as the Medium of Instruction, except of course, in Filipino Language curricular subjects, in all public Elementary and Secondary Schools so the Philippines can once more regain its pole position in English proficiency in Asia and thereby improve the country's competitive advantage and thus contribute to the quality of education in our country.

The Bilingual Policy of the Department of Education (DepEd), introduced in 1974 through DECS Order No. 25, S. 1974 was designed to develop a "bilingual nation competent in the use of English and Filipino". Accordingly, the academic subjects of Industrial Arts, Home Economics, Physical Education, Social Studies, Character Education, and Values Education were mandated to be taught using Filipino as a medium of instruction while other subjects are required to be taught in English. In actual implementation, however, the subjects mandated to be taught in English are taught in a mix of Taglish or English/local dialect combination.

While the Filipino professional or worker was and in some ways still is the preferred employee of multinational corporations primarily because of competence in the English language, the mastery of English suffered a major setback as a result of the aforementioned policy. And this gradual and very telling setback resulted from the following circumstances that became formidable barriers in obtaining proficiency in the English language:

1. Filipino, as a language is comprised nearly entirely of Tagalog, with minor components of Tagalized Spanish, Tagalized English, and Tagalized Chinese, among other language components and influences. Since native Tagalog speakers are not a majority, the actual majority of learners are faced with the task of learning *two secondary languages simultaneously*, in other non-Tagalog regions, the Filipino component of the bilingual policy is invariably implemented in either the regional language or dialect, Taglish, or in English.
2. On the other hand, classes that used Filipino as a medium of instruction limited learners' exposure to English. Language as a skill is best learned while spoken, heard, written, and read. The successful learning of English is directly proportional to the frequency of the opportunity for it to be heard, spoken, and written by the learners, particularly with their teachers and educators.

3. Even as media of instruction and discussion are in Filipino, the best-quality educational and reading materials are in English. To appreciate the impact of this circumstance, consider this: the average native Bicol language speaker will have to translate the reading material into Filipino/Tagalog first – to be able to discuss the material intelligently with the teacher and among fellow learners, but at the same time, the learner will likely translate the material further into Bicol (the primary language of a region) for full cognition or deeper understanding.

Obviously, this linguistic juggling act is an unnecessary obstacle for the average school learner encountering subjects like Chemistry and Physics for the first time. And as the complexity of the concepts and applications increase, the more taxing the multiple-language processing becomes – *considering how most languages outside of English do not have the vocabulary of English when it comes to the subject of Science.*

Without adequate competence in English, our students will have increased difficulty in mastering Mathematics, Science, Engineering and Technology; all these are core disciplines in our nation's efforts to become globally competitive. There are many words, concepts, and ideas in these subjects that have no direct translation in Filipino. To invent new words for these concepts and ideas merely increases the complexity of the learning process.

In our country, the majority of successful enterprises use English as a medium of internal and public communication. Job interviews are conducted in English. English is the language of our law – Philippine laws are written in English; Philippine legislators invariably speak in English in their speeches, in their interpellations on the floors of Congress and in media interviews. To undermine the mastery of English in our schools is clearly detrimental to our students, and eventually in their workplace and in their interaction with the outside world.

Other Asian nations are developing skilled workers competent in English and therein lies the diminishing of our advantage. This bill intends to rectify this by remedying the deficiencies of the current Bilingual Education Policy of the DepEd; the fullest objective being the improvement of the total learning process in our schools towards more valuable education for our students, and stauncher preparation for their successful entrance in the corporate and industrial stage of the global commercial theater.



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**AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE THE USE OF ENGLISH
AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN PHILIPPINE SCHOOLS**

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

1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the
2 “Strengthening and Enhancing the Use of English as the Medium of
3 Instruction Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the declared policy of the
5 State to provide the citizenry with the opportunities to have quality
6 education to learn, communicate, grow and change in the pursuit of a
7 higher standard of life. Towards this end, the government undertakes to
8 align the education of the young with the requirements and realities of
9 business life and competitive in the global environment by strengthening,
10 enhancing and developing the use of the English language as the medium
11 of instruction in all levels of education, from the preschool to the tertiary
12 level.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms or acronyms shall refer to and/or mean as hereunder defined:

- a. "Medium of Instruction (MOI)" refers to the language or dialect used in teaching.
- b. "School Year (SY)" refers to the part of the year during which school is in session typically from June to March.
- c. "Parents, Teachers and Community Association (PTCA)" refers to a group of parents and teachers organized for the welfare of a school and its pupils.
- d. "Regional or native language" refers to the regional language or any dialect prevailing in a region or place.
- e. "Academic subjects" refers to curricular subjects in the areas of general education, science and technology.

SEC. 4. Medium of Instruction (MOI). – The MOI in all subjects taught shall be as follows:

- a. English, Filipino or the regional/native language may be used as the MOI in all subjects from preschool until Grade III.
- b. English and Filipino shall be taught as separate subjects in all levels in the elementary and secondary.
- c. In all academic subjects in the elementary grades from Grade IV to Grade VI and in all levels in the secondary, the MOI shall be English.

1 d. In the tertiary level, the current language policy as prescribed
2 by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall be
3 maintained.

4 e. In addition to formal instruction, the use of English shall be
5 encouraged as a language of interaction in the school.
6 Corollary to this, the organization of English clubs such as
7 book, oratorical, debating, writing and related associations
8 shall be encouraged. In school publications, the use of
9 English shall be given priority as far as practicable.

10 **SEC. 5. Government Examinations and Entrance**

11 **Examinations.** – Government examinations and entrance examinations
12 to public schools and state colleges and universities at all levels shall use
13 English as the language of assessment. *Provided, however,* That it may
14 include questions in Filipino for which the credit for such questions shall
15 not exceed ten percent (10%) of the total points in the examination.

16 **SEC. 6. Support Facilities.** – All the requirements, devices and
17 support facilities necessary to strengthen, enhance and develop English as
18 the MOI such as training and orientation for teachers, teachers' manuals,
19 learning modules and workbooks, textbooks, audiovisual aids and other
20 auxiliary teaching and learning materials shall be formulated, developed
21 and provided by the Department of Education (DepEd).

22 **SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The DepEd,
23 in consultation with the CHED, the Technical Education and Skills
24 Development Authority (TESDA) and other concerned government

1 agencies shall promulgate within sixty (60) days the implementing rules
2 and regulations (IRR) that shall be necessary to implement the provisions
3 of this Act.

4 **SEC. 8. Congressional Oversight Committee.** – There is
5 hereby created a congressional oversight committee composed of three
6 Members from the Senate and three Members from the House of
7 Representatives. The Members from the Senate shall be appointed by the
8 Senate President based on the proportional representation of the parties
9 or the coalitions therein with at least one Senator representing the
10 Minority. The Members of the House of Representatives shall be
11 appointed by the Speaker, also based on the proportional representation
12 of the parties or the coalitions therein with at least one Senator
13 representing the Minority. The members of the House of Representatives
14 shall be appointed by the Speaker, also based on the proportional
15 representation of the parties or the coalitions therein with at least one
16 Member representing the Minority.

17 The committee shall be headed by the respective Chairpersons of
18 the Senate and the House of Representatives' Committees on Education.

19 The Congressional Oversight Committee on Education shall, in aid of
20 legislation, perform the following:

- 21 a. Participate in the crafting of the IRR;
- 22 b. Approve the final draft of the IRR;
- 23 c. Set the guidelines and the overall framework to monitor and
24 ensure the proper implementation of this Act;

- 1 d. Ensure transparency and require the submission of reports
2 from government agencies concerned on the conduct of
3 programs, projects and policies relating to the
4 implementation of this Act;
- 5 e. Determine inherent weakness in the law and recommend the
6 necessary remedial legislations or executive measures; and
- 7 f. Perform such other duties and functions and responsibilities
8 as may be necessary to effectively attain the objectives of
9 this Act.

10 The Congressional Oversight Committee on Education shall be
11 assisted by the secretariat of the committees of both the House of
12 Representatives and the Senate and shall be assisted by personnel who
13 may be seconded therefrom. It may likewise retain the services of
14 consultants.

15 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act is
16 declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and
17 effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

18 **SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** – All executive orders, laws and
19 department orders and parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the
20 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

21 **SEC. 11. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
22 after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspaper
23 of general circulation.

24 Approved,