

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

H. B. No. 270

Introduced by HONORABLE JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The image Christians have of Muslims is invariably more negative than the image that Muslims have of Christians. It was said that it was the minds and hearts of both Muslims and Christians that provided the basic challenge in the search for dialogue and peace. An effort of Christians and Muslims alike to improve their understanding and appreciation of each other's historical, social and cultural values is the cornerstone of the edifice of peace that each Mindanaoan, Christian or Muslim, must build.

This should include an understanding of the so-called Moro problem which is the historical and systematic marginalization and minoritization of the Islamized ethno-linguistic groups, arguably constituting a Moro nation (Bangsamoro), in their own homeland in the Mindanao islands, first by colonial powers Spain then the U.S., and more recently by successor Philippine governments dominated by an elite with a Christian-Western orientation. This is the background of the recurrent Moro armed struggle which again manifested itself in history in the late 1960s and early 1970s continuing up to the present.

In Mindanao, there is a need for horizontal people-to-people peace among the tri-peoples (Moros or Muslims, Christian settlers and their descendants, and the Lumads) there, especially at the community level, to complement the vertical top-level peace negotiations and processes with the several Moro and other rebel groups there. It is said that peace begins in the hearts and minds of persons. One of the most important institutions for this is the school or educational system.

This bill therefore mandates the inclusion in the curricula of all levels of education and training in all schools in the country, starting in Mindanao, of the study and understanding of Moro history, culture and identity which recall and highlight the positive relations among the tri-peoples, especially between Muslims and Christians, as well as their common origins and other points of commonality. This needs to be emphasized because we may have our differences but we have more in common, on top of which, is the clamor for peace.

History also deals with the issues of ethnicity and respect that are brought to the fore in those situations of minority and majority relationships. Culture and identity of the self and the other have been part of tri-people, especially Muslim-Christian, relations in Mindanao. The past relations and understandings of the other greatly influence the relations of today. The issue of the values and differences in various cultures call out for recognition and a positive acceptance. History indicates that this has not always been the case. And as they say, those who do not learn from the lessons of history are condemned to repeat it.

We therefore earnestly seek support for and approval of this bill.



JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA
Representative
Lone District, Province of Aurora

Introduced by Honorable JUAN EDGARDO "SONNY" M. ANGARA

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE MANDATORY STUDY OF MORO HISTORY, CULTURE AND
IDENTITY IN THE CURRICULA OF ALL LEVELS OF SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTRY

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "*Moro History, Culture and Identity Studies Act.*"

SECTION 2. Inclusion in Curricula. - The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall include the study and understanding of Moro history, culture and identity in the curricula of all levels of education and training in all schools in the country, starting in Mindanao, adapting the scope and treatment of the subjects or courses to the respective educational levels. The DepEd and CHED shall likewise initiate and maintain regular programs and special projects to provide venues for information and discussion of Moro history, culture and identity, including the utilization of informal education and other means to stress the importance of respect therefor.

SECTION 3. Key Content. - In the formulation and creation of courses or subjects on Moro history, culture and identity to be included in the school curricula or other educational or training programs to implement and carry out the directives herein, including the writing, printing and publication of textbooks and other reading materials relative thereto, the agencies concerned shall consult recognized experts on Moro history, culture and identity as well as recognized resource persons on the Mindanao peace process and Muslim-Christian dialogue, and shall at all times emphasize the following key points and areas:

- a) An understanding of the "Mindanao problem" and the "Moro problem" as well as the roots of the conflict there and its impact on the rest of the country, with appropriate attention to the history of the Muslims in the Philippines.
- b) The specific character of Mindanao as an island shared by these tri-peoples and thus the ideal of their equality, co-existence and unity, including the peculiarities of the different Moro and Lumad ethno-linguistic groups.

- c) The positive relations and remembrances in history among the tri-peoples of Mindanao: the Christian settlers and their descendants, the Moros or Muslims, and the Lumad or indigenous highlander tribes.
- d) The identification of the common origins of the peoples of Mindanao and of the Philippines as well as other points of commonalities, including the positive presentation of these peoples before the arrival of Islam and Christianity.
- e) The appreciation of the various cultures and ethnic identities.
- f) Support for the broader Mindanao peace process which address both the structural roots of the Mindanao conflict and the deep social, cultural and religious cleavages there, and which consists not only of peace negotiations with rebel groups but also people-to-people peace processes such as promotion of Muslim-Christian dialogue and a culture of peace.
- g) Fostering of the attitudes and values of peace an dialogue such as esteem, respect, honestly, sincerity, patience, generosity, graciousness, sensitivity, trust, prudence, and love.

SECTION 4. *Funds and Appropriations.* – The amount as may be necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be taken from the discretionary funds of the Office of the President, the DepEd and the CHED and/or from the latter two agencies' appropriations for policy formulation, program planning, standards development and instructional materials development. Thereafter, such amounts such as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 5. *Repealing Clause.* – Any provision of law or regulation inconsistent herewith is hereby repealed, revoked or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or inoperative, the other provisions shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect immediately upon approval.

Approved,