

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4237

Introduced by Kabataan Party-List Representative Raymond V. Palatino

EXPLANATORY NOTE

1 Our nation's history is replete with many young Filipinos, from students to young workers
2 and peasants to out of school youths who took their role as agents of social change by heart, and died
3 for the cause. This bill seeks to memorialize a day to commemorate the martyrdom of our young
4 men and women who, beyond mere words, took the ultimate sacrifice of offering their lives for
5 national liberation and social change.

6 Why do we designate September 20 as the particular day for the commemoration? It is on
7 this day in the year 1982 when renowned student leader and activist Edgar Jopson, was captured by
8 the military in Davao City and was subsequently shot numerous times until he died, allegedly the
9 next day. That many of our young martyrs during that period in our history, such as Edgar Jopson,
10 were attracted to the Left and were in fact martyred because of their subversive activities should not
11 deter us from honoring and commemorating their deaths and recognizing their martyrdoms. On the
12 contrary, we should contextualize their heroism as manifestations of their times, when the nation was
13 confronted by massive poverty under a tyrannical dictatorship that offered the people few, if not no
14 "pragmatic" alternative. We should commemorate their lives and inculcate among young Filipinos
15 that patriotic spirit that will inspire them to work and struggle for social change, beyond the mere
16 confines of comfort and of pragmatism. Beyond whatever ideological reservation we may have, we
17 must reaffirm our recognition that their martyrdoms were instrumental in restoring many of the
18 democratic rights we currently enjoy.

19 It is by good coincidence that September 20 is also a day before the anniversary of the
20 imposition of Martial Law under which tens of thousands of Filipinos were subjected to an
21 oppressive and fascist rule, a few thousand of whom subsequently died in the hands of the Marcos

1 military.

2 Let the National Young Martyrs' Day also allow us to remember and recognize many other
3 young martyrs from the various periods of our history when we were colonized and occupied by
4 foreign powers. Let us not forget that the Propaganda Movement, lead by national hero Jose Rizal,
5 was composed of young Filipino intellectuals, many of whom died under the hands of the Spaniards
6 who occupied the Philippines for three centuries. Many members of the Katipunan of Andres
7 Bonifacio, and many of its leaders were also from the ranks of the working class and peasant youth.
8 During the Japanese occupation, many of the guerillas who persisted in the resistance against the
9 invaders were also from the ranks of the youth. Indeed, notwithstanding centuries of history, the
10 youth has always emerged as one of the most potent forces in effecting social change.

11 At a time when our youth are continuously bombarded by the temptation of pragmatism and
12 a comfortable life, of individualism and careerism, and at a time when our people continue to suffer
13 from perennial socio-economic and political crises, let our young martyrs past and present serve as
14 an inspiration to them, that they may be ready for the constant necessity for selfless sacrifices in its
15 various forms.

Adopted.


HON. RAYMOND V. PALATINO
Representative, Kabataan Party-list

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. _____

Introduced by Kabataan Party-List Representative Raymond V. Palatino

AN ACT
DECLARING THE TWENTIETH (20th) OF EVERY SEPTEMBER AS
NATIONAL YOUNG MARTYRS' DAY

1 SECTION 1. It is a policy of the State to inculcate and foster among young Filipinos patriotism,
2 nationalism and appreciation of the role of national heroes and symbols in the historical development
3 of the nation.
4

5 SECTION 2. September 20 of every year is hereby declared as the National Young Martyrs' Day
6 to commemorate the many young Filipinos who offered their lives in the struggle for national
7 liberation and social change.
8

9 SECTION 3. The National Young Martyrs' Day shall concurrently be called "Edgar Jopson Day"
10 in commemoration of the renowned nationalist student leader who was captured and shot by the
11 military on September 20, 1982.
12

13 SECTION 4. The National Youth Commission, in coordination with the National Union of
14 Students of the Philippines (NUSP) and other national youth organizations, is hereby tasked to plan,
15 fund and execute appropriate programs and activities to carry out the aim of this commemoration.
16

17 SECTION 5. The Department of Education shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations in
18 order to designate September 20 as a special day when social studies lectures in elementary and high
19 schools shall be devoted to the teaching of the lives of young Filipino martyrs and the patriotic values
20 that all Filipino youth must espouse.
21

22 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least
23 two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Adopted,