

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.

House Bill No. 4701

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As of 2009, the estimated population of the Philippines is 92,226,600 people. Various studies place the number of ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines at over 100, making the country one of the most ethnically diverse in Asia. The 2000 Philippine Census estimates 6.3 million Indigenous Peoples (IPs) belonging to 85 ethnolinguistic group. The National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) however, has different data sets based on "unofficial surveys" of population by ethnographic region. An International Labor Organization publication for instance cites NCIP data estimating the number of IPs at 13.5 million. This information is also outdated, being based on the 1996 listings of the defunct Offices of the Southern Cultural Communities and Northern Cultural Communities. These discrepancies are not only due to classification limitations, or other factors, but also because some indigenous peoples have difficulties in registering marriages, births, or deaths. It therefore becomes apparent that many IPs are not registered. Without a legal birth record, an individual does not officially exist and therefore lacks legal access to the privileges and protection of a nation.

Birth registration is not generally known among disadvantaged Filipinos particularly in Indigenous Peoples and underprivileged families with children in need of special protection. Among these groups, birth registration remains insignificant. Many of them understand the implications of non-registration only when they get to experience problems in transactions requiring proofs of name, age or nationality.

This lack of birth registration is often caused by the fact that many of these IPs are indigent and lack the necessary finances to be able to register. There is thus a need to encourage these IPs into registering in order for the State to afford them the necessary protection they deserve.

It is in this light that the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ



MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE FREE BIRTH REGISTRATION OF INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy* – It is the policy of the State to recognize and promote all the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) within the framework of the Constitution. Towards this end, the State shall institute and establish the necessary mechanisms to enforce and guarantee the realization of these rights, taking into consideration their customs, traditions, values, beliefs, their rights to their ancestral domains.

SEC. 2. It is hereby mandated that all the fees arising from or related to the birth registration of all members of ICCs/IPs, timely or otherwise shall be waived.

SEC. 3. All Civil Registrars are hereby enjoined to accept both timely and delayed birth registration of members of ICCs/IPs.

SEC. 4. Any person caught charging any form of fee or payment for the registration of birth in contravention of the provisions of this Act shall be held liable for imprisonment of not more than six (6) months or a fine of not more than Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000) or both.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules* – The Department of Interior and Local Government, the National Statistics Office and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples shall issue such orders, rules and regulations and other issuances as may be necessary to ensure the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause* – If for any reason, any part of or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause* – Any law, executive order, letter of instruction, rules and regulations, circulars, issuances or any part thereof inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,