

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

Sixteenth Congress
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 1446

Introduced by **REP. PANGALIAN M. BALINDONG**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is said that peace begins in the hearts and minds of persons. One of the most important institutions for this development is the school, or the educational system.

For this purpose, this bill mandates the inclusion in the curricula 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. These need to be emphasized; while Filipino and Muslim cultures may have differences, it is a fact that they are bound by a common heritage, the land they call Philippines, and they have a lot in common, on top of which, is the clamor for peace.

The mandatory study should include an understanding of what is called the 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 United States of America, and more recently by successor Philippine governments, dominated by an elite having 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 this very day.

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 values and differences in various cultures call out for recognition and a positive acceptance, although History shows that this has not always been the case.

And, as often said, those who do not learn from the lessons of history are condemned to repeat it.

The approval therefor of this bill is earnestly sought.


REP. PANGALIAN M. BALINDONG
2nd District, Lanao del Sur

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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 House of the 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 of 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 people 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 and dialogue such as esteem, respect, honesty, 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.