

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 4755



Introduced by **Kabataan Party-list Representative Terry L. Ridon**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our nation's storied past is flooded with the stories of many young Filipinos, from students to young workers, peasants to out of school youth and other walks of life, all of whom took the role as agents of social change to liberate our country from the chains that besieged it, even if circumstances left these young heroes no choice but to offer their lives.

This bill is seeking to commemorate the martyrdom of the youth who, beyond mere words, took the initiative and make the ultimate sacrifice to offer their lives for national liberation and social change.

This bill seeks to set September 20 of every year as the date to commemorate the martyrdom of the youth because of its historic significance to the national youth movement during Martial Law. It was the date when renowned Martial Law era youth leader and activist Edgar Jopson was captured by the military in Davao City and was shot numerous times until he died. During these turbulent times, many youths – like Jopson – were left with no choice but to go underground to continue their campaign against the dictatorship, choosing to fight in far-flung provinces at a time when military might reigned supreme. Their actions may hinder us from recognizing them as heroes, but we should contextualize their heroism as manifestation of their youthful response to the call of their time, an era when the nation was confronted by massive poverty under the tyrannical dictatorship that offered the people few alternatives to change the society.

It is but fitting for our nation to commemorate the lives of young martyrs, and in doing so, kindle the patriotic spirit of young Filipinos to work and struggle for social change beyond the confines of their classrooms and their homes. Beyond any ideological reservation we may have, we must reaffirm our recognition of their martyrdom as an instrument in restoring many of our democratic rights we enjoy today.

Another reason the bill proposes the day of commemoration as September 20 is because coincidentally, it is also the day before the anniversary of the imposition of martial law under which

millions of Filipinos were subjected to an oppressive and fascist rule where thousands died fighting for freedom under the iron hands of the Marcos dictatorship.

Let this bill commemorating young martyrs in our history be our day of remembrance and recognition of the many young martyrs who figured in our history and had offered their lives for the freedom of our country. For indeed, our nation was founded on the blood of many young Filipino martyrs – from the youths that joined national hero Jose Rizal in the Propaganda Movement, to the brave youths who fought valiantly in the Katipunan alongside Andres Bonifacio. As we set a date to commemorate the life and times of young martyrs, let us also remember the guerrillas who persisted in the resistance against the Japanese invaders, many of whom were in the prime of their youth. Let us remember those youths who, in the years after the lifting of Martial Law, continued to fight for the oppressed and the marginalized even if it meant early death.

At a time when our youth are continuously bombarded by the temptation of pragmatism and a comfortable life of individualism and careerism, and at a time when our people continue to suffer socio-economic and political crises, let our young martyrs from the past to present serve as an inspiration for them to always be ready to make selfless sacrifices whenever necessary.

In this light, the passage of this bill – which was first filed by my predecessor former Kabataan Rep. Raymond Palatino – is earnestly sought.



HON. TERRY L. RIDON
Representative, Kabataan Party-list

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Young Martyrs’ Day Act of 2014.”
2

3 **SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It shall be the declared policy of the State to incalculable and
4 foster among the young Filipinos patriotism, nationalism, and appreciation of the role of national
5 heroes and symbols in the historical development of the nation.
6

7 **SECTION 2.** September 20 of every year is hereby declared as the National Young Martyrs’ Day
8 to commemorate many young Filipinos who offered their lives in the struggle for national liberation
9 and social change.
10

11 **SECTION 3.** The National Young Martyrs’ Day shall concurrently be called “Edgar Jopson Day”
12 in commemoration of the renowned nationalist student leader who was captured and shot by the
13 military on September 20, 1982.
14

15 **SECTION 4.** The National Youth Commission, in coordination with the National Union of Students
16 of the Philippines (NUSP) and other national youth organizations, is hereby tasked to plan, fund
17 and execute appropriate programs and activities to carry out the aim of this commemoration.
18

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

- 1 **SECTION 6. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete
2 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Adopted,