

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila
Sixteen Congress
Second Regular Session
House Bill No. **5110**



Introduced by Hon. LEOPOLDO N. BATAOIL

EXPLANATORY NOTE

"While a people preserve its language; it preserves the marks of liberty."

-- EL FILIBUSTERISMO, 1887

Pedro Chirino (1557-1635) served in the Philippines for 12 years. He arrived in May 1590 and left in July 1602, and thus saw and described the Philippines and the Filipinos during the early years of the Spanish conquest. Perhaps the most cited chapter in his work concerns the pre-Spanish writing or baybayin.

In "Relacion de Las Islas Filipinas" by Pedro Chirino, which was originally published in Rome in 1604 and made more accessible in a bilingual edition of 1969 with a translation from the original Spanish by Ramon Echevarria.

Here Chirino stated that: "So accustomed are all these islanders to writing and reading that there is scarcely a man, and much less a woman, who cannot read and write in letters proper to the island of Manila, very different from those of China, Japan, or India." He even drew the various letters of the baybayin, explaining how this was written and read.

The importance of writing in general and of the alphabet in particular for the preservation and progress of civilization is incalculable. As University of Chicago scholar I. J. GELB has declared: "Writing is so important in our daily life that i should be willing to say that our civilization could exist more easily without money, metals, radios, steam engines, or electricity than without writing." Before the invention of writing, the preservation of history, literature, and tradition was dependent upon fallible oral transmission and faulty human memory.

It is no wonder that the seven ancient peoples (Sumerians, Egyptians, Elamites, Indians, Cretans, Hittites, and Chinese) who devised the earliest forms of true writing considered the art of writing to be a gift or invention of God or the gods. "Writing is among the greatest inventions in human history, perhaps the greatest invention, since it made history possible." Thus Andrew Robinson, literary editor of the (London) Times Higher Education Supplement, introduces his scholarly and fascinating study of alphabets, hieroglyphics and pictograms.

Thus, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


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AN ACT
DECLARING “BAYBAYIN” AS THE NATIONAL WRITING SYSTEM
OF THE PHILIPPINES, PROVIDING FOR ITS PROMOTION, PROTECTION,
PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

SEC. 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “National Writing System Act of 2014”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to inculcate, propagate and preserve the cultural heritage and treasures of the Philippines for the evolution and development of patriotism among the citizenry by giving utmost priority to the conservation and promotion of arts, letters and culture. Towards this end, there is a need to promote, protect, preserve and conserve “Baybayin” as the National Writing System of the Philippines, using it as a tool for cultural and economic development to create a consciousness, respect and pride for the legacies of Filipino cultural history, heritage and our authentic identity.

SEC. 3. Declaration of “Baybayin” as the National Writing System of the Philippines. – To generate greater awareness on the plight of “Baybayin” and foster wider appreciation on its importance and beauty, “Baybayin” is hereby declared the National Writing System of the Philippines. As used in this Act, “Baybayin” shall refer to all existing and discovered ancient and traditional scripts of the Philippine indigenous peoples.

SEC. 4. Promotion of “Baybayin” as the National Writing System of the Philippines. – “Baybayin” as the national writing system representing Philippine traditions and national identity shall be promoted through the following:

- (a) by requiring all manufacturers of locally produced processed food products to inscribe “Baybayin” scripts and their translation on the containers or labels;
- (b) by mandating the local government units (LGUs) to include the appropriate “Baybayin” script in their signage for street names, public facilities, public buildings, and other necessary signage for other public service establishments such as hospitals, fire and police stations, community centers and government halls;
- (c) by requiring newspaper and magazine publishers to include a “Baybayin” translation of their official name; and
- (d) by directing the appropriate government agency to disseminate knowledge and information about “Baybayin” script by distributing reading materials in all levels of public and private educational institutions and all government and private agencies and offices to instil awareness of the declaration of “Baybayin” as the national writing system and to conduct staff trainings for the proper handling of these important documents.

SEC. 5. Protection, Preservation and Conservation of “Baybayin” Script. – The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is hereby mandated to protect, preserve and conserve “baybayin” as a National Cultural Treasure.

SEC. 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher

Education (CHED), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. – If any part, section or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other part, section or provision not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. - Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.