

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7466

Introduced by Hon. Salvador B. Belaro Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Despite the fact that the Philippines is regarded as one of the largest English-speaking countries in the world, there are studies showing English proficiency of our graduates to be declining.

For instance, in the two-year study conducted by Hopkins International Partners based on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Filipino university graduates averaged only 630, a far cry from the 850 passable score required by BPO companies, an outcome lower than the competency requirement for taxi drivers in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Filipino graduates also averaged a Common European Framework of Reference of Language (CEFR) grade of B1, lower than the CEFR B2 proficiency target set for high school graduates in Thailand and Viet Nam. The same report indicated that the Filipino university graduates' median score was comparable to the proficiency of 5th and 6th grade students from English-speaking countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

This development jeopardizes the burgeoning business process outsourcing industry in our country, among others, which principally depends on the strong English proficiency of our human resources.

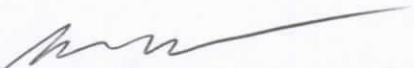
In addition, the decline in our English proficiency jeopardizes our being a global supplier of prime English-proficient manpower, a fact which have continuously pumped in deeply needed dollar remittances to our economy.

This decline may be traceable to the policy of the Department of Education to use the mother tongue in the various regions of the country as medium of *instruction in our schools*.

Also, while Filipino, our national language is supposed to grow simultaneously with English, what is happening is that the promotion of Filipino is being done at the expense of teaching English in our schools.

Finally, another reason for this decline is the lack of constitutional guidance on the use of English, despite the presence of Article XIV, Section 7 of the Constitution, which provides that "For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law." By the very wording of this section, the status of English as a medium of instruction, commerce and industry in our country is being placed in shaky grounds as it is not that promotive of the use of the English *language in our country*.

On the basis of the foregoing, this bill aims to be the enabling law that will affirm English as one of the official languages of our country and that will be the source of clear-cut government policy on a planned and purposive promotion of English as the lingua franca of instruction, commerce and industry.


CONG. SALVADOR B. BELARO, JR.
Representative
1-Ang Edukasyon Party List

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AN ACT
AFFIRMING ENGLISH AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF OUR
COUNTRY AND PROMOTING AND STRENGTHENING ENGLISH AS
THE LINGUA FRANCA OF INSTRUCTION, COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the “Strengthening of English Proficiency Act of 2018”.

SECTION 2. English, together with Filipino, is hereby categorically affirmed as an official language of the Philippines and, as much as possible, it shall be the language of instruction in our schools, and shall be the lingua franca not only of instruction, but also of commerce and industry.

SECTION 3. For this purpose, all grade levels in our educational system shall make use of English as the language of instruction, except in the teaching of Filipino which shall be maintained as a separate subject in the school curriculum.

SECTION 4. The Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) shall undertake measures to further strengthen the English proficiency of our students through the following measures, viz:

- a) Evaluation, assessment and review of curricula;
- b) Promotion and strengthening of the use of English in all levels of our educational system;
- c) Improvement of student modules in English and its key components;
- d) All other matters which are necessary to strengthen the English proficiency of our students, teachers, and the entire population.

SECTION 5. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) are hereby tasked to formulate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SECTION 6. An initial amount of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00) necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act upon the effectivity of this Act. Thereafter, the amount of Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) shall be appropriated regularly and shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. If any provision hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 8. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. This act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,