

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7543



Introduced by HON. LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

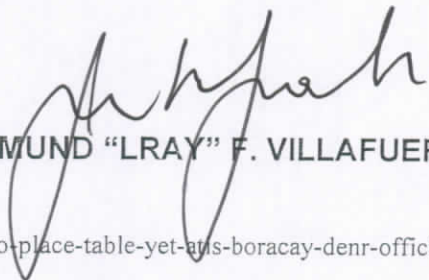
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Philippine history is riddled with stories about the struggle of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and the challenge of being interwoven into modern society—all at the expense of their ancestral lands and rich culture. News of IPs being driven out of their homes are still prominent in mainstream media. Most recently, the grant of land to the Atis of Boracay is facing a road block as the said grant is being challenged and verification has been slow¹. This is in spite of the recognition of their rights through Republic Act No. 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997.

Ancestral domain is only one challenge to the estimated 17 million IPs scattered across the country. Basic social services remain barely at reach for IPs and Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs), owing largely to the geographical location of the 110 ethno-linguistic IP groups. The bill proposed aims to resolve this by establishing resource centers for IPs and ICCs, taking into account their ethnological locations.

It aims to provide government services to the poorest and disadvantaged and promote efficient delivery of services in recognition of the importance of our IPs rights. Further, it intends to address the lack of basic government functions being provided to IPs and ICCs by catalyzing relevant government agencies and involve them in the participator programs proposed. It is the hope of this representation that through this legislation, the impact of government services is felt by everyone regardless of location.

The approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


LUIS RAYMUND "LRAY" F. VILLAFUERTE, JR.

¹ <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2018/04/12/1805307/no-place-table-yet-atis-boracay-denr-official-admits>

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING RESOURCE CENTERS FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURAL
COMMUNITIES/INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO ENHANCE AND ENSURE
DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Resource Centers for Indigenous Peoples Act of 2018."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall recognize, respect and protect the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs)/Indigenous Peoples (IPs), to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national laws and policies; Furthermore, the State shall take measures, with the participation of the ICCs/IPs concerned, to protect their rights and guarantee respect for their cultural integrity, and to ensure that members of the ICCs/IPs benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the population.

SECTION 3. *Establishment of Resource Centers for ICCs/IPs.* – There shall be established ICCs/IPs Resource Centers, hereinafter referred to as the "Center", in such strategic places as may be determined by the National Commission on

Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), hereinafter referred to as the "Commission", taking into consideration their ethnological locations.

SECTION 4. *Staff and Components of the ICC/IP Resource Centers.* – The Commission shall designate in every Resource Center a Chief Coordinating Officer. Concerned government departments and agencies and local governments shall assign staff members to the Resource Centers.

SECTION 5. *Composition and Functions of the Center.* – The Center shall be composed of the following three (3) major service areas with their respective functions, namely:

- a) Statistical Service Area – Documentation and recognition of ICCs/IPs, their Indigenous knowledge, systems and practices, political structures and customary laws through census, appraisal and baseline reports and libraries;
- b) Human Development Index Service Area – Addressing of problems of ICCs/IPs and provision of basic and necessary services through link-up with concerned government department and agencies, such as training programs, scholarship grants, employment, livelihood and enterprises and health services; and
- c) Domains Management Service Area – Promotion of participatory programs, projects and activities for ICCs/IPs to effectively deliver their responsibility of maintaining ecological balance, restore denuded areas, observing laws and ensuring the implementation of the Ancestral Domains Sustainable Development and Protections Plans and such other existing programs.

SECTION 6. *Monitoring Progress and Implementation and Impact of this Act.* – The Commission shall submit to Congress every three (3) years or as determined in the implementing rules and regulations, an annual report of its accomplishments.

SECTION 7. *Funding.* – The initial funding requirements for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the agencies concerned. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued

implementation shall be included in the agencies yearly budgets under the General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* – Within ninety (90) days after the approval of this Act, the Commission, shall issue the necessary Rules and Regulations for the effective implementation of this Act, in coordination with the following concerned government agencies to wit:

- a. Local Government Units;
- b. Philippine Statistics Authority;
- c. Department of Social Welfare and Development;
- d. Technical Education and Skills and Development Authority;
- e. Department of Education;
- f. Commission on Higher Education;
- g. Commission on Human Rights;
- h. Department of Justice;
- i. Department of Labor and Employment;
- j. Department of Trade and Industry;
- k. Department of Health;
- l. Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- m. Department of Agriculture;
- n. Land Management Bureau;
- o. Land Registration Authority.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision herein be declared unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Act.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect in fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in one (1) newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,