

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 9006



Introduced by Representative Salvador B. Belaro Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 6 of the Constitution clearly states that the national language of the Philippines is Filipino, and provides that the government should take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system, subject to provisions of law and as the Congress may deem appropriate.

The fundamental law, under Section 7 of the same article, further mandates that “for purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English”.

Consistent with the abovementioned constitutional mandate, as well as, the issuances of the then Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), now Department of Education (DepEd), the country adhered to the Policy on Bilingual Education. Said policy sought the achievement of competence in both Filipino and English through the teaching of both languages and their use as media of instruction at all levels.

The goals of the Bilingual Education Policy include:

1. Enhanced learning through two languages to achieve quality education as called for by the 1987 Constitution;
2. Propagation of Filipino as a language of literacy;
3. Development of Filipino as a linguistic symbol of national unity and identity;
4. Cultivation and elaboration of Filipino as a language of scholarly discourse that is to say, its continuing intellectualization; and
5. Maintenance of English as an international language for the Philippines and as a non-exclusive language of science and technology. (DO 52, S. 1987 – The 1987 Policy On Bilingual Education)

Notably, DECS' DO 52 clarified that the continuing improvement in the teaching of both languages shall be the responsibility of the whole educational system, and that tertiary level institutions shall lead in the continuing intellectualization of Filipino.

Later, Republic Act No. 7722 or "Higher Education Act of 1994" was enacted. It created the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) with jurisdiction over public and private institutions of higher education as well as degree-granting programs in all post-secondary educational institutions, public and private. Interestingly, the language policy of CHED (CMO 59 s, 1996) remained in consonance with the Bilingual Education Policy embodied in DECS order No. 52.

Then came the enactment of Republic Act No. 10533 or the K to 12 law, and the issuance of the corresponding CHED Memorandum Order No. 20, Series of 2013 which excluded the study of Filipino, Panitikan, and the Philippine Constitution as core subjects. The changes in the General Education curriculum were apparently made to ensure that there would be no duplication of subjects in Grade 1 to 10, senior high school, and college. However, many disagreed with the memorandum order and viewed the move to be inimical to the preservation of Filipino language as a symbol of national unity and identity. Thus, numerous petition were lodged with the Supreme Court (SC) assailing, among others, the constitutionality of said CHED order.

On October 9, 2018, the SC *en banc* promulgated its decision on the consolidated petitions. In upholding the constitutionality of CMO 20, Series of 2013, the Court pointed out three (3) salient points: (1) CHED, under RA 7722, is authorized to determine the (a) minimum unit requirements for specific academic programs, (b) general education distribution requirements, and (c) specific professional subjects; (2) the study of Filipino, Panitikan and the Constitution are already found in the basic education curriculum pursuant to RA 10533; and (3) in the tertiary level, nothing in the stated laws require that Filipino and Panitikan must be included as subjects, and that the study of Filipino can easily be included as courses of study in the tertiary level, if higher education institutions (HEIs) decide to do so. Evidently, the SC ruling merely interprets what the law is and not what the law should be. It merely says that the inclusion of Filipino subjects in the tertiary curricula is discretionary on the part of the HEIs, thus it does not preclude Congress from taking away that discretion.

In these times of strong attachment to social media, and almost total reliance to the internet, as well as, the Filipino's fondness to the culture and language of other countries like USA, South Korea, etc., it is not difficult for us to lose our identity as a nation. Indeed, our national language is an unseen bond that ties us together, the soul of the country that would remain resilient as long as it is cherished and protected, not only for us present to day but more importantly for generations to come.

In order to guide the CHED in the exercise of its functions, and do away with the exercise of discretion on the part of HEIs, this proposal seeks to ensure the inclusion of Filipino and Panitikan subjects in the tertiary curricula, in consultation with the Commission on Filipino Language. The measure hopes to ensure the development. Enhancement, propagation, and preservation of Filipino and other Philippine language.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



CONG. SALVADOR B. BELARO, JR.

Representative

1-Ang Edukasyon Party List

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9006

Introduced by: Hon. Salvador B. Belaro Jr.

AN ACT
MANDATING THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION TO
INCLUDE FILIPINO AND PANITIKAN SUBJECTS IN THE TERTIARY
EDUCATION CURRICULA

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 “Inclusion of Filipino and Panitikan in the College Curriculum Act of 2019”.

SECTION 2. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure and promote the evaluation, development and further enrichment of Filipino language.

SECTION 3. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall ensure the inclusion of Filipino and Panitikan subjects in the tertiary curricula. It shall undertake consultations with other national government agencies such as the Professional Regulation Commission and the Commission on Filipino Language, and other stakeholders such as the private and public schools associations, the national student organizations, the national teacher organizations, the parents-teachers associations and the chambers of commerce on matters affecting them.

SECTION 4. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Adopted,