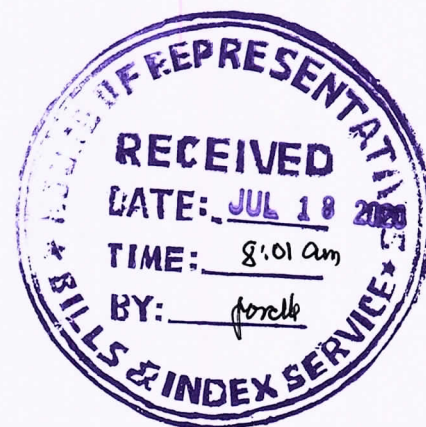


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7119



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines Constitution recognizes the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of the rights of indigenous peoples (IPs). In addition, the Republic Act No. 8371, also known as the “Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997” or IPRA, upholds the right of IPs to manage their ancestral domains, and has become the cornerstone of current national policies on indigenous peoples.

Majority of the estimated 14-17 million population of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) and Indigenous People (IPs) in the Philippines reside in the uplands which they claim are part of their traditional territories. They are mainly concentrated in Northern Luzon especially the Cordillera Administrative Region (33%), and Mindanao (61%), with some groups in the Visayas area¹. The indigenous communities represent nearly 16% of the country’s population.

¹ UNDP Philippines. 2013. “Fast Facts: Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines”

https://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/library/democratic_governance/FastFacts-IPs.html

However, despite financial aid and technical assistance from various international donor agencies, they are among the poorest and the most disadvantaged social groups in the country. As a result, the incidence of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty is much higher among the IPs, compared to the rest of the population. One of the major causes of their deprivation on access to basic services is the remoteness of the IP settlements and residence from main service delivery areas.

Considering the above premises, it is of vital importance that resource centers be established in every region of the country covering all settlements and residence of ICCs and IPs which are ethnographically determined by the National Commission for Indigenous People (NCIP). These centers shall enhance and ensure the delivery of basic, social, technical, and legal services to the ICCs/IPs.

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



ALFRED VARGAS

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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.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall recognize, respect, and protect the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) and Indigenous People (IPs), to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions. The State shall consider their 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 ICCPs/IPs.* – There shall be established ICC/IP Resource Centers, hereinafter referred to as the “Center”, in such strategic places in every region of the country 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 Center.

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 structure and customary laws through census, appraisal and baseline reports and libraries;
- (b) **Human Development Index Service Area** – Addressing of problems of concerned government department and agencies, such as training programs, scholarship grants, employment, livelihood and enterprises and health services; and
- (c) **Domains Management Services 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. *Appropriations.* – The initial funding requirement 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.

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – 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:

- Local Government Units (LGUs);
- Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA);
- Department of Social Welfare Development (DSWD);
- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA);
- Department of Education (DepEd);
- Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- Commission on Human Rights (CHR);
- Department of Justice (DOJ);
- Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
- Department of Health (DOH);
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
- Department of Agriculture (DA);
- Land Management Bureau (LMB);
- Land Registration Authority (LRA);

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, rules and regulations or part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modify accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section or provision of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, no other part, section or provisions thereof shall be affected thereby.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or two (2) newspapers of general circulation

Approved,