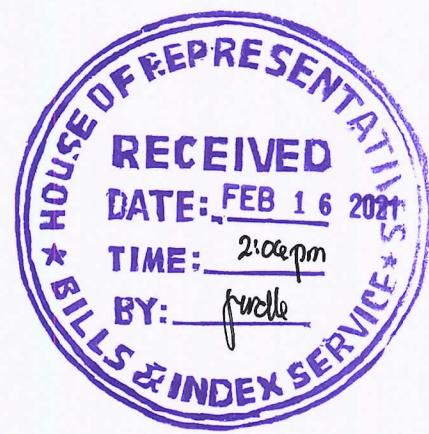




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8738

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representatives
EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA and DOMINGO C. RIVERA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippine Constitution, being the supreme law of the land, recognizes that "in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and secure to ourselves and our posterity, the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace," [we] the sovereign Filipino people implore the aid of the Almighty God.¹ The same Constitution mandates that "no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" and that "the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed."²

¹ Preamble, 1987 Philippine Constitution

² Section 5, Article 3, 1987 Constitution

According to the U.S. Department of State's Philippines 2019 International Religious Freedom Report, the 2015 census (the most recent) conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that 79.5% of the population is Roman Catholic and 9% belong to other Christian groups, including Seventh-day Adventists, United Church of Christ, United Methodists, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Bible Baptist Church, other Protestant churches, Jehovah's Witnesses, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Other Christian groups include locally established churches such as the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ), Philippine Independent Church (Aglipayan), Members Church of God International, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and the Name Above Every Name. Approximately 6% of the population is Muslim according to the PSA though the Office of the President's National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) estimates that Muslims account for 10% to 11% of the population. The NCMF attributes the higher estimate to a number of factors: the reluctance of Muslims to officially register with the civil registrar office or to participate in the formal survey, the community's transience due to internal movement for work, and the government's failure to survey Muslim areas and communities thoroughly.³ This establishes that approximately more than 90% of Filipinos believe in God, with the great majority worshipping the Christian God.

As a people who believe in God, and as expressed in and recognized by no less than our Constitution, this bill seeks to implore the aid of Almighty God by institutionalizing the act of prayer as an integral part of the daily activities in each and every government and/or public institution.

This bill is not to be construed as a legislation to advance any specific religion, but as an inter-religious concurrence to what is already recognized by our Constitution that we, as a people, implore the aid of Almighty God.

³ U.S. Department of State's Philippines 2019 International Religious Freedom Report

No less than the preamble of our Constitution emphasizes the necessity that we, as a people, implore the aid of Almighty God, who in the Holy Bible had said, "if My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."⁴ And who furthermore ascertained that, "Apart from Me you can do nothing."⁵ And the same God of the Bible points out that, "You do not have because you do not ask God"⁶, highlighting the need for us to come to Him in prayer.

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


HON. EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA


HON. DOMINGO C. RIVERA

⁴ 2 Chronicles 7:14, The Holy Bible

⁵ John 15:5, The Holy Bible

⁶ James 4:2, The Holy Bible



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House Bill No. 8738

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representatives
Eduardo “Bro. Eddie” C. Villanueva and Domingo C. Rivera

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING PRAYER AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF
AGENDA OF EVERY MEETING OR ACTIVITY IN THE GOVERNMENT
AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act shall be known as the
2 **“PAMAHALAANG NAGDARASAL” Act.**

3
4 **Section 2. Declaration of Policy.** The Constitution states that we
5 are a sovereign people imploring the aid of Almighty God and upholding
6 the supreme law of the land in order to build a just and humane society
7 and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals aspirations,
8 promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and
9 secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of independence and
10 democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom,
11 love, equality, and peace.

Moreover, the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights, and the Constitution guarantees that no law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed.

Section 3. Definition of Terms. As used in this Act:

(a) *Prayer* refers to a spoken discourse or an act of calling out to an Almighty God or a transcendent or divine authority for the purpose of imploring the aid of and/or expressing thanksgiving to the same. For the purpose of this Act and as much as possible, prayer shall be interfaith or interreligious in nature which means it shall be inclusive of different religious traditions and/or spiritual or humanistic beliefs

(b) *Government* refers to the:

- a. National Government encompassing its executive, legislative and judicial branches including all of its respective departments, bureaus, offices and/or instrumentality;
- b. Local Government Units (LGUs); and
- c. Government-owned-controlled-corporations (GOCCs);

(c) *Public Institutions* refers to all entities established, controlled or supervised by the government such as public schools

Section 4. Institutionalizing Prayer in the Government and Public Institutions. Prayer is hereby encouraged to be constantly included in the agenda of every meeting or activity in the government and public institutions, institutionalizing it as an integral part of the agenda of every meeting or activity in the government and public institutions.

Section 5. Covered meetings and activities of this Act. Prayer shall be encouraged as a constant inclusion, an integral part of the following meeting or activity of the government and public institutions:

- a. State of the Nation Address (SONA) of the President;
- b. Meetings of the Cabinet;
- c. Sessions and committee hearings of Congress;
- d. Sessions and hearings of the Supreme Court and its lower courts;
- e. Sessions and hearings of the respective councils and bodies of LGUs;
- f. Flag ceremonies in the government and all public institutions;
- g. Classes and programs in all public schools; and
- h. Any other meeting, program or activity as maybe identified by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) or other pertinent government agencies over their respective jurisdiction as provided by law.

Section 6. Implementing rules and regulations and the Civil Service Commission as the lead agency in the implementation of this Act. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the CSC, Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in coordination and consultation with other concerned government agencies and relevant stakeholders, shall jointly formulate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

The CSC shall serve as the lead agency in the implementation of this Act. Subject to the approval of the President, the CSC shall promulgate and issue standard procedures, guidelines as well as system of sanctions necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 7. Inviolability of the separation of Church and State. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect or diminish, in any way, the meaning and intent of Section 5, Article 3 of the 1987 Constitution, which prohibits the State to favor or advance any specific religion nor shall any government official or employee be subjected into penalty or sanction for non-participation in prayer mandated by this Act.

Section 8. Separability Clause. Should any provision of this Act or any part thereof be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions, insofar as they are separable from the invalid and unconstitutional ones, shall remain in full force and effect.

1
2 **Section 9. Repealing Clause.** All laws, orders, issuances, rules
3 and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby
4 repealed or modified accordingly.

5
6 **Section 10. Effectivity.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
7 after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2)
8 newspapers of general circulation.

9
10
11 **Approved,**