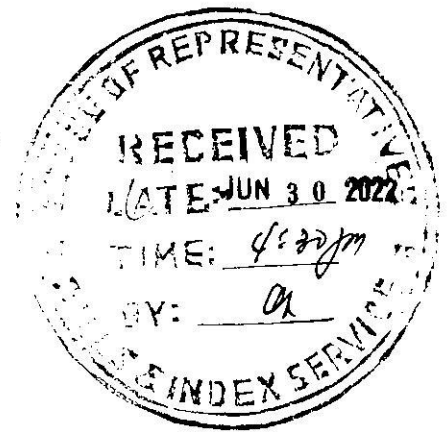


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 350



Introduced by Honorable Danilo Ramon S. Fernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The issues of federalism and parliamentary form of government are once again being thrust into the national conversation.

To most of our countrymen, however, federalism remains to be a dense and difficult topic. It is not difficult to understand why there has not been a groundswell of support for federalism. It is a system of governance that is new to most Filipinos who have never experienced any political system other than a unitary or highly centralized form of governance. Compounding the problem is the fact that there is no "standard federal form of government" in the world - each country with a federal set-up has distinctive characteristics adapted or suited to its own political realities or dynamics. To illustrate, the system prevailing in the Federal Republic of Germany is different from the one in place in the United States of America or those being practiced in Malaysia and Australia.

On the other hand, when it comes to the parliamentary form of government, the Philippines had a very brief experience under that set-up during the Marcos-Virata period. And similar to the federalist question, proponents have to make a choice which to adopt as between the British or the French model.

If the federal-parliamentary form of government is to take root in the Philippines, it is indispensable that policy-makers institutionalize a massive information program to familiarize Filipinos as to the merits of this laudable social experimentation. More fundamentally, it is vital to integrate in the formal education sector the teaching of this ground-breaking form of public administration. A mandatory subject in the higher education curriculum on "Modern Political Systems" that would focus on federalism and the parliamentary

form of governance would be a first step in orienting our countrymen as to the mechanics of this political innovation.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that the proposed new required course in the tertiary level should be separate and distinct from all the other existing subjects in political science or public administration. If we need to remember the lessons learned in the mandatory teaching of the Rizal course, when colleges resorted to teaching the life, works and writings of our national hero merely aspart of the "Philippine Government and History" or the "Philippine Constitution and Government" subjects in the general education course, only a cursory knowledge of Dr. Jose Rizal was attained among students. When too much material is compressed into a subject designed to be completed within one semester, the noble objectives of our educational system could only be compromised.

The present collegiate courses in political science and public administration offer a scant acquaintance and shallow familiarity with federalism and parliamentary systems. In their attempts to provide an overview or a grand sweep of ideas on democracy, freedoms, political economy, etc., these subjects could not afford to provide the Filipino youth a working knowledge of the complex concepts of federalism and parliamentary governance. On the other hand, political leaders and their staff have been called upon to attend multiple symposia, seminars and lectures on federalism. These however are mere crash courses which, at best, could only offer a segmented or disjointed view of the federalist paradigm. If federalism is to become engrafted or ingrained into the political culture of Filipinos, the same could only be attained through measured or calculated steps. We need to build a momentum first and, thereafter, sustain that momentum so that federalist values could seep into the consciousness of our countrymen. We are in for the long haul, so to speak. And that steady momentum could only be built up through the formal educational system.

In order to ensure therefore the success of the federalist experiment, it is imperative that we make a thorough or in-depth study of that new political template an integral part of our formal school system.

In view of all the foregoing considerations, the early approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



DANILO RAMON S. FERNANDEZ
Lone District of Santa Rosa City

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

Nineteenth Congress
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HOUSE BILL NO. 350

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED)
TO INCLUDE A COURSE ON MODERN POLITICAL SYSTEMS, WITH
EMPHASIS ON FEDERALISM AND PARLIAMENTARY FORMS OF
GOVERNMENT, AS A MANDATORY SUBJECT IN THE HIGHER
EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Modern Political Systems Studies Act."

SEC. 2. *Higher Education Curriculum.* - For purposes of this Act, the term "higher education curriculum" shall refer to the general education curriculum designed for students taking up courses leading to a degree.

SEC. 3. *Inclusion of a Course on "Modern Political Systems" as a Mandatory Subject in the Higher Education Curriculum.* – Pursuant to its Mandate under Republic Act 7722 or the "Higher Education Act of 1994", the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is hereby mandated to develop a course on "Modern Political Systems" as a mandatory subject in the higher education curriculum.

Further, the CHED shall encourage the preparation and publication of textbooks and other instructional materials in support of the objectives of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Course Content.* -In the process of curriculum development and the preparation and publication of textbooks and other pertinent reading materials on Modern Political Systems, the CHED shall ensure that emphasis would be given to the teaching of federalism, parliamentary forms of government and other aspects of modern governance. The subject "Modern Political Systems" shall be separate and distinct from all other existing courses on political science and public administration, and shall not in any manner be absorbed, merged with or subsumed under the latter.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Chairperson of the CHED shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Repealing clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC.7. *Effectivity clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication either in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,