

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
 First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 423



Introduced by Representative **CARLITO S. MARQUEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This refiled bill seeks the establishment of the Piña Handloom Weaving Development Program (PHWDP) by creating the training center to help boost the country's beleaguered piña handloom weaving industry in the country and to improve the competitiveness of its products.

This proposed measure was approved and passed by the House of Representatives on 27 January 2020 and likewise transmitted to and received by the Senate on 28 January 2020.

There is more to the western part of Panay than Boracay. In fact, there are many interesting places in the provinces of Aklan, Antique and western Iloilo that just amaze without driving all the way to Caticlán. Ruins, churches, food and rowdy festivals are there waiting. Aklan is proud of its *piña* (pineapple) fiber. So much so that products derived from processing these fibers into fabrics is one, if not its top export industry: barong tagalog and baro't saya, the Philippines' national dress for men and women, worn by presidents and celebrities; bags and mats; shawls and other Filipiniana items that are prized by tourists and designers here and abroad.

It is a whole cottage industry that has given hope to idle wives and retirees and poor families that derive their income from preparing, weaving, making products from *piña* fibers. It is even safe to say that in many towns in the province, there is a community of weavers and craftsmen busily meeting an order.

Piña-weaving in Aklan is an age-old tradition handed down from generations. It dates back during the Spanish colonial era. In the 1970's, demand for products from *piña* fibers was realized and from that time, when Aklan started its own industry by having government agencies train Aklanons to fuel the local economy. In fact, Aklan is known as

the Piña Fiber capital of the Philippines. Kalibo's piña cloth was said to be traded during the Pre-Hispanic times and reached as far as Greece and Egypt during its heyday.

There is no finer and more elegant fiber for the Barong Tagalog than piña fabric. Known as the Queen of Philippine Fabric, the piña fiber is extracted by hand from the leaves of the native pineapple. Each strand is painstakingly knotted by hand and loom woven manually to produce piña cloth that is soft, and usually in ivory color.

The traditional loom weaving industry endures as a source of income and livelihood in this town as residents continuously sustain it despite the occurrence of several modern cloth-making technologies. Thousands of Filipinos are employed in the industry in various capacities. For many marginalized people living in and on the fringes of the piña handloom weaving, particularly indigenous people, piña weaving provides an opportunity to earn cash. Weaving and embroidery jobs enable women, especially, to earn salaries that allow them to be home rather than being forced to travel abroad to become domestic workers. Since piña fabric is hand loomed by only a few weavers, it is very precious and scarce, which also makes it expensive. Piña cloth is simple and elegant. Products created are considered a work of love and patience. Therefore, a piña garment is considered as an heirloom.

Training weavers is difficult, however, since it requires meticulous patience and dedicated practice. Despite the importance of this handloom industry, the industry is in decline. The government also fails in its support for the industry despite the presence of RA 3470 (An Act Creating the National Cottage Industries Development Authority). It failed to organize, revive, encourage, and promote the establishment of piña handloom weaving industry. When craft dies, it is not only the artisans and their businesses that die. With its demise crashes an entire history, legacy, tradition and knowledge.

The PHWDP embodies core programs such as the Investment Promotion and Facilitation; Production Support and Extension; Research and Development; Market Promotion and Development; and the program on Infrastructure Development for the enhancement of the industry.

Under the bill, the PHWDP is designated to be the lead agency responsible for strengthening the collaboration of the various piña handloom weaving industry players and for engineering the development of the piña fiber sector with the objective of reducing poverty and alleviating living conditions at the community level.

The measure directs the PHWDP to maintain a Pinya Handloom and Weaving Information Center, which shall principally serve as the museum, library and digital repository of all information pertaining to piña weaving.

The PHWDP is likewise mandated to create and maintain its own website that will feature the development of piña weaving in the Philippines, a periodic update and reports on the piña weaving project undertaken by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and information focusing on Philippine piña weaving designs and other relevant market information.

As piña fiber weaving gains momentum, thousands of jobs for weavers are created. The key is to increase profits for the local weavers. Global fashion designers are always searching for innovative materials and new ideas to give them an edge in the industry. Piña handloom weaving has the potential to greatly influence fashion. To date though, adequate support for the industry remains a challenge. The government and consumers can play a pivotal role in the re-introduction of piña fabric weaving. This can be further accomplished through the continued efforts of local organizations such as TESDA, PTRI, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Advocate of Philippine Fair Trade, and the Aklan Piña Manufacturers & Traders Association. By continually re-introducing piña to the world through such efforts as the Aklan's Fiber Festival and annual feature presentations in Manila fashion shows, the world is beginning to wake from its sleep. However, piña has yet to secure a global presence. Through the return to their ethnic roots and age-old traditions, the piña salvation is just the beginning to enter the limelight. Businesses are striving to meet current export orders to Japan, Hong Kong, USA, France and UK. International awareness, promotion and marketing of piña cloth will help change the region's economy by putting piña fabric weaving industry on the map.

This will lead to huge potential and economic rewards for indigenous weavers, their families, and their communities. It will raise the standard of living and benefit the country. As yet, though, local profit margins are small, and are likely to remain so until they can propel themselves into the world marketplace. In order to fully revive this traditional industry, cooperatives need to work together for development, funding and international fair trade.

Immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ENGR. CARLITO "Lito" MARQUEZ

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Introduced by Representative **CARLITO S. MARQUEZ**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY (TESDA) TRAINING CENTER IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF
KALIBO, PROVINCE OF AKLAN, TO BE KNOWN AS THE KALIBO, AKLAN
TESDA PIÑA HANDLOOM WEAVING TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT
CENTER, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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 “*Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center Act*”.

SEC. 2. Establishment. – There is hereby established a Technical Education and Skill Development Authority (TESDA) Piña Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center in the Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan, under the supervision of the TESDA, to be known as the Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center. It shall be established in a highly accessible location in the Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan, pursuant to the purposes of this Act and to the mutual agreement between the TESDA and the concerned local government units (LGUs).

SEC. 3. General Mandate. – The Kalibo, Aklan Piña TESDA Handloom Weaving Training and Assessment Center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, shall primarily provide technical-vocational education and training (TVET) programs to students, local residents from low-income families, and out-of-school youths, including persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, in the municipality of Kalibo and adjacent localities in the province of Aklan, to help them become productive, self-reliant and globally competitive labor assets in the art, craft, and trade of handloom weaving, particularly of piña fiber.

The Center shall offer training program on relevant skills competencies, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship activities needed to deliver the effective

employment interventions that will hasten the development of the Municipality of Kalibo and adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan into human resource and productivity hubs in meeting the manpower qualification standards of both local and international labor markets for piña handloom weaving.

The Center shall serve as TESDA-accredited Assessment Center for acquired competences in TVET programs for handloom weaving in the Municipality of Kalibo and adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan. It shall also provide teachers' training and curriculum design assistance to the secondary schools offering the technical-vocational livelihood (TVL) track under the K to 12 Program in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), TESDA, Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI), and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

SEC. 4. Training Programs. — The Center shall offer diverse short-term certificate courses and modular trainings in skills specialization in handloom weaving. To this end, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), PTRI, NCCA, business-industry partners, and such other relevant agencies and instrumentalities, both local and international, shall provide the necessary assistance to enable the Center to develop skilled and competitive manpower to achieve a robust and inclusive economy in the host area and adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan.

The Center may establish research and technology hubs, technology development farms, satellite or extension training centers, and promote mobile training programs for handloom weaving technology, skills standardization, design concepts, and product commercialization geared towards the acquisition of practical livelihood, employable skills, gainful employment, and entrepreneurship in priority areas in the Municipality of Kalibo and adjacent localities in Province of Aklan.

To address the manpower needs for skilled artists, craftsmen, and designers for handloom weaving, the Center shall offer the following TESDA-registered training programs with competencies assessment leading to National Certification Levels I-III:

- a. Skills training in handloom weaving through use of emerging new techniques and methods, and operation of small and medium-scale handloom weaving machinery and equipment, especially for piña hand weaving;
- b. Short-term basic skills trainings and seminars focused on the re-introductions of handloom weaving, revival of traditional handloom weaving techniques and designs, funding and infrastructure support for handloom machines and equipment, and relevant market information on product promotion in both domestic and international trade exposition;

- c. Practical training methods in the use of natural and synthetic fiber materials, piña fiber, modern cloth-making technology, and development and production of alternative handloom weaving materials and sources;
- d. Training programs on handloom weaving design concepts in both indigenous patterns and modern designs, and product diversification and uses, specifically for piña cloth;
- e. Livelihood trainings and small business literacy programs on the institutionalization and commercialization of Philippine handloom weaving training, especially for piña cloth, and end products, in all aspects promoting handloom weaving through research and development, production support and extension, education and training, fiber processing and utilization technologies, market promotion and investment facilitation, infrastructure development, standards implementation and trade regulation, including international demand benchmarking for handloom-made products;
- f. Strengthening collaboration of the various handloom weaving industry stakeholders, and development of the handloom weaving fiber sector;
- g. Basic business literacy training in financial management and marketing, practical accountancy, bookkeeping, office procedures, business processes and application procedures including registration, licensing, documentation, business patent and intellectual property regulation, business financing and investment opportunities sourcing, import-export accreditation, online home-based business operation, and use of social media business marketing; and
- h. Other relevant trainings that may be needed by the people of Kalibo and the Province of Aklan specifically focused on handloom weaving to enhance their capacities for practical livelihood, gainful employment and entrepreneurial activities.

SEC. 5. *Compliance with TESDA Requirements* – The provisions of this Act notwithstanding, the Center shall become operational only upon the determination and certification by the TESDA, through the issuance of a formal recommendation and certificate of compliance, that the Center has satisfactorily complied with the minimum requirements for quality standards prescribed by TESDA governing the following competency assessment criteria:

- a. Standard procedures and guidelines for the establishment and operation of a Center;
- b. Operational sustainability of the Center, in terms of the availability of licensed faculty-trainers and personnel, equipment, training and laboratory

1 facilities, instructional materials, and other standard requirements of a
2 Center;

3 c. Sustainable funding source and allocation of budget requirement;

4 d. Assurance that the training programs offered are fully aligned with the
5 minimum standards of competency-based quality technical-vocational
6 skills technology and the needs of the host area an adjacent communities
7 served in the of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
8 Integration and Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF) for TVET; and

9 e. Compliance with such other TESDA conditionalities and standards in
10 establishing a TESDA-accredited training center, as may be applicable in
11 establishing a Center.

12 **SEC. 6. Administration** – The Center shall be headed by a Technical-Vocational
13 Administrator, under the supervision of the TESDA, who shall render full-time service
14 and be responsible for the administration and operation of the Center.

15 The Technical-Vocational Administrator shall be appointed by the TESDA
16 Director-General in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Civil Service
17 Commission and the qualification requirements for such office.

18 The Technical-Vocational Administrator shall enter into mutual agreements with
19 locally-based private and public counterpart agencies or instrumentalities and persons,
20 subject to approval by the TESDA Director-General, for such assistance as may be
21 necessary to effectively implement this Act.

22 **SEC. 7. Appropriations.** – The TESDA Director General shall include in the
23 Authority's program the operation of the Center, the funding of which shall be included
24 in the annual General Appropriations Act.

25 The LGUs concerned, in consultation with the TESDA, shall set aside from
26 any available local revenue an amount deemed appropriate as annual counterpart fund to
27 support the operation of the Center established herein.

28 **SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days after
29 the approval of this Act, the TESDA shall, in coordination with the DOLE, DTI, DOST,
30 Department of Budget and Management, DILG, NEDA, PTRI, NCCA, concerned LGUs,
31 and such other relevant agencies and industry-business partners of the host locality of
32 Kalibo, prepare and issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective
33 implementation of this Act.

34 **SEC. 9. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason, any section of this Act shall be
35 deemed unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be
36 affected and shall remain in force and in effect.

37 **SEC. 10. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions,
38 rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby
39 repealed or amended accordingly.

1 SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication
2 in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,