

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **3925**



Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution provides,

“SECTION 7. For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and, until otherwise provided by law, English.

The regional languages are the auxiliary official languages in the regions and shall serve as auxiliary media of instruction therein.

Spanish and Arabic shall be promoted on a voluntary and optional basis.”

This bill proposes the suspension of the mandatory use of regional languages as the primary media of instruction in kindergarten to Grade 3, and to relegate said languages as auxiliary media of instruction as provided for by the Constitution, while a comprehensive evaluation and assessment is conducted by the EDCOM II.

In 2013, the use of regional and native languages as the medium of instruction for students in the Kindergarten until Grade 3 was institutionalized with the passing of RA No. 10533. The said law further provides for a transition program wherein Filipino and English shall be gradually introduced to prepare students in Grades 4 to 6 for secondary education where these are the primary languages of instruction. While the intentions of the law to develop the country’s regional languages and make education more accessible and learner-oriented are noble, the Philippine educational system is confronted with several realities that make the current use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction counterproductive.

According to a recent study from the University of the Philippines – Baguio, teachers are confronted with three possible scenarios in the use of the mother tongue. The first is when majority of the students communicate in the regional mother tongue, which is more common in rural areas. The second is when the teacher uses the regional lingua franca but the students use different mother tongues. The third scenario is when the students’ linguistic profiles show that they are more competent with Filipino or English as when either of these two are used at home instead of the regional lingua franca.

The country has proceeded to implement the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction when our education system is not equipped with sufficient teacher training, textbooks, and

other instructional materials to support mother tongue-based multilingual education. The mobility of people and local economic development created many cosmopolitan areas across the country where the local population is now composed of people from different ethno-linguistic backgrounds, and the mandatory use of the regional language instead of the widely understood Filipino or English has become difficult for teachers and learners alike. While it is recognized that the development of regional languages is essential in cultivating the national identity, such can be achieved without imposing upon learners and teachers the use of a regional language they are not proficient in.

On the other hand, a 2000 survey by the Social Weather Station showed that 85% of Filipinos nationwide understand Filipino. Meanwhile, the last survey conducted by SWS on English proficiency was in 2008, which revealed that 76% of Filipinos understand English. In this day of interconnectivity and access to technology, the proficiency of Filipinos nationwide on the use of Filipino and English has significantly improved. These two languages remain to be the most widely used in commerce and mass media. Furthermore, there are readily available instructional materials in Filipino and English, which learners and teachers can use.

A 2019 study of the Philippine Institute for Development Studies also pointed out several problems that confronted the implementation of the MTB-MLE. The implementation inadvertently created the problem of children being taught and teachers being asked to teach in a regional language that may be similar, but not identical to the language they use at home. The difference in dialects among the languages adopted also created conceptual and operational issues including complaints that the children are being taught the archaic version of their own language. A key issue is linguistic diversity in classroom, given that children nowadays are exposed to multiple languages at home and in their community.

The current administration likewise recognizes the need to re-examine the medium of instruction used in schools in order to maintain the advantage that Filipinos have established due to their command of the English language.

The formative years of the students from kindergarten to Grade 3 are crucial in preparing them for personal and academic development. Ultimately it is the development of the learners that would suffer when we impose the mandatory use of the mother tongue when the teachers themselves are not equipped to teach using the standard mother tongue, and the learners are more competent with using Filipino or English or a different dialect of the regional mother tongue.

On July 23, 2022, Republic Act No.11899 lapsed into law which created the EDCOM II for the purpose of undertaking a comprehensive national assessment and evaluation of the performance of the Philippine education sector for the purpose of recommending transformative, concrete and targeted reforms in the sector. This presents an opportunity to finally address the issues and controversies surrounding the implementation of the MTB-MLE policy through a proper forum and with the adequate resources.

Hence, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.


MARK C. GO

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HOUSE BILL NO. **3925**

Introduced by Honorable Mark O. Go

AN ACT SUSPENDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOTHER TONGUE-BASED-MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION (MTB-MLE) POLICY AND MANDATING EDCOM II TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE MTB-MLE POLICY, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11899 OR THE “SECOND CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION (EDCOM II) ACT”

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

SECTION 1. Republic Act No 11899 or the or the “Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) Act”, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec.8. National Assessment and Evaluation; Scope. – Pursuant to Section 4 of this Act, the national assessment and evaluation shall include the following:

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“(g) Reduction of the gap between the learning outcomes of higher education and the required competencies of the world of work through the adoption of a higher education curriculum that is relevant and responsive to the changing demands of industries and the labor market; [and]

“(h) Adoption and use of trends in sectoral quality and performance and evaluation, including new ways of teaching and learning, assessment and certification of knowledge and skills, improvements in education governance, and new architectural and engineering designs for schools and auxiliary facilities[.]; AND

“(I) EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION (MTB-MLE) POLICY INCLUDING ITS IMPACT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND EMPLOYEMNT PREPAREDNESS OF FILIPINO STUDENTS AND DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.”

SEC. 2. The implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) for kindergarten and the first three (3) years of elementary education, as provided in Section 4 of Republic Act No. 10533 of the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013", is hereby suspended, *provided* that Filipino Sign Language (FSL) shall remain the medium of instruction for students with pertinent disabilities. The suspension shall not be lifted until such time that EDCOM II makes a recommendation for reimplementation.

SEC. 3. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Acts are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 4. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

