

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4225



Introduced by Representative Ambrosio "Boy" C. Cruz, Jr.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bocaue Pagoda Festival is a religious celebration observed every first Sunday of July in Bocaue, Bulacan in honor of the Feast of the Holy Cross of Wawa or Mahal na Krus sa Wawa.

The devotion to the Holy Cross of Wawa started when it was found along Bocaue river in 1850 after saving a girl from drowning. According to stories, the girl, while trying hard to save herself from drowning, followed the Holy Cross of Wawa until she was brought ashore.¹ For many, the said incident is proof that the Holy Cross of Wawa, which is now enshrined at St. Martin of Tours Parish Church, is miraculous. Since then, devotees have gathered in throngs to celebrate the Holy Cross of Wawa and thus, the Bocaue Pagoda Festival was born.

Through time, the Bocaue Pagoda Festival has become a time-honored event in the province of Bulacan. Consequently, the festival also constantly evolved such that there are now several activities for everyone to enjoy during the festivities. However, the most anticipated part of the festival is the fluvial procession with the pagoda as its centerpiece. The Holy Cross of Wawa, or its replica, is placed on top of the pagoda. Smaller boats surround the pagoda in a custom called *ligiran*.² For many, this is the pinnacle of the event, the embodiment of the true meaning of the religious celebration that is the Bocaue Pagoda Festival.

With such a perfect mix of religious and cultural celebration, the Bocaue Pagoda Festival has boosted the local tourism in Bocaue in more ways than one. Before the pandemic, up to more than 20,000 tourists would come to Bocaue to attend the festival. Meanwhile, in 2022, the festival still drew more than 5,000 local and outside tourists despite the restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.³

Accordingly, it is important to recognize the importance of the Bocaue Pagoda Festival

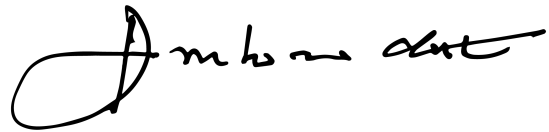
¹ <https://newscorebulacan.net/grandiose-pagoda-sails-again-in-bocaue-rivers/>

² <https://radyonatin.com/story.php?storyid=19750>

³ Supra Note 1.

as part of Bocaue's identity. As such, this bill seeks to declare the Bocaue Pagoda Festival as an official festival in the municipality of Bocaue, Bulacan. Through this measure, the religious and cultural importance of the festival would be institutionalized. A Festival Committee would be created such that there would now be one body that will oversee the implementation of this Act. With this bill, the significance of the Bocaue Pagoda Festival would be further emphasized, not only to the locals of Bocaue, but to the whole country as well.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ambrosio Cruz, Jr.", with a large, stylized initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

AMBROSIO "BOY" C. CRUZ, JR.
Representative, Fifth District of Bulacan

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4225

Introduced by Representative Ambrosio “Boy” C. Cruz, Jr.

**AN ACT DECLARING THE BOCAUE PAGODA FESTIVAL AS AN OFFICIAL
FESTIVAL IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOCAUE, BULACAN 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 “Bocaue Pagoda Festival Act.”

Section 2. *Festival Declaration* – Bocaue Pagoda Festival is hereby declared an official festival in the Municipality of Bocaue, to be celebrated every first Sunday of July every year.

Section 3. *Festival Committee*– There is hereby created a Festival Committee which shall be composed of the following:

- a. The Municipal Mayor as chairperson;
- b. Municipal Vice Mayor;
- c. Representative of the local parish church;
- d. Representative of each administrative district of the LGU;
- e. Representatives of different sector, e.g. youth, women, business, non-government organizations, among others;
- f. Representative from the Department of Tourism (DOT);
- g. Members of the Municipal Tourism Council; and
- h. Members of the Municipal Council for Cultural Heritage and Arts.

The members of the Committee shall be assigned duties and responsibilities based on their capabilities. They shall also organize a secretariat among themselves.

Section 4. *Implementation* – Within sixty (60) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Festival Committee shall formulate and issue the necessary rules and regulation for its implementation.

Section 5. *Funding.* – To carry out the purposes of this Act, there shall be created a special festival fund, which may be sourced from the Internal Revenue Allotment of the Municipality or such other sources in the form of donations and contributions from individuals and organizations.

Section 6. *Separability clause.* - If any provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, such declaration shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Act.

Section 7. *Repealing clause.* - All provisions of laws, presidential decrees, letters of instruction and other presidential issuances which are incompatible or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed amended or repealed.

Section 8. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,