

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL No. 5078

Introduced by
REPRESENTATIVE LANI MERCADO-REVILLA

AN ACT
RECOGNIZING AUGUST 1, 1898 AS THE DAY OF THE PROMULGATION OF THE
SOLEMN DECLARATION OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE AND DECLARING
AUGUST 1 OF EVERY YEAR AS A LEGAL HOLIDAY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On June 12, 1898 the Philippine revolutionary forces led by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed freedom from the Spaniards by establishing a revolutionary government in Kawit, Cavite where the Philippine Flag was waved for the very first time and the Philippine National Anthem, the *Marcha Nacional Filipina* composed by Julian Felipe was sung.

However, recently unearthed historical documents show that the declaration of Philippine Independence which was written and read by Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista on June 12th was not signed by Gen. Aguinaldo, after his proclamation as the president of the revolutionary government. He expressed reservation to the document which indicated that the Philippines will be under the protection of the American government.

When Gen. Aguinaldo established the seat of government, in Bahay na Tisa, dubbed as the "First Malacanan", at the town of Bacoor in the Province of Cavite, his adviser, Apolinario Mabini, wrote a new Declaration of Philippine Independence. This was promulgated and signed at the Bacoor Assembly on August 1, 1898 by 200 municipal presidents (now town mayors), from 16 provinces of the Philippines, and by Gen. Aguinaldo where he was proclaimed as the President of the first Philippine independent government.

On August 6, 1898, then Secretary of the Interior, Leandro Ibarra attested to the existence of the original document entitled *ACTA* (Act of Independence) and was ordered by President Aguinaldo to send the document to foreign governments in order for the Philippines to gain recognition as an independent state.

On September 29, 1898, when Malolos Congress was established, its First Act was the ratification of the Acta Agosto Uno as the Philippines' Act of Independence.

This historical discovery is supported by a duly subscribed copy of ACTA that was recently found in Bahay na Tisa. It is a testament to the actual solemn Declaration of the Philippine Independence that was witnessed and promulgated by civilian leaders from all over the country on August 1, 1898.

Former Prime Minister Cesar Virata, descendant of President Aguinaldo, himself testified to the veracity of the said events. He said that Mabini expressed dissatisfaction with the contents of the June 12th proclamation written by Bautista because it was subservient to the US government, and the event was prepared and attended by the Army, and therefore it was a military affair. Virata further said that Mabini conveyed that foreign states do not recognize military governments, and because of this, Aguinaldo did not affix his signature to the prepared proclamation.

Moreover, this recent historical revelation has been concurred by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and by several historians, such as Dr. Emmanuel Franco Calairo, author of the book *Proclamation Philippine Independence, The Truth About August 1, 1898 Bacoor Assembly*, published by this representation, as then the City Mayor of Bacoor.

This piece of legislation does not intend to revise history, but merely seeks proper recognition of the Bacoor Assembly which took place on August 1, 1898 in Bacoor, Cavite. It aims to memorialize the aspirations of the people who took part in the promulgation of the ACTA, as a solemn Declaration of Philippine Independence signed on said date, which was subsequently ratified by the Malolos Congress on September 29, 1898.

To highlight the importance of the Bacoor Assembly in our history, immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


REP. LANI MERCADO-REVILLA

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

Section 1. August First of every year shall be commemorated as the official day of Promulgation of the Declaration of Philippine Independence, signed and subscribed in Bacoor, Cavite.

Sec. 2. To properly celebrate the occasion, August First of every year shall be declared as a non-working legal holiday. The National Government shall implement appropriate ceremonies in the observance of the signing of the Declaration of Philippine Independence in the Bacoor Assembly at Bahay na Tisa, Bacoor, Cavite.

Sec. 3. Let the Bacoor Assembly, wherein *The ACTA*, the solemn Declaration of Philippine Independence, written by Apolinario Mabini and signed by about 200 municipal presidents from 16 provinces of the Philippines on August 1, 1898, subscribed by Leandro Ibarra, Secretary of the Interior on August 6th, and approved by the President of the revolutionary government President Emilio Aguinaldo, be recognized and written in Philippine history books and curricula of the Department of Education and the Commission of Higher Education as a historical fact and event.

Sec. 4. All laws, presidential decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or any part thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 4. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,