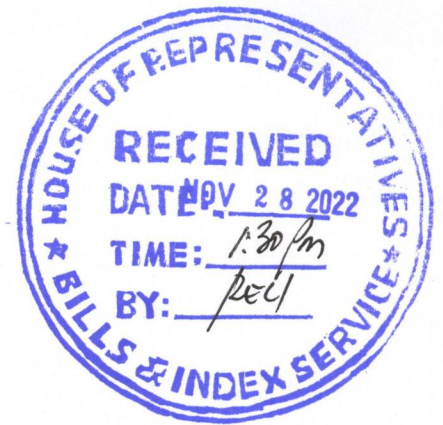


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6402



Introduced by:
HONORABLE KHYMER ADAN T. OLASO
Representative, 1st District, Zamboanga City

HOUSE BILL NO. 6402

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA
REGIONAL ETHNO-LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL STUDIES CENTER, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Sections 14, 15, 16 and 17, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution declare that the State shall foster the preservation, enrichment and dynamic evolution of a Filipino culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression. The Constitution likewise mandates the State to conserve, develop, promote and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations. It further provides that all the country's artistic and historic wealth constitutes the cultural treasure of the nation and shall be under the protection of the State, which may regulate its disposition.

In the pursuit of cultural preservation as a strategy for maintaining Filipino identity, Republic Act (RA) No. 10066 or "An Act Providing for the Protection and Conservation of the National Cultural Heritage, Strengthening the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and its Affiliated Cultural Agencies, and for other purposes" was enacted and had the objectives of protecting, preserving, conserving and promoting the nation's cultural heritage, its property and histories, and the ethnicity of local communities; establishing and strengthening cultural institutions; and protecting cultural workers and ensuring their professional development and well-being.

As stated in its *Declaration of Principles*, RA 10066 underscored the duty of the State to "create a balanced atmosphere where the historic past coexists in harmony with modern society." It emphasized that in addressing the problem of conservation, the approach must be done in an integrated and holistic manner, cutting across all relevant disciplines and technologies and that the State shall further administer the heritage resources in a spirit of stewardship for the inspiration and benefit of the present and future generations." RA 10066 is an umbrella law which provides the guiding principles for further laws that may be crafted to protect, preserve and conserve our cultural heritage.

With the rich cultural heritage of the Zamboanga Peninsula, there is an urgent need for its promotion, conservation and preservation. Take the case of the "*Chabacano*" dialect which is only spoken in the City of Zamboanga. This dialect, as a result of rapid urbanization and development, is now diluted and it will only be a matter of time before this dialect faces the threat of disappearance.

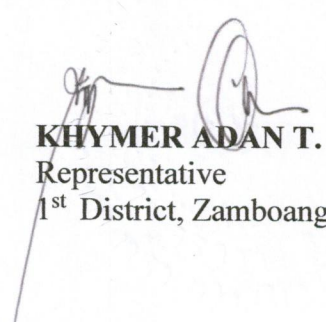
As a background, “chabacano is the general name for a group of Creole languages spoken in the Philippines.” “There are several modalities: the Chabacano of Ermita or Ermiteño which lost its last known speaker a few years ago. Cavite Chabacano may still have a few thousand active speakers. There is a Chabacano (or Ternateño)-speaking community in Ternate. In 1995 there were just over 3,000 speakers, so it is today in a precarious situation due to pressure from the Tagalog language.”¹

“The Chabacano variant of Zamboanga is the one with the most speakers — almost half a million — and until the local government recently decided to act, it was not well regarded among its speakers either. Chabacano, contrary to what we know, “is not broken Spanish for the mere undeniable fact that it is a language with its own grammar and rules, and with its own vocabulary, which includes words from Spanish and several Filipino languages. It is the lack of conjugation of verbs which, in comparison with Spanish, makes the people think that it is just a broken language.”² For the language to survive, it is absolutely crucial that it goes from being a language of familiar use to a language that is present in all institutions, in the news, in the discussions of important topics (like politics, economy or science), in the educational system, in the dubbing of movies, or in the translation of great works of literature.”³

With this, there is a need to establish a regional ethno-linguistic and cultural studies center in the Zamboanga Peninsula that shall serve as a research institution that is mainly focused on the grassroots level of identifying, recognizing, documenting, conserving, preserving and promoting local history, folklore, language and other aspects of cultural heritage through academic, scientific and scholastic approaches.

As Senator Loren Legarda underscored, “it is through learning and appreciating the wealth of our local history and culture that we will be able to better enrich our national identity and achieve more sustainable and inclusive social and economic progress.”

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



KHYMER ADAN T. OLASO
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1st District, Zamboanga City

¹ <https://www.manilatimes.net/2022/11/15/opinion/columns/chabacano-is-not-broken-spanish/1866367>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

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OTHER PURPOSES

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 “*Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Ethno-Linguistic and Cultural Studies Center Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to pursue and support the cultural development of the Filipino people, through the preservation, enrichment and dynamic evolution of Filipino national culture, based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression. Toward this end, it is also declared the policy of the state to recognize the wealth of history and culture of the provinces in the Zamboanga peninsula including those of the cultural communities that it hosts, which is beneficial in strengthening government programs and policies in (a) dispute settlement, (b) addressing stereotypes, (c) unequal opportunities and representations, (d) conserving what has been studied and recovered, and (e) appraising the Zamboangueño identity and pride.

SEC. 3. *Establishment of the Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Ethno-Linguistic and Cultural Studies Center.* There is hereby established the Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Ethno-Linguistic and Cultural Studies Center in the Western Mindanao State University (WeMSU) which shall hereinafter be referred to as the “Center”.

SEC. 4. *Region- and Cultural Community-wide Cooperation.* - Inter-institutional cooperation within and among provinces and institutions of higher learning in the Zamboanga peninsula is highly encouraged to prevent redundancy, duplication and overlapping of functions of existing local studies centers, if there are any.

SEC. 5. *Structure and Staffing Pattern.* - The administration of the Center shall have plantilla positions for a Director, a librarian or archivist, history researchers, anthropologists, and if necessary, a museum curator, museum researchers and conservators. It shall have the liberty to determine its organization and create new divisions or units as it may deem necessary and appoint officers and employees.

SEC. 7. *Composition and Functions of the Center.* – The Center shall be composed of, but not limited to, five (5) major service areas with their respective functions, namely:

- a. Research Service Area – conduct local anthropologic, ethno-linguistic and cultural researches and studies in the Zamboanga Peninsula particularly those of cultural communities therein to document local history, culture and society and contribute in the local policy-making;
- b. Publication Service Area - acts as the leading publisher of local history, culture and society knowledge in the localities and cultural communities in the Zamboanga peninsula, in print and on-line. It shall support the production of educational materials on local history, culture and society, the promotion of vernacular literature and language, and other studies concerning the localities and cultural communities in the peninsula.
- c. Awareness Campaign Service Area – creates and promotes participatory programs, projects and activities to continue and encourage discourse on local history, culture and society, as well as champion or cultivate the laws and policies on cultural heritage to guide the local government units in the Zamboanga peninsula;
- d. Collection Service Area – tasked with the collection building of local historical and cultural resources and the conservation thereof, though:
 - i. Collection of printed materials focusing on publications from local cultural communities of the Zamboanga Peninsula;
 - ii. Gathering available microfilm/microfiche publications;
 - iii. Photoduplication of documents found in government institutions especially the national cultural heritage agencies and in other institutions where data relevant to Zamboanga Peninsula ethno-cultural and linguistics studies are available, here and abroad;
 - iv. Obtaining memoirs and other writing about significant personages and institutions in the Zamboanga Peninsula and its cultural communities;
 - v. Acquisition of materials significant to the enrichment of the Zamboanga Peninsula local history, culture and society scholarship; and
 - vi. Procurement through donations, exchanges or purchases of important historical documents, manuscripts, journals, books, etc.
- e. Oral Traditions Preservation Area – tasked with the collection, documentation, preservation and propagation of the oral traditions and local dialects within the Zamboanga Peninsula

Section 8. *SUC Support to the Center.* – Western Mindanao State University (WeMSU) shall be the host of the Center. It shall

- a. Designate premises conducive and equipped to contain collection of the Center, conduct public programs such as lectures, seminars and exhibits, and entertain researchers and visitors;
- b. Build the collection of the Center by acquiring and purchasing seminal Filipiniana core collection;

- c. Harmonize the university research program with the goals and objectives of the Center;
- d. Encourage localized studies among the faculty and the students to benefit the immediate community where the school is located;
- e. Involve academic, experts and scholars outside WeMSU to contribute in the research and publication activities of the Center; and
- f. Develop policies and programs appraising the quality and scholarship of historical and cultural research and publication for the Center.

Section 9. *Patronage of Publications Produced by the Center* – The dire need for a body of knowledge about the cultural communities of the Zamboanga Peninsula shall be augmented by encouraging the Center to produce regular publications, either by its resident scholars and non-residents. It shall provide at least two copies of each publication produced for deposit at the Historical Data Bank of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), the National Library of the Philippines (NLP), and the University of the Philippines Diliman Filipiniana Library. The Department of Foreign Affairs shall purchase copies of the publications for dissemination to all Sentro Rizal cultural centers in foreign service posts. The local school board and the Department of Education shall do the same for all public and private schools of the immediate schools division and the Department of Interior and Local Government and NLP for the public libraries.

Section 10. *Local Historical Committees Network (LHCN)*. – This existing unit within the NHCP shall develop a comprehensive local and international linkage program that will connect the Center not only with relevant government agencies, non-government organizations and other local and international historical and cultural societies, committees, associations, and councils, whose objectives are in line with the goals and objectives of the Center, but also with the national government, the local governments of the Zamboanga Peninsula and already existing local studies centers.

Section 11. *Representation of the Center*. – The Center must be represented in the Local School Boards and the Local Culture and Arts Councils of the local government units in the Zamboanga Peninsula, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) of the Zamboanga Peninsula Region and other government bodies concerning local history, culture and heritage.

Section 12. *Funding*. – The initial funding requirements for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Western Mindanao State University (WeMSU). Thereafter, such sums as it may deem necessary for its continual implementation shall be included in the institution's yearly budgets under the General Appropriations Act.

Section 13. *Repealing Clause*. – All laws, rules and regulations or part thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 14. *Separability Clause*. – If any part, section or provision of this Act shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 15. *Effectivity Clause*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,