

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

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9110



Introduced by HON. GUS S. TAMBUNTING

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING A NATIONWIDE LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION PROGRAM
AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

No less than the Constitution provides that "[t]he Congress shall establish a national language commission composed of representatives of various regions and disciplines which shall undertake, coordinate, and promote researches for the deveiopment, propagation, and preservation of Filipino and other languages"

It's evident that the Philippines boasts a rich tapestry of languages, with approximately 130 distinct ones. Nevertheless, out of these languages, "nearly 40 are on the brink of extinction, with fewer than 8,000 speakers or less, and are steadily declining as their native languages are no longer the primary choice or are being replaced by Filipino, Ilocano, Cebuano, or other languages in different regions.

In response to this distressing reality of vanishing or endangered languages, the government has initiated and executed programs and policies aimed at preserving, revitalizing, and promoting the use of local languages. Instances of these initiatives are the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) incorporated in Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013," and the Language Immersion Program administered by the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino. Nevertheless, addressing the issue of language extinction necessitates the implementation of a comprehensive nationwide program.

The objective of this proposed measure is to institutionalize a Language Revitalization Program for all endangered or dying languages in the country. This bill mandates the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples to undertake the responsibility of identifying, describing, and mapping all endangered and dying languages in the Philippines. The goal is to create a List of Dying and Endangered Philippine Languages. Additionally, language revitalization centers known as Bahay-Wika will be established in the areas identified in the list. These centers will be responsible for executing language learning and immersion programs for both students and adults, providing teacher training for endangered languages, and developing relevant courses and instructional materials.

On behalf of the people of Parañaque City's Second District, and for the common good of the Filipino people, the approval of the said measure is earnestly sought.



REP. GUS S. TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City

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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 "Bahay-Wika Act of 2023".

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared as a policy of the Government to preserve and revitalize dying and endangered local languages in the Philippines for purposes of affording future generations the use and appreciation the richness and beauty of these languages and the cultures that they underpin.

Sec. 3. *Identification of Dying and Endangered Languages.*-Within one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act, the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino (KWF), in coordination with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), shall undertake a comprehensive research program for the identification, description and mapping of dying and endangered languages in the Philippines. The outcome of this research program shall be the List of Dying and Endangered Philippine Languages, which shall contain information regarding the number of active speakers, the general location of active speakers, the availability of translators, among other data that the concerned agencies deem necessary. This List shall be updated on an annual basis.

Sec. 4. *Establishment of Bahay-Wika.* - On the basis of the List of Dying and Endangered Philippine Languages, the KWF shall undertake the establishment of Bahay-Wika, or a language revitalization center, in the public elementary and secondary schools of the cities or municipalities identified as the areas where a significant number of active speakers still lives.

These centers shall:

- (a) implement extra-curricular classes and seminars on learning and immersing with the dying and endangered language for the students in the respective schools where these

- are stationed. Priority shall be given to students who belong to the indigenous communities that speak said language;
- (b) provide relevant trainings to teachers on how to incorporate the dying and endangered language to the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in the basic education curriculum;
 - (c) provide a program for the teaching of the dying and endangered language to the adult members of the ethnic group; and
 - (d) develop courses and instructional materials, such as books, dictionaries, translations and multi-media tools for learning the dying and endangered language and for instruction using such language.

The personnel complement of these Centers shall be funded by the KWF, including the appointment of at least one language expert based on the qualifications to be set by the KWF. Teachers in the schools where the Centers are stationed may be designated as its staff subject to the grant of additional honoraria and allowances.

Sec. 5. *Annual Report.* - The Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino shall submit to Congress an annual report on the status of the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 6. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued implementation of the language revitalization program shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act not later than ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

Sec. 8. - *Separability Clause.* - Should any provision of this Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance be held invalid, the other provisions or sections of this Act shall not be affected thereby.

Sec. 9. - *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Sec. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,