



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9641



Introduced by **HON. JORGE “PATROL” BUSTOS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Battle of Bessang Pass is one of the most decisive battles between the Japanese forces and Filipino-American soldiers during the World War II and one of the greatest military victories in the history of the Philippines.

Bessang Pass being the last stronghold of the Japanese Army in the Philippines is located in the northern part of the Philippines in Cervantes, Ilocos Sur.

On 14 June 1945, the United States Army Forces in the Philippines-Northern Luzon (USAFIP-NL) guerillas and the Filipino defenders demonstrated bravery and heroism during the historic victory at Bessang Pass in World War II. The capture of Bessang Pass was a significant step towards liberating the northern Philippines from Japanese occupation. This led to the eventual surrender of General Tomoyuki Yamashita, marking the end of Japanese rule in the country.

The Battle of Bessang Pass was won by countless brave soldiers, farmers, ordinary people, including women, who despite the lack of weapons, ammunition and combat training courageously attack the invincible Imperial Japanese Army.

By declaring June 14 of every year as a Special Non-Working Holiday in the Province of Ilocos Sur, the government would initiate programs and activities that will instill a sense of pride and love for our country. This commemoration would also serve as a reminder of the sacrifice of our forefathers and inculcate the youth and future generations to uphold the values of patriotism, courage, and unity.

Likewise, a Resolution No. 0310, series of 2020, was unanimously passed by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Ilocos Sur, expressing their strong support for this declaration. The resolution represents the collective voice of the people of Ilocos Sur. It is also a recognition of the historical significance of the Battle of Bessang Pass and the courage displayed by our heroes who fought for our freedom and independence.

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



JORGE “PATROL” BUSTOS



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AN ACT

DECLARING JUNE 14 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF ILOCOS SUR, TO BE KNOWN AS “BESSANG PASS LIBERATION DAY” IN HONOR OF THE BRAVERY AND HEROISM OF ALL FILIPINO DEFENDERS DURING WORLD WAR II

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

SECTION 1. June 14 of every year is hereby declared a special non-working holiday in the Province of Ilocos Sur in recognition of all Filipino defenders who selflessly fought for our freedom during the Battle of Bessang Pass.

In the event that the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the holiday will be observed on the Monday that follows.

SECTION 2. An annual program of activities for the celebration of “Bessang Pass Liberation Day” shall be prepared and implemented with the Local Government of Ilocos Sur as the lead agency. All heads of concerned government agencies and instrumentalities, local government units, public and private educational institutions, employers in the private sector, and industry associations, shall support the Local Government of Ilocos Sur in all efforts to engage and participate in any activity conducted in celebration of the “Bessang Pass Liberation Day”.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.