

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
 First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 408



Introduced by Representative **JESUS R. MARQUEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks the establishment of a Technical Education and Skills Development Authority Training and Assessment Center in the Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan, with the objective of revitalizing and institutionalizing the piña handloom weaving industry in the locality. It aims to strengthen the industry's value chain, enhance the global competitiveness of its products, and secure sustainable livelihoods for communities engaged in the craft, particularly in the Province of Aklan.

The measure was previously approved by the House of Representatives on 09 August 2023 during the 19th Congress, and transmitted to the Senate on 14 August 2023, having been originally filed by former Congressman Carlito S. Marquez.

While the island of Boracay has brought international recognition to the western part of Panay, there exists a broader cultural and economic landscape in the provinces of Aklan, Antique, and western Iloilo. These areas are home to historical landmarks, vibrant festivals, and enduring artisanal traditions. Among Aklan's most valuable contributions to national heritage is its piña fiber weaving industry, which has historically produced garments such as the *Barong Tagalog* and *Baro't Saya*, bags, mats, shawls, and other *Filipiniana* items highly regarded both locally and abroad.

Piña weaving constitutes an essential cottage industry, sustaining the livelihoods of countless rural families, including women, retirees, and members of indigenous communities. In many towns, clusters of skilled weavers continue to fulfill domestic and export orders, keeping the tradition alive. The craft is a heritage practice dating back to the Spanish colonial era, with records indicating that Kalibo's piña cloth was actively traded as early as the pre-Hispanic period and reached distant markets such as Greece and Egypt.

Known as the Queen of Philippine Fabrics, piña cloth is distinguished by its unique quality, labor-intensive production process, and cultural significance. Fibers are meticulously extracted by hand from native pineapple leaves, knotted manually, and woven using traditional looms. The resulting fabric is lightweight, sheer, and typically

ivory in color. Each garment produced is considered a work of art—an heirloom that embodies patience, craftsmanship, and pride.

Despite its cultural and economic value, the piña weaving industry is currently in a state of decline. The rigorous training required to master the craft, coupled with limited institutional support, has led to a shrinking number of skilled artisans. Although Republic Act No. 3470 (An Act Creating the National Cottage Industries Development Authority) was enacted to promote cottage industries, its implementation has fallen short in safeguarding the continuity of piña handloom weaving. The erosion of this tradition would not only affect the livelihoods of artisans but also endanger a living legacy of indigenous knowledge and cultural identity.

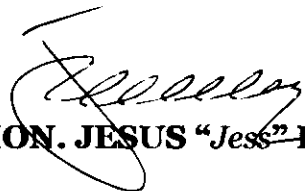
We therefore advocate for the creation of the Kalibo Aklan TESDA Piña Training and Assessment Center that shall serve as the cornerstone for the revitalization and long-term sustainability of the piña handloom weaving industry. It shall function as the central institution for training, innovation, and knowledge preservation in the field of piña weaving.

With adequate support from government agencies such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and local organizations such as the Aklan Piña Manufacturers and Traders Association, the piña weaving industry will generate significant employment and foster economic growth, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.

This measure will lead to huge potential and economic rewards for indigenous weavers, their families, and their communities. It will raise the standard of living and benefit the country. As yet, though, local profit margins are small, and are likely to remain so until they can propel themselves into the world marketplace. In order to fully revive this traditional industry, cooperatives need to work together for development, funding and international fair trade.

The State affirms its commitment to the promotion of cultural heritage industries as instruments of sustainable development, inclusive growth, and national pride. In doing so, the Philippines honors its weavers and preserves for future generations the artistry, discipline, and dignity of piña handloom weaving.

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


HON. JESUS “Jess” R. MARQUEZ

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTER IN THE
MUNICIPALITY OF KALIBO, PROVINCE OF AKLAN AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

1 **SECTION 1.** *Establishment of a Training and Assessment Center.* – There is
 2 hereby established a training and assessment center, under the supervision of the
 3 Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), to be known as the
 4 “*Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña Handloom Weaving, Training, and Assessment Center*”. It
 5 shall be located in a highly accessible area in the Municipality of Kalibo, Province of Aklan,
 6 pursuant to the purposes of this Act and the agreement between the TESDA and the
 7 concerned local government units (LGUs).

8 **SEC. 2.** *General Mandate.* – The Kalibo, Aklan TESDA Piña Handloom Weaving,
 9 Training, and Assessment Center, hereinafter referred to as the Center, shall primarily
 10 provide technical vocational education and training (TVET) programs to students and
 11 local residents from low-income families and out-of-school youths, including persons
 12 with disabilities and indigenous peoples, to help them become productive, self-reliant,
 13 and globally competitive labor assets in the art, craft, and trade of handloom weaving,
 14 particularly of piña fiber.

15 The Center shall provide effective employment interventions through training
 16 programs on relevant skills in trade competencies, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship
 17 activities to help hasten the development of the host area and its adjacent localities into
 18 human resource and productivity hubs in meeting the manpower qualification standards
 19 of both local and international labor markets for piña handloom weaving.

20 The Center, as accredited by TESDA, shall assess the acquired competencies in
 21 TVET programs for handloom weaving in the Municipality of Kalibo and the adjacent
 22 localities in the Province of Aklan. It shall also provide teachers’ training and curriculum

design assistance to the secondary schools offering the technical-vocational livelihood (TVL) track under the K to 12 Program in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd), TESDA, Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI), and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

SEC. 3. *Training Programs.* — The Center shall offer diverse short-term certificate courses and modular trainings in skills specialization in handloom weaving. To this end, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) PTRI, NCCA, business-industry partners, and such other relevant agencies and instrumentalities, both local and international, shall provide the necessary assistance to enable the Center to develop skilled and competitive manpower to achieve a robust and inclusive economy in the host area and adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan.

The Center may establish research and technology hubs, technology development farms, satellite or extension training centers, and promote mobile training programs for handloom weaving technology, skills standardization, design concepts, and product commercialization geared towards the acquisition of practical livelihood, employable skills, gainful employment, and entrepreneurship in priority areas in the Municipality of Kalibo and adjacent localities in the Province of Aklan.

To address the manpower needs for skilled artists, craftsmen, and designers for handloom weaving, the Center shall offer the following TESDA-registered training programs with competencies assessment leading to National Certification Levels I-III:

- a. Skills training in handloom weaving through use of emerging new techniques and methods, and operation of small and medium-scale handloom weaving machinery and equipment, especially for piña hand weaving;
- b. Short-term basic skills trainings and seminars focused on the re-introductions of handloom weaving, revival of traditional handloom weaving techniques and designs, funding and infrastructure support for handloom machines and equipment, and relevant market information on product promotion in both domestic and international trade exposition;
- c. Practical training methods in the use of natural and synthetic fiber materials, piña fiber, modern cloth-making technology, and development and production of alternative handloom weaving materials and sources;
- d. Training programs on handloom weaving design concepts in both indigenous patterns and modern designs, and product diversification and uses, specifically for piña cloth;
- e. Livelihood trainings and small business literacy programs on the institutionalization and commercialization of Philippine handloom weaving training, especially for piña cloth, and end products, in all aspects promoting

handloom weaving through research and development, production support and extension, education and training, fiber processing and utilization technologies, market promotion and investment facilitation, infrastructure development, standards implementation and trade regulation, including international demand benchmarking for handloom-made products;

- f. Strengthening collaboration of the various handloom weaving industry stakeholders, and development of the handloom weaving fiber sector;
- g. Basic business literacy training in financial management and marketing, practical accountancy, bookkeeping, office procedures, business processes and application procedures including registration, licensing, documentation, business patent and intellectual property regulation, business financing and investment opportunities sourcing, import-export accreditation, online home-based business operation, and use of social media business marketing; and
- h. Other relevant trainings that may be needed by the people of Kalibo and the Province of Aklan specifically focused on handloom weaving to enhance their capacities for practical livelihood, gainful employment and entrepreneurial activities.

SEC. 4. Compliance with TESDA Requirements. – The provisions of this Act notwithstanding, the Center shall become operational only upon the issuance by the TESDA of a formal recommendation and certificate of compliance attesting that the Center has satisfactorily complied with the minimum standards of quality it has prescribed governing the following:

- (a) Standard procedures and guidelines for the establishment and operation of a Center;
- (b) Operational sustainability of the Center, in terms of licensed faculty-trainers and personnel, equipment, training and laboratory facilities, instructional materials, and other standard requirements of a Center;
- (c) Sustainable funding source and allocation of the budgetary requirement;
- (d) Full alignment of the training programs offered with the minimum standards of competency-based quality technical vocational skills and the technology needs of the host area and adjacent communities served within the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations integration and the Philippine Qualifications Framework for TVET; and
- (e) Compliance with such other TESDA conditionalities and standards as may be necessary and applicable in establishing a Center.

SEC. 5. Administration of the Center.– The Center shall be headed by a Technical-Vocational Administrator who shall render full-time service and be responsible for its administration and operation, under the supervision of the TESDA.

1 The Technical-Vocational Administrator shall be appointed by the TESDA Director
2 General in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission and
3 the qualification requirements for such office.

4 The Technical-Vocational Administrator may enter into agreements with locally-
5 based private and public counterpart agencies, instrumentalities or persons, and seek
6 such assistance as may be necessary to effectively implement this Act, subject to the
7 approval of the TESDA Director General.

8 **SEC. 6. Appropriations.** – The Director General of the TESDA shall include in the
9 Authority's program the operation of the Center, the funding of which shall be included
10 in the annual General Appropriations Act.

11 The LGUs concerned, in consultation with the TESDA, shall set aside from any
12 available local revenue an amount deemed appropriate as annual counterpart fund to
13 support the operation of the Center herein established.

14 **SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days after the
15 approval of this Act, the TESDA shall, in coordination with the DOLE, DTI, DOST, DA,
16 Department of Budget and Management, DepEd, DILG, NEDA, PTRI, NCCA, the
17 concerned LGUs, and such other relevant agencies and industry-business partners of the
18 host locality, prepare and issue rules and regulations for the effective implementation of
19 this Act.

20 **SEC. 8. Separability Clause.** – If, for any reason, any section or provision of this
21 Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions thereof shall
22 not be affected and shall remain in force and in effect.

23 **SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions, rules
24 and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act are repealed or
25 amended accordingly.

26 **SEC. 10. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
27 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,