



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 615



Introduced by Representative **ANTONINO B. ROMAN III**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has long enjoyed a strategic advantage as an English-speaking nation. English remains an official language under Article XIV, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution and has enabled millions of Filipinos to access global employment, education, and entrepreneurship opportunities. It has been the cornerstone of the country's competitiveness in business process outsourcing (BPO), tourism, international diplomacy, and migration.

However, recent data from global assessments raise serious concerns. In the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 15-year-old Filipino students ranked last in Reading Comprehension. The 2022 PISA was almost as bad. The Philippines also dropped from 20th to 27th place in the Education First (EF) English Proficiency Index between 2019 and 2020. In his State of the Nation Address, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. underscored the urgent need to strengthen English proficiency to ensure the competitiveness of our learners and workers.

While the country appropriately celebrates the Filipino language every August through the nationally observed "Buwan ng Wika," there is no comparable institutionalized celebration for the English language, despite its continued relevance in government, business, education, and international communication. This absence undermines efforts to reinforce English competency at a time when global engagement is more critical than ever.

With growing foreign investment interest—especially with infrastructure projects like the Cavite–Bataan interlink bridge—our local workforce must be equipped to communicate effectively in English. Promoting English proficiency is not merely a cultural or academic concern; it is an economic and strategic imperative.

This bill therefore seeks to institutionalize a “National English Competency Week” during the first week of September every year, encouraging all sectors to promote, celebrate, and strengthen English language skills nationwide.



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AN ACT
DECLARING THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER OF EVERY YEAR AS
“NATIONAL ENGLISH COMPETENCY WEEK” TO PROMOTE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND COMPETENCE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Title. -- This Act shall be known as the “National English Competency Week Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. -- It is the policy of the State to uphold English proficiency as a tool for national competitiveness, global engagement, and personal advancement. The State shall implement programs to raise awareness of the importance of English, foster interest in its use, and support its instruction and practice in educational and professional settings.

SEC. 3. National English Competency Week. -- The first week of September of every year is hereby declared as National English Competency Week. During this period, schools, government agencies, local government units, and private institutions are encouraged to mount programs and activities designed to promote English proficiency.

SEC. 4. Program of Activities. -- The following activities may be undertaken as part of the celebration:

- Debates, declamation and essay-writing contests
- Public speaking and writing workshops
- Spelling bees and storytelling events
- Forums and panel discussions in English
- Recognition of English-language excellence among students and government workers

SEC. 5. Lead Implementing Agencies. -- The following agencies shall jointly lead the observance and programming:

- Department of Education (DepEd)
- Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
- Civil Service Commission (CSC)
- Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)
- Philippine Information Agency (PIA)
- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)

They shall issue implementing rules and a joint calendar of activities within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 6. Funding. -- The agencies involved shall allocate resources necessary to implement this Act from their respective budgets, or through coordination with the private sector and civil society organizations.

SEC. 7. Separability Clause. -- If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 8. Repealing Clause. -- All laws, executive orders, proclamations, or regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 9. Effectivity. -- This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,