

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1054



Introduced by Representative GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

**AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE CIVIL EFFECTS OF CHURCH-DECREED
ANNULMENT**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 6 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution affirms the separation of Church and State, but equally guarantees in Article III, Section 5 the free exercise of religion. While civil law and canon law operate in separate domains, the institution of marriage is central to both—and to the moral, social, and legal fabric of Filipino life.

At present, annulments granted by Church tribunals, particularly under canon law, are not automatically recognized by the State. Thus, spouses declared free to remarry under Church law must still undergo a separate, often duplicative, and costly civil annulment proceeding, even if both processes arise from the same facts and result in the same conclusion: the marriage is void ab initio.

This bill seeks to recognize the civil effects of annulments decreed by Churches or religious sects duly recognized under Philippine law. It simplifies and streamlines the legal process for Filipinos whose marriages have been annulled under their religious traditions by granting such decisions civil effect, provided that due process, legal capacity, and jurisdictional requirements are met.

It maintains necessary State oversight by requiring the registration of the Church annulment decision with the local civil registrar and its transmission to the Philippine Statistics Authority, ensuring that legal rights, obligations, and property relations arising from the annulment are preserved and properly documented.

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


GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
2nd District, Pampanga

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City**

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 1054

Introduced by Representative GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

**AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE CIVIL EFFECTS OF CHURCH-DECREED
ANNULMENT**

*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 “Church-Decreed Annulment Act”.

SECTION 2. *Effect of Church Decree.* - Whenever a marriage, duly and legally solemnized by a priest, minister, rabbi or presiding elder of any church or religious sect or any person authorized to solemnize marriages in the Philippines, is subsequently annulled or dissolved in a final judgment or decree in accordance with the canons or precepts of the church or religious sect in which the marriage was solemnized or in which either married partner is a member at the time of the request for the annulment or dissolution, the said annulment or dissolution shall have the same effect as a decree of annulment or dissolution issued by a competent court.

SECTION 3. *Status of Children.* — The status of children of marriages subject to the church annulment or dissolution decree shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order No. 209, otherwise known as the “Family Code of the Philippines”. In case the ground for the church annulment or dissolution decree is not similar to any of the grounds provided in the Family Code of the Philippines, their common children born or conceived before the issuance of the church annulment decree shall be considered legitimate.

SECTION 4. *Property Relations, Custody and Support of Children, and Legitimes.* — The liquidation, partition and distribution of the properties of the spouses, the custody and support of the common children, and the delivery of their presumptive legitimes shall be agreed upon by the spouses, and embodied in a public document. In case no agreement is met, the provisions of the Family Code of the Philippines shall be in force.

SECTION 5. *Recording in Civil Registry.* — The church annulment decree shall be recorded in the appropriate civil registries together with the agreement of the spouses required in the preceding section within thirty (30) days from the issuance of the church annulment decree, subject to the conditions that may be imposed by the church or religious sect.

SECTION 6. *Subsequent Marriage.* — Without prejudice to the conditions set forth by the church or religious sect, either of the former spouses may marry again after complying with the requirements of the preceding paragraph and Article 52 of the Family Code of the Philippines; otherwise, the subsequent marriage shall be null and void.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or is inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,