



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



Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2297

Introduced by **Representative Ma. Victoria Co-Pilar**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is home to a rich and diverse tapestry of cultures, languages, and traditions – each contributing to the unique identity of our nation. Among these cultural treasures are the indigenous and traditional writing systems such as Baybayin, Kulitan, Badlit, Kur-itan, and others, which once flourished across various regions of the archipelago. These scripts served as powerful tools of communication, expression, and cultural continuity long before colonization disrupted the development of native literacy.

Today, many of these scripts face the threat of extinction due to centuries of marginalization, lack of intergenerational transmission, and limited institutional support. Without deliberate and sustained intervention, these writing systems may vanish – taking with them vital aspects of Filipino identity, creativity, and heritage.

This bill seeks to promote, protect, preserve, and conserve the indigenous and traditional writing systems of the Philippines by formally recognizing them as cultural treasures and integrating them into national development through education and cultural awareness. Among the key provisions of the proposed measure are:

- The inclusion of indigenous scripts in relevant subjects in both basic and higher education, including the offering of specialized courses;
- The active promotion of these scripts during national cultural celebrations such as Buwan ng Wika;
- The documentation and preservation of historical and oral materials relating to the scripts;

- The organization of seminars, symposia, and cultural activities to strengthen regional knowledge and use of traditional writing systems;
- The designation of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) as the lead agency in crafting policies and coordinating with key government institutions such as the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), Department of Education (DepEd), and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for effective implementation.

The passage of this measure affirms the constitutional mandate to conserve, develop, and promote our national culture and heritage. It also aligns with Republic Act No. 10066 or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, further strengthening the cultural foundation of the Filipino people in an era of rapid globalization and digital transformation.

By investing in the revival and sustainability of our indigenous scripts, we empower future generations with a deeper sense of identity, pride, and continuity – anchored in the legacy of our ancestors and in the diversity that defines our nation.

In the 19th Congress, this bill was sponsored by Representatives Marc O. Go, Elizaldy S. Co, and Greg G. Gasatsaya. It was approved in the third and final reading in the House of Representatives.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G. Go", with a stylized flourish at the end.



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2297**

Introduced by Representative Ma. Victoria Co-Pilar

AN ACT
PROMOTING PHILIPPINE INDIGENOUS AND TRADITIONAL WRITING
SYSTEMS AND PROVIDING FOR THEIR PROTECTION, PRESERVATION, AND
CONSERVATION

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Philippine Indigenous and Traditional Writing Systems Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State to foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression. To this end, the State shall promote, protect, preserve, and conserve the Philippine indigenous and traditional writing systems as a means to inculcate patriotism and social consciousness among the citizenry.

SEC. 3. *Promotion of Philippine Indigenous and Traditional Writing Systems.* – To generate greater awareness of indigenous and traditional scripts of the Philippines and engender wider appreciation of their significance and beauty, the promotion of the writing systems is hereby recognized as part of our cultural treasures.

As expressions of Philippine tradition and symbols of the national identity, the country's indigenous writing systems shall be promoted through the following measures and activities:

- (a) Inclusion of these writing systems in relevant subjects of basic and higher education such as elective or specialized courses in higher education on the study of the same;
- (b) Conduct of activities to be spearheaded by the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and local governments that promote awareness of the writing systems, particularly during *Buwan ng Wika* and similar occasions and events;
- (c) Conduct of seminars, conferences, conventions, symposia, and other relevant activities on Philippine writing systems, taking into consideration the writing system that is indigenous to a particular region;
- (d) Ensure proper record-keeping of relevant documents and preservation of oral evidence on the writing systems; and other applicable measure, as may be adopted by the concerned government agencies.

SEC. 4. *Protection, Preservation and Conservation of Indigenous or Philippine Traditional Scripts.* – The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) shall be the lead agency in promulgating policy guidelines on the promotion of the writing systems.

Accordingly, the NCCA is hereby mandated to protect, preserve, and conserve the writing systems as national cultural treasures in accordance with Republic Act No. 10066, otherwise known as the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009”. The NCCA shall coordinate with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) for technical assistance on the development of the Philippine languages and writing, and with the DepEd, CHED, and other relevant government agencies for the proper implementation of this provision.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act, the NCCA shall, in coordination with the DepEd, CHED and KWF, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any part, section or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts, sections and provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,