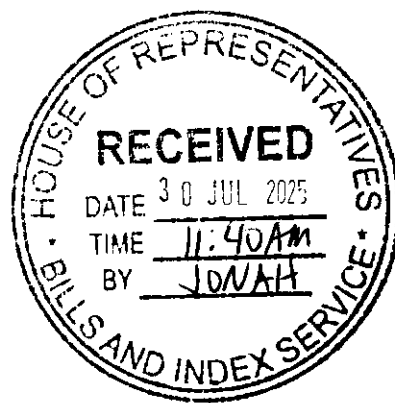




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2630



Introduced by Representative KATRINA CHUA - TAI

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Zamboanga Peninsula is home to a rich mosaic of cultures, languages, traditions, and histories that have significantly shaped the identity and heritage of the Filipino nation. Among its most distinctive cultural expressions is the “Chabacano” dialect, spoken primarily in Zamboanga City. However, this unique language is slowly being diluted due to rapid modernization and the declining intergenerational transmission within local communities.

Chabacano is more than just a means of communication—it is a linguistic art form with its own structure, vocabulary, and grammar, blending Spanish with elements of various Filipino languages. For Chabacano to endure, it must be actively used and promoted in key sectors of society such as governance, education, media, science, economics, and public discourse. Such integration will enable the Zamboanga Peninsula to develop in its own culturally grounded manner, while remaining in step with national progress.

At the same time, many of the country’s ethno-linguistic communities continue to be underrepresented in academic research, public policy, education, and cultural programming. To address this gap, this bill proposes the establishment of the Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Ethno-Linguistic and Cultural Studies Center at Western Mindanao State University (WeMSU) - a dedicated institution tasked with the documentation, preservation, and promotion of the region’s diverse cultural heritage and linguistic traditions.

The Center will serve as a hub for conducting local historical, anthropological, and ethno-linguistic research; publishing culturally grounded materials; implementing awareness campaigns; collecting and preserving important historical resources; and safeguarding oral traditions. These efforts aim not only to conserve the cultural legacy of the Zamboanga Peninsula but also to make it accessible for education, policymaking, and identity-building.

In addition, the Center will encourage collaboration among institutions of higher learning in the region and work closely with national agencies such as the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, the National Library of the Philippines, the Department of Education, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, among others. Through this, the Center will help shape a more inclusive and culturally informed society—rooted in the recognition and appreciation of our diverse local identities.

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

KATRINA CHUA - TAI
1st District of Zamboanga City



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **2630**

Introduced by Representative KATRINA CHUA - TAI

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA
REGIONAL ETHNO-LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL STUDIES CENTER, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. **Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Ethno-Linguistic and Cultural Studies Center Act."

SEC. 2. **Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to pursue and support the cultural development of the Filipino people, through the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of Filipino national culture, based on the principle of unity in diversity in a climate of free artistic and intellectual expression. Toward this end, it is also the policy of the state to recognize the wealth of history and culture of the provinces in the Zamboanga Peninsula including those of the cultural communities that it hosts, which is beneficial in strengthening government programs and policies in (a) dispute settlement, (b) addressing stereotypes, (c) unequal opportunities and representations, (d) conserving what has been studied and recovered, and (e) appraising the Zamboangueño identity and pride.

SEC. 3. **Establishment of the Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Ethno-Linguistic and Cultural Studies Center.** – There is hereby established the Zamboanga Peninsula Regional Ethno-Linguistic and Cultural Studies Center in the Western Mindanao State University (WeMSU), which shall hereinafter be referred to as the "Center".

SEC. 4. **Region and Cultural Community-wide Cooperation.** – Inter-institutional cooperation within and among provinces and institutions of higher learning in the Zamboanga Peninsula is highly encouraged to prevent redundancy, duplication, and overlapping of functions of existing local studies centers.

SEC. 5. **Structure and Staffing Pattern.** – The administration of the Center shall have plantilla positions for a Director, a librarian or archivist, history researchers, anthropologists, and if necessary, a museum curator, museum researchers and conservators. It shall have the liberty to determine its organization and create new divisions or units as it may deem necessary and appoint officers and employees.

SEC. 6. **Composition and Functions of the Center.** – The Center shall be composed of, but not limited to, five (5) major service areas with their respective functions, namely:

- a. Research Service Area - conduct local anthropologic, ethno-linguistic and cultural research and studies in the Zamboanga Peninsula particularly those of cultural communities therein to document local history, culture and society and contribute to local policy-making;
- b. Publication Service Area – shall serve as the leading publisher of local history, culture and knowledge on local history, culture, and society in the Zamboanga Peninsula, in print and online. It shall support the production of educational materials on local history, culture and society, the promotion of vernacular literature and language, and other studies concerning localities and cultural communities in the Peninsula;
- c. Awareness Campaign Service Area - creates and promotes participatory programs, projects and activities to continue and encourage discourse on local history, culture and society, as well as champion or cultivate the laws and policies on cultural heritage to guide the local government units in the Zamboanga Peninsula;
- d. Collection Service Area - tasked with building and conserving a collection of local historical and cultural resources thereof, through:
 - i. Collection of printed materials focusing on publications from local cultural communities of the Zamboanga Peninsula;
 - ii. Gathering of available microfilm/microfiche publications;
 - iii. Photoduplication of documents found in government institutions especially the national cultural heritage agencies and in other institutions where data relevant to Zamboanga Peninsula ethno-cultural and linguistic studies are available, here and abroad;
 - iv. Obtaining memoirs and other writings about significant personages and institutions in the Zamboanga Peninsula and its cultural communities;
 - v. Acquisition of materials significant to advancement of local historical, cultural, and societal scholarship in the Zamboanga Peninsula; and
 - vi. Procurement through donations, exchanges or purchases of important historical documents, manuscripts, journals, books, etc.
- e. Oral Traditions Preservation Area - tasked with the collection, documentation, preservation, and promotion of oral traditions and local dialects within the Zamboanga Peninsula.

SEC. 7. *SUC Support to the Center.* – The Western Mindanao State University (WeMSU) shall be the host of the Center. It shall:

- a. Designate premises conducive and equipped to contain collections of the Center, conduct public programs such as lectures, seminars and exhibits, and entertain researchers and visitors;
- b. Build the collection of the Center by acquiring and purchasing a seminal Filipiniana core collection;
- c. Harmonize the university research program with the goals and objectives of the Center;
- d. Encourage localized studies among faculty and students to benefit the immediate community where the school is located;

- e. Involve academics, experts and scholars outside WeMSU to contribute to the research and publication activities of the Center; and
- f. Develop policies and programs appraising the quality and scholarship of historical and cultural research and publication for the Center.

SEC. 8. ***Patronage of Publications Produced by the Center.*** – The dire need for a body of knowledge about the cultural communities of the Zamboanga Peninsula shall be augmented by encouraging the Center to produce regular publications, whether authored by its resident scholars or external contributors. It shall provide at least two copies of each publication produced for deposit at the Historical Data Bank of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), the National Library of the Philippines (NLP), and the University of the Philippines Diliman Filipiniana Library. The Department of Foreign Affairs shall purchase copies of the publications for dissemination to all Sentro Rizal cultural centers in foreign service posts. The local school board and the Department of Education (DepEd) shall do the same for all public and private schools within the concerned schools division, and by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the NLP for public libraries.

SEC. 9. ***Local Historical Committees Network (LHCN).*** – This existing unit within the NHCP shall develop a comprehensive local and international linkage program that will connect the Center not only with relevant government agencies, non-government organizations and other local and international historical and cultural societies, committees, associations, and councils, whose objectives are in line with the goals and objectives of the Center, but also with the national government, the local governments of the Zamboanga Peninsula and already existing local studies centers.

SEC. 10. ***Representation of the Center.*** – The Center must be represented in the Local School Boards and the Local Culture and Arts Councils of the local government units in the Zamboanga Peninsula, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) of the Zamboanga Peninsula Region and other government bodies concerning local history, culture and heritage.

SEC. 11. ***Funding.*** – The initial funding requirements for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Western Mindanao State University (WeMSU). Thereafter, such sums as it may deem necessary for its continual implementation shall be included in the institution's yearly budgets under the General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 12. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, and rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 14. ***Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,