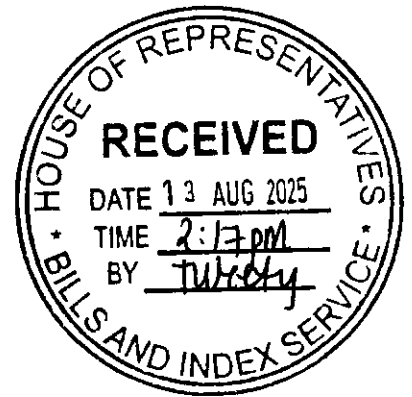


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3686



Introduced by Honorable Representatives
KABATAAN Partylist Rep. RENEE LOUISE M. CO
and ACT Teachers Partylist Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE ACCOUNTS AND HEROISM OF
FILIPINO COMFORT WOMEN DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION IN THE
ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY, AND TERTIARY CURRICULA OF THE PHILIPPINE
EDUCATION SYSTEM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For Filipinos who survived and are old enough to remember World War II, the Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945 was a time of devastation and human suffering: women being raped and bayoneted, children being killed, and men being massacred. Despite this, many of the younger generations do not recognize and remember the tragedies that befell hundreds of thousands of Filipinos, especially those forced to serve as "comfort women" by the Japanese Imperial Army.

All too often, there is a historical silence about the brutality and sexual slavery endured by Filipino women under the Japanese occupation. Some survivors of World War II lament that even policymakers have neglected their obligation to recognize and demand justice for such victims of Japanese war atrocities.

More than half a century has passed since the end of the war and yet the harrowing experiences and continuing struggle for justice of the Filipino comfort women remain officially unacknowledged in our history books and curricula. Such silence only adds to the historical injustice.

Military sexual slavery is undoubtedly one of the cruelest forms of human rights violations committed during the war, but it is rarely recognized as such. During World War II, the Japanese Imperial Army went on a path of conquest and domination, violating women's human rights by putting up "comfort women stations" in occupied countries such as Korea, China, and the Philippines, wherein they forced hundreds of thousands of women to endure systematic rape and military sexual slavery. This form of violence against women inflicted both physical and psychological suffering upon these women. After the war, those who survived continue to live in shame and silence.

In the succeeding decades after the war, many men—including Americans and foreign soldiers—were celebrated and honored as war heroes, while also being granted public support and recognition by the State. In contrast, the Philippine government failed to acknowledge the comfort women's wartime experiences, as well as their heroic participation in the war of resistance against the Japanese colonizers.

Finally, in 1992, with the help of women's groups and advocates such as the Lila Pilipina and the GABRIELA National Alliance of Filipino Women, the surviving comfort women brought this historical injustice to the public eye. Lola Pacita Santillan and Lola Rosa Henson were among the first Filipino women to come forward and publicly admit having been forced into sexual slavery during the second world war. But sadly, after more than twenty years, the number of comfort women fighting for justice has been dwindling. Some, like Lola Rosa and Lola Pacita have now passed away, and many other comfort women are already old and frail, facing the possibility of dying without seeing the dawn of their quest for justice. The Japanese government continues to refuse to indemnify and formally apologize to these women and their families.

Around the world, however, there is a growing recognition that the crimes of sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army were violations of women's human rights and international humanitarian law. The 1996 United Nations (UN) Commission on Human Rights reported by Special Rapporteur Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, as well as the 1998 UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities report by Ms. Gay J. McDougall, gave strong support to the comfort women's demands for a formal apology and legal compensation from the Japanese government.

Unfortunately, the harrowing accounts of the sacrifices and martyrdom of comfort women as sexual slaves under the Japanese Imperial Army have not been mentioned in the past and present Philippine history books.

The bill seeks to rectify this historical injustice by proposing the inclusion in the elementary, secondary, and tertiary curricula of the Philippine education system the lives and heroism of Filipino comfort women during the Japanese occupation. In doing so, this bill seeks to bring voice and recognition to the courageous struggles of these women. This is in line with the recent United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommendation under the Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), particularly Part 11 (v), which states that the Philippines must mainstream in the country's educational curricula "the history of Filipina victims/survivors of wartime sexual slavery, as remembrance is critical to a sensitive understanding of the history of human rights violations endured by these women, to emphasize the importance of advancing human rights, and to avoid recurrence."

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



RENEE LOUISE M. CO
KABATAAN Partylist



ANTONIO L. TINO
ACT Teachers Partylist

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3686

Introduced by Honorable Representatives
KABATAAN Partylist Rep. RENEE LOUISE M. CO
and **ACT Teachers Partylist Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO**

**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE ACCOUNTS AND
HEROISM OF FILIPINO COMFORT WOMEN DURING THE JAPANESE
OCCUPATION IN THE ELEMENTARY, SECONDARY, AND TERTIARY
CURRICULA OF THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATION SYSTEM, APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR**

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 “Comfort Women Education Act”.

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, and appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country.

Towards these ends, the State shall recognize the suffering and sexual slavery experienced by Filipino women under the Japanese occupation of the country, and their heroic participation in waging the war of resistance. The State shall include the accounts of comfort women’s sacrifices and martyrdoms in the curriculum and history books.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a) *Comfort Women* refers to the victims of state-sanctioned military sex slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II.
- b) *Comfort Women Education* refers to teaching the lives and heroism of comfort women during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, and on their continuing struggle for justice and recognition.

SECTION 4. *Integration of Comfort Women Education in Curriculum.* – All public and private elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools and institutions shall integrate age- and development-appropriate comfort women education as part of their curricula. Thus, the history of the struggles and plights of Filipino comfort women shall be included in the Araling Panlipunan (AP) subject for the elementary and secondary levels. For the tertiary level, educational institutions are mandated to include comfort women education in the list of elective courses.

All covered educational institutions shall also integrate comfort women education in the learning materials and history books corresponding to the curriculum.

SECTION 5. *Curriculum Review.* – The coverage and quality of comfort women education in public and private elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools and institutions shall be included in the comprehensive curriculum review to be conducted by the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

SECTION 6. *Appropriation.* – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged to the respective appropriations of the DepEd and the CHED under the General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sum as may be necessary for its continuous implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Guidelines.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd and the CHED, in consultation with comfort women organizations and relevant stakeholders, shall formulate the rules and regulations to effectively implement this Act.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, any part or provision not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, proclamations, and other issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,