

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4015



Introduced by **Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA**

AN ACT
PRESERVING, DEVELOPING, AND PROMOTING THE BICOL LANGUAGES AS
PART OF THE NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE, MANDATING PROGRAMS
FOR THEIR PROTECTION AND TRANSMISSION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bicol Region is one of the most linguistically diverse regions of the Philippines. According to the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino and academic studies, it is home to more than twenty distinct languages and dialect clusters, including Central Bikol, Rinconada Bikol, Buhi-non, Partido Bikolano, Miraya Bikol, Libon Bikol, Sorsogon Bikol, Gubatnon, Masbateño, and the speech communities of Catanduanes, among others. Peripheral varieties such as Waray-Sorsogon and the endangered Agta languages of Camarines Sur also form part of this heritage.

Despite this richness, Bicol's languages face mounting challenges. Younger generations are shifting increasingly to Filipino and English, with many Bicol languages at risk of attrition within a few decades if intergenerational transmission continues to decline. Local publishing and media in Bicol languages are limited, documentation of dialects remains incomplete, and many traditional oral literatures and songs are unrecorded. Without urgent intervention, these languages may be lost, eroding not only cultural identity but also local knowledge embedded in vocabulary relating to agriculture, fisheries, geography, and community life.

This bill therefore seeks to **preserve, develop, and promote the Bicol languages as part of the national cultural heritage**, consistent with Article XIV, Sections 14 to 17 of the 1987 Constitution. It proposes the following key measures:

1. **Establishment of Bicol Language Research and Preservation Centers** in state universities and colleges, mandated to document, archive, and publish works in local languages.
2. **Local Government Participation** through DILG-issued model ordinances, encouraging LGUs to integrate Bicol languages in signage, public information, and

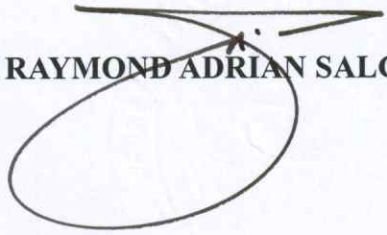
disaster communication, with adoption considered in the Seal of Good Local Governance and tied to access to national grants.

3. **Incentive Grants** through the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) for schools, media organizations, and community groups that produce content in Bicol languages.
4. **Mandatory Broadcast of Bicol Music**, requiring all radio and television stations in the region to play at least one Bicol-language song or musical piece every broadcast hour.
5. **Biennial Language Vitality Report**, submitted by the KWF to Congress, measuring the state of Bicol languages and recommending remedial action.

These provisions create both **institutional infrastructure and daily visibility** for Bicol languages, while respecting local autonomy by using incentives, model policies, and performance-based criteria rather than compulsory local legislation.

By passing this bill, Congress will affirm the constitutional mandate to conserve and enrich the nation's cultural heritage, while ensuring that the voices of the Bicol Region — in all their diversity — continue to be heard, spoken, sung, and transmitted to future generations.

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



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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to preserve, enrich, and promote the Bicol languages as part of the cultural heritage of the Filipino people, consistent with Article XIV, Sections 14 to 17 of the 1987 Constitution on language and culture.

SEC. 2. *Scope.* For the purposes of this Act, the term "*Bicol languages*" shall refer to the indigenous languages and dialects spoken in the Bicol Region, including the following:

(a) Central Bikol Group — Standard Central Bikol (Naga–Legazpi), Coastal Northern Albay Bikol, Northern Catanduanes Bikol, Southern Catanduanes Bikol, Tabaco Bikol, and Daet Bikol;

(b) Inland Bikol Group — Rinconada Bikol, Partido Bikolano, and Buhi-non Bikol;

(c) Albay Bikol Group — West Miraya Bikol, East Miraya Bikol, and Libon Bikol;

(d) Sorsogon Bikol Group — Southern Sorsogon Bikol and Gubatnon;

(e) Masbate Group — Masbateño, Hiligaynon-Masbate, and Cebuano-Masbate; and

(f) Peripheral and Contact Varieties — Waray Sorsogon, Waray of Northern Catanduanes, and the Agta languages of Camarines Sur, including Agta Tabangnon and Agta Isarog.

SEC. 3. *Language Research and Preservation Centers.* The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), in partnership with state universities and colleges in the Bicol Region, including Bicol University, Partido State University, Central Bicol State University of

Agriculture, and Catanduanes State University, shall establish Bicol Language Research and Preservation Centers tasked with

- (a) Documenting vocabulary, grammar, orthographies, and oral traditions of Bicol languages
- (b) Recording oral literature, folk songs, and traditional expressions for digital archiving;
- (c) Producing dictionaries, anthologies, and publicly accessible repositories; and
- (d) Training scholars, teachers, and community leaders in language preservation.

SEC. 4. *Integration in Cultural Programming.* The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), in coordination with local government units, shall ensure that Bicol languages are used and promoted in cultural festivals, theater, radio, community programming, and digital content. Grants and awards shall be provided for creative works in Bicol languages.

SEC. 5. *Local Government Participation.* Provinces, cities, and municipalities in the Bicol Region are hereby encouraged and supported to adopt local ordinances promoting the use of at least one Bicol language in:

- (a) official signage and public markers;
- (b) translations of local ordinances and resolutions;
- (c) public information campaigns; and
- (d) disaster risk reduction and emergency warnings.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), in coordination with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), shall issue model ordinances and guidelines to assist local government units in implementation.

Adoption of such ordinances shall be considered in the annual Seal of Good Local Governance evaluation and shall serve as a basis for priority access to cultural and performance-based grants from the national government.

SEC. 6. *Bikol in Media.* Media organizations, publishers, and digital platforms that produce original content in Bicol languages may be granted priority access to cultural grants and funding administered by the NCCA and the KWF.

All radio and television stations operating within the Bicol Region, whether public or private, shall be required to air at least one (1) song or musical piece in any Bicol language every two (2) broadcast hours as part of regular programming.

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), in coordination with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts

(NCCA), shall issue the rules and regulations to implement this provision, including compliance monitoring and appropriate administrative sanctions for violations.

SEC. 7. *Reporting.* The KWF shall submit to Congress a biennial report on the state of Bicol languages, including vitality indices, progress of preservation measures, and recommended actions.

SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the KWF, in coordination with the NCCA and state universities and colleges in the Bicol Region, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,