

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5401



Introduced by **HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Inabeg is a handloom-woven textile produced by local weavers of Buhi, Camarines Sur. In past generations, Buhinons made their clothes, towels, blankets, and other common household textiles from abaca and other natural fibers through handloom weaving.¹ In modern times, the use of unabeg fabric has extended to ceremonial and fashion attire, aiming to preserve and promote both the heritage of unabeg and its handloom weaving tradition in Buhi.

According to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), consumer preferences began to shift in the 1970s, and the popularity of unabeg declined in the 1990s.² Despite this, traditional handloom weaving persisted in Buhi. In 2013, the local government of Buhi declared the unabeg fabric as its One Town, One Product (OTOP), which has received support from the DTI's OTOP Program. Around 70 active local weavers were then organized into the Buhi OTOP Key Players Association (BOKPA). Through BOKPA, local weavers received appropriate training, equipment, and market support, which significantly contributed to their increased income and the preservation of traditional Buhinon weaving practices. This initiative has also empowered women in various communities of Buhi, who serve as the primary drivers of preserving the unabeg weaving tradition. Furthermore, other municipalities have utilized unabeg fabric in various products, including sustainable bags produced by an enterprise in Camarines Sur, as well as shoes designed in Marikina City.³

However, the unabeg weaving industry continues to face various challenges. Intergenerational continuity is a major concern, as only a few children of Buhinon weavers choose to carry on the tradition and consider it a viable livelihood. The rise of fast fashion has also dramatically altered clothing styles and consumer purchasing behavior. Nevertheless, unabeg fabric, as a cultural treasure, an integral part of identity, and a source of pride for the Buhinons, must be conserved, promoted, and popularized—particularly by integrating it into contemporary fashion trends and government ceremonies or events. Section 15, Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides: "Arts and letters shall enjoy the patronage of the State. The State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations."

In line with this Constitutional mandate, this bill seeks to establish the Unabeg Weaving Development Council, which shall formulate the National Unabeg Weaving Industry Development Policy, authorize the appropriation of P10,000,000.00 for the initial

¹ Dateline Ibalon. (2024, June 12). *The weavers of Buhi: a tradition of craftsmanship and sustainability*. Datelineibalon.com. <https://dateline-ibalon.com/2024/06/the-weavers-of-buhi-a-tradition-of-craftsmanship-and-sustainability/>

² DTI. (n.d.). *Weaving through tomorrow*. <https://www.dti.gov.ph/archives/regional-archives/region-5-success-stories-regional-archives/weaving-through-tomorrow-the-buhi-handloom-weavers-story/>

³ Project Gora. (2022, December 26). *Weavers of Buhi, Camarines Sur*. Projectgora.com. <https://projectgora.com/weavers-of-buhi-camarines-sur/>

implementation the Act, and mandate the Department of Science and Technology and Department of Trade and Industry, in coordination with relevant government agencies, to promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations.

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



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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION, PROMOTION, AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE INABEG WEAVING INDUSTRY**

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 “Inabeg Weaving Industry Development Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to foster patriotism and nationalism by preserving indigenous cultural heritage, promote the preferential use of locally manufactured products, honor Filipino culture and heritage by uplifting the value and prestige of indigenous weaves, and promote sustainable employment and inclusive economic growth. In pursuing this policy, the State shall ensure the protection of the cultural rights of Indigenous Peoples while enabling them to benefit equitably from the economic opportunities arising from the weaving industry. Toward this end, the State shall support the protection, promotion, and development of the unabeg weaving industry, a unique textile tradition originating from Buhi, Camarines Sur, which exemplifies Filipino ingenuity, environmental sustainability, and community-based innovation.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- (a) Inabeg – A handwoven textile tradition from Buhi, Camarines Sur, created mostly by women weavers, with men also taking part in the craft. It is made from “collar refuse” or excess discarded fabric scraps from garment factories, which are unraveled, straightened, and spun into balls of thread, then woven into sustainable textiles that embody both creativity and community heritage.
- (b) Inabeg weaving industry – composed of the interrelated and interconnected component supply chain centered on the production of the unabeg textile.
- (c) Neo-ethnic Philippine textiles – refers to textiles made of or containing natural or indigenous materials, sourced and/or produced in the Philippines using updated, relevant, and green scientific and technological approaches and innovations; while integrating and/or retaining traditional patterns, designs, icons, motifs and/or approaches.
- (d) Weavers – individuals, households, or organized groups engaged in the weaving of unabeg, whether full-time or part-time.

SECTION 4. *Establishment of the Inabeg Weaving Development Council.* – There is hereby created an Inabeg Weaving Development Council which shall be composed of:

- (a) Department of Science and Technology as Chair;
- (b) Department of Trade and Industry as Co-Chair;
- (c) Department of Tourism;
- (d) Department of Education;
- (e) Commission on Higher Education;
- (f) National Commission for Culture and the Arts;
- (g) National Commission on Indigenous Peoples;
- (h) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority;
- (i) Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority;
- (j) Philippine Creative Industries Development Council;
- (k) Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines;
- (l) Representative from the local government unit of unabeg-producing area; and
- (m) Representative from the unabeg weaving industry.

SECTION 5. *The unabeg Weaving Industry Development Policy.* – Within one (1) year from its organization, the Council shall formulate the National unabeg Weaving Industry Development Policy, which shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Formulation of the unabeg weaving industry roadmap;
- (b) Innovations in unabeg design and engineering;
- (c) Provision of technical support mechanisms for sustainable weaving activities;
- (d) Development and promotion of neo-ethnic Philippine textiles integrating unabeg;
- (e) Formulation of Philippine standards for unabeg woven textiles;
- (f) Establishment of an intellectual property protection framework for unabeg textiles;
- (g) Creation of a national database of Philippine indigenous textiles;
- (h) Development of unabeg textile-related technical skills and vocational programs;
- (i) Education, training, and capacity-building programs for weavers;
- (j) Market promotion through trade fairs, weaving festivals, and e-commerce platforms;
- (k) Establishment of financial support mechanisms, including credit windows, livelihood loans, and subsidies; and

- (l) Research and development partnerships with academic institutions for innovation in weaving techniques and product diversification.

SECTION 6. Appropriations. – The amount of Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury for the initial implementation of this Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Science and Technology and Department of Trade and Industry, in coordination with the Department of Tourism, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority, Philippine Creative Industries Development Council, and Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this Act.

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

SECTION 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,