

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5661



Introduced by Representative **MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines has long been a nation that celebrates the triumphs of its athletes, whose dedication, discipline, and patriotism have brought honor and pride to our country on the world stage. However, while we commemorate their victories in the moment, there remains a need for a lasting and dignified recognition of their contributions to national identity and unity.

This bill seeks to institutionalize the commemoration of Filipino sports heroes by granting them the privilege of interment at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB), the nation's most hallowed ground for those who have rendered distinguished service to the country. The measure is anchored on the State policy to honor and perpetuate the memory of individuals whose lives serve as enduring inspiration to present and future generations.

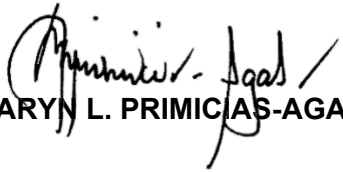
The proposed legislation draws from the spirit of Republic Act No. 8757, which established the Philippine Sports Hall of Fame, recognizing athletes, coaches, and trainers who have achieved excellence in their respective fields. However, while the Hall of Fame immortalizes their achievements, it does not provide for a national resting place befitting their stature. This bill addresses that gap by extending the privilege of interment at the LNMB to Filipino sports heroes who have brought honor to the country through exceptional performance in the Olympics, Paralympic Games, or world championships, and who are recognized by the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and the Games and Amusements Board (GAB).

The measure is also consistent with the evolving policy on eligibility for interment at the LNMB. As clarified by the Supreme Court, the privilege of burial at the LNMB is not limited to military personnel but has, over the years, been extended to civilians who have made significant contributions to Philippine society, subject to the approval of competent authorities. The Supreme Court has recognized that the list of eligible at the LNMB includes not only those who rendered active military service or military-related activities but also non-military personnel who were recognized for their significant contributions to the Philippine society (such as government dignitaries, statesmen, national artists, and other deceased persons whose interment or reinterment has been approved by the Commander-in-Chief, Congress or Secretary of National Defense).¹

Furthermore, the bill ensures that only those who have demonstrated not only athletic excellence but also good moral character and integrity are eligible, subject to a rigorous screening process by a multi-sectoral committee. This safeguards the sanctity of the LNMB and upholds the values that Filipino sports heroes are expected to embody.

¹Ocampo v. Enriquez, G.R. No. 225973, 8 November 2016.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought to provide our sports heroes the recognition they deserve, and to inspire future generations to pursue excellence and serve the nation with honor.


MARYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS

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AN ACT
HONORING FILIPINO SPORTS HEROES BY GRANTING THEM THE PRIVILEGE OF
INTERMENT AT THE LIBINGAN NG MGA BAYANI, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the *“Filipino Sports Heroes Commemoration Act”*.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to honor and perpetuate the memory of the Filipino sports heroes who have led lives worthy of inspiration and emulation of this generation and of generations still to come.

In recognition of their dedication and sacrifices for the country, the State shall allow deceased sports heroes who during their time brought honor and glory to the country be laid to rest at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani*.

SEC. 3. Sports Heroes. - Sports heroes as used in this Act shall refer to Filipino national athletes, amateur or professional, including athletes with disabilities, who have distinguished themselves in their particular field of sports, possessed good moral character and integrity, represented and brought honor and glory to the country by winning any medal in the Olympics or Paralympic Games or a World Championship in any professional sports competition sanctioned by any of the international governing bodies of various sports, and recognized as such by the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and Games and Amusements Board (GAB). They also refer to any Filipino athlete, coach, or trainer who were inducted into the Philippine Sports Hall of Fame pursuant to Republic Act No. 8757, entitled: *“An Act Establishing the Philippine Sports Hall of Fame and Appropriating Funds Therefor”*.

Sports heroes must be citizens of the Philippines either from birth without having to perform any act to acquire or perfect their Philippine citizenship, or those who are former Filipino citizens by birth who are naturalized in another country but reacquired Philippine citizenship making them dual citizens of both the Philippines and the country where they were naturalized pursuant to Section 4 of Republic Act No. 9225, otherwise known as the “Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003”.

SEC. 4. *Interment at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.* - Filipino sports heroes as defined in Section 3 hereof shall, upon the recommendation of the screening committee established under Section 5 of this Act, be eligible for interment at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

SEC. 5. *Screening Committee.* - A screening committee shall be established by the PSC to determine and recommend qualified Filipino sports heroes which shall be comprised of the following:

- a) Chairperson:
Chairperson of the PSC;
- b) Vice Chairperson:
Chairperson of the GAB;
- c) Members:
 - i) President of the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC);
 - ii) President of the Philippine Paralympic Committee (PPC);
 - iii) Chairperson of the Philippine Olympians Association (POA);
 - iv) Head of the Grave Service Unit of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP);
and
 - v) Chairpersons of the Senate Committee on Sports and the House of Representatives Committee on Youth and Sports Development.

The screening committee, upon determination of the eligibility of the deceased sports hero, shall issue a certificate of eligibility for interment at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani*.

SEC. 6. *Interment Service.* - Upon issuance of a certificate of eligibility for interment, the PSC or the GAB, as the case may be, shall coordinate with the AFP to issue the interment directive and make the necessary arrangement for the interment services.

Such interment privilege, however, may be waived by the family of the deceased sports hero or by the sports hero upon written notice to the PSC, GAB or the AFP.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The PSC shall, in coordination with the POC, PPC, GAB, POA, and AFP, promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within sixty (60) days after its effectivity.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, issuances, decrees, rules, and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are deemed amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

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

Approved,