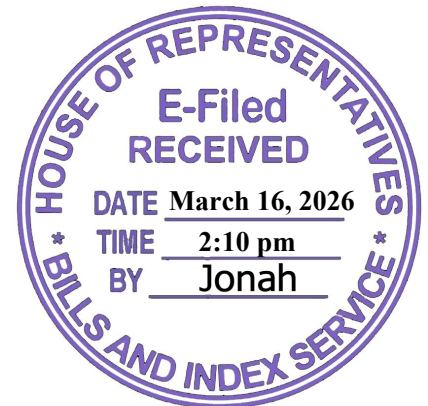




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

20th CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8523



Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines possesses a rich and diverse cultural heritage expressed through indigenous knowledge systems, traditional crafts, oral traditions, music, dance, rituals, and other community-based cultural practices. These living traditions are vital expressions of Filipino identity and serve as an important link between generations. However, many of these traditions are now at risk of disappearing due to rapid modernization, migration, declining interest among the youth, and the absence of sustainable mechanisms for transmitting knowledge from cultural bearers to younger generations.

The Schools of Living Traditions (SLTs) were established as community-based learning spaces where traditional knowledge and skills are passed down directly from cultural masters and elders to the youth. Through this system, communities are empowered to preserve and continue their unique cultural practices while ensuring that these traditions remain relevant in contemporary society.

Despite their importance, many SLTs currently operate without a clear institutional framework, adequate funding, or consistent government support. Some initiatives rely heavily on temporary projects, grants, or limited local efforts, which often leads to irregular implementation and the eventual discontinuation of programs. The lack of institutionalization also limits the ability of cultural agencies and local governments to provide long-term support, training, and monitoring for these initiatives.

Republic Act No. 10066, or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, recognizes the importance of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. However, it does not sufficiently establish a structured and sustainable system for the nationwide implementation and support of Schools of Living Traditions.

This bill seeks to institutionalize the Schools of Living Traditions (SLTs) as a formal and sustained mechanism for safeguarding and transmitting intangible cultural heritage across the country. By amending Republic Act No. 10066, the measure provides a clear policy framework for the establishment, operation, and support of SLTs in partnership with cultural communities,

cultural agencies, and local government units.

Through this measure, the government will ensure consistent funding, proper documentation of traditional knowledge, capacity-building for cultural masters, and increased participation of the youth in heritage preservation. Institutionalizing SLTs will strengthen community-led cultural education and protect endangered traditions from disappearing.

By providing long-term support and recognition to these community-based learning systems, this bill affirms the State's commitment to safeguarding the nation's living heritage for present and future generations.

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


CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ
Lone District, Calamba City

**Republic of the Philippines HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City**

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 8523

Introduced by Honorable Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

**AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE SCHOOLS OF LIVING TRADITIONS (SLT), AMENDING
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10066, OR THE “NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ACT OF
2009,” AS AMENDED AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Article X of Republic Act No. 10066 or the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009”, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

**“ARTICLE X
CULTURAL EDUCATION**

x x x

SEC. 42. *Cultural Heritage Education Program.* – The DepEd, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the CHED, in consultation with the Commission, shall integrate into their respective curricula the teaching of Philippine Cultural Heritage, and ensure that the same is earnestly pursued by all schools and at all 9 education modes and levels. x x x

x x x

SEC. 42-A. *SCHOOL OF LIVING TRADITIONS.* – THE SCHOOL OF LIVING TRADITIONS (SLT) IS HEREBY INSTITUTIONALIZED AS A COMMUNITY–BASED, NON-FORMAL INTERGENERATIONAL CULTURAL EDUCATION MECHANISM WHERE CULTURAL MASTERS, ELDERS, OR PRACTITIONERS TRANSMIT LIVING TRADITIONS, SKILLS, AND VALUES TO YOUNGER GENERATIONS THROUGH DEMONSTRATION, PRACTICE, AND IMMERSION IN THE LIVING CONTEXT OF THE COMMUNITY. THE SLT SHALL BE THE NATIONAL PROGRAM AND FRAMEWORK UNDER THE COMMISSION TO ENSURE THE CONTINUITY, VIABILITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF TRADITIONAL AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES. THE SLT SHALL FORM PART OF THE NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SAFEGUARDING SYSTEM, TO ENSURE THE VIABILITY, CONTINUITY, AND TRANSMISSION OF LIVING TRADITIONS AND OTHER FORMS OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, INCLUDING ITS IDENTIFICATION, DOCUMENTATION, RESEARCH, PRESERVATION,

PROTECTION, PROMOTION, ENHANCEMENT, TRANSMISSION, AND REVITALIZATION THROUGH FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION. ALL SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITIES SHALL BE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE AND UNDERTAKEN WITH THE FREE AND PRIOR INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC) OF RELEVANT CULTURAL GROUPS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES. AS USED IN THIS ACT, A CULTURAL MASTER REFERS TO A RECOGNIZED INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP WHO HAS MASTERED A LIVING TRADITION AND IS RECOGNIZED BY THE COMMUNITY TO TRANSMIT SUCH KNOWLEDGE OR PRACTICE. LIVING TRADITIONS SHALL REFER TO CONTINUING SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICES, AND EXPRESSIONS ENCOMPASSING ORAL TRADITIONS, LANGUAGES, PERFORMING ARTS, SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITUALS, FESTIVE EVENTS, TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP, INDIGENOUS LIVELIHOOD SYSTEMS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT ARE CONTINUALLY TRANSMITTED, ADAPTED, AND RECREATED BY COMMUNITIES OVER TIME.

SEC. 42-B. *CENTER FOR SCHOOLS OF LIVING TRADITION.* – A CENTER FOR SCHOOLS OF LIVING TRADITIONS (CSLT) IS 8 HEREBY CREATED WITHIN THE COMMISSION, TO BE HEADED BY A CHIEF. THE CSLT SHALL SERVE AS THE TECHNICAL, RESEARCH, COORDINATION, AND MONITORING ARM OF THE SLT PROGRAM. THE CSLT SHALL:

- (A) DEVELOP AND UPDATE OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES, MANUALS, AND MONITORING TOOLS FOR SLT IMPLEMENTATION;
- (B) CONDUCT RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION, AND TRAINING FOR CULTURAL MASTERS, COMMUNITY CUSTODIANS, AND LOCAL PARTNERS;
- (C) MAINTAIN AND REGULARLY UPDATE THE NATIONAL SLT DATABASE AND ARCHIVES;
- (D) COORDINATE AND MONITOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION WITH TESDA, DEPED, CHED, NCIP, AND LGUs;
- (E) ADMINISTER GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES FOR CULTURAL MASTERS AND SLT COORDINATORS; AND
- (F) FACILITATE INTER-REGIONAL EXCHANGE AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS AMONG SLTs NATIONWIDE.

SEC. 42-C. *SLT PROGRAM LEAD IMPLEMENTING AGENCY.* – THE COMMISSION SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OVERALL COORDINATION, POLICY DIRECTION, AND SUPERVISION OF THE SLT PROGRAM. IN THIS CAPACITY, IT SHALL:

- (A) FORMULATE AND ADOPT NATIONAL POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND STANDARDS FOR THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SLTs;
- (B) ENSURE ALIGNMENT OF SLT PROGRAMS WITH NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORKS;
- (C) ALLOCATE AND ADMINISTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND GRANTS FOR ACCREDITED SLTs AND THEIR CULTURAL MASTERS;

(D) OVERSEE INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL;

(E) ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE FPIC OF INDIGENOUS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES, IN COORDINATION WITH THE NCIP;

(F) MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF SLT PROGRAMS NATIONWIDE; AND

(G) PREPARE THE STAFFING PATTERN OF THE CSLT, SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS.

SEC. 42-D. *SLT INTER-AGENCY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION.* – IN COORDINATION WITH THE COMMISSION, THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES SHALL:

(A) NCIP – FACILITATE COMMUNITY CONSENT AND SAFEGUARD THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS CULTURAL COMMUNITIES;

(B) DEPED – INTEGRATE SLT 20 METHODOLOGIES AND COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE INTO THE CULTURE-BASED LEARNING SYSTEMS;

(C) CHED – ENCOURAGE RESEARCH, ACADEMIC LINKAGES, AND PROGRAMS SUPPORTING LIVING TRADITIONS AND COMMUNITY-BASED PEDAGOGY;

(D) TESDA – HARMONIZE SLT CRAFT AND SKILLS TRAINING WITH TESDA’S CULTURE-BASED TRAINING REGULATIONS, ENSURING RESPECT FOR CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY WHILE SUPPORTING COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS;

(E) DILG – DIRECT LGUs TO INTEGRATE SLT PROGRAMS INTO LOCAL CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PROVIDE LOGISTICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT; AND

(F) LGUs – ALLOCATE FUNDS, DESIGNATE COMMUNITY CUSTODIANS OR LOCAL PARTNERS, AND PROVIDE SPACES OR FACILITIES FOR SLT ACTIVITIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL CULTURE AND ARTS COUNCILS.

x x x”

SEC. 2. *Appropriations.* – The initial amount necessary to implement the provisions of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the Commission. Thereafter, such amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The concerned LGUs shall likewise allocate and charge the amounts necessary for the implementation of this Act against their respective local funds.

SEC. 3. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Commission, in consultation with other agencies and representatives of indigenous and local communities shall, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder not otherwise affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, letters of instruction, proclamations, administrative orders, rules, or regulations that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,