

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

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8845



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (“UNESCO”) recognizes traditional sports and games as part of humanity’s intangible cultural heritage that must be safeguarded and transmitted to future generations. These traditional forms of play embody the values, skills, and cultural expressions of communities, and serve as important vehicles for social cohesion, education, and cultural continuity.

Indigenous sports and games refer to the traditional sports, games, or physical activities inherent to indigenous cultural communities, reflecting their customs, traditions, and way of life, which have been handed down from generation to generation. These include, among others, Arnis, Sipa, Palo-sebo, Sungka, Luksong Tinik, Patintero, Siato, and Tumbang Preso. Collectively, these activities represent a rich repository of cultural knowledge and practices that form an integral part of the nation’s intangible cultural heritage.

For generations, indigenous sports and games have played a vital role in shaping the formative years of Filipino youth. Beyond recreation, these traditional activities instill important values such as teamwork, discipline, resilience, respect, and camaraderie. They help build character, enhance social interaction, promote physical fitness, and provide meaningful avenues for cultural expression and community engagement.

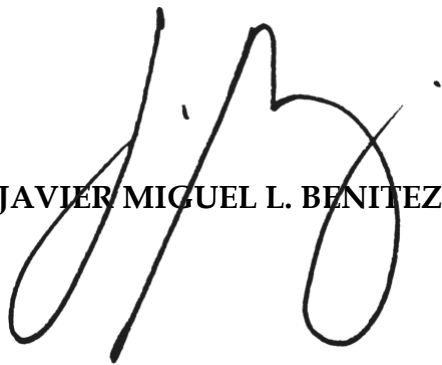
In recent years, however, the practice and transmission of indigenous sports and games have steadily declined. The growing prevalence of electronic gadgets, mobile devices, and console-based entertainment has increasingly displaced traditional forms of play. While technological advancement brings undeniable benefits, it is imperative to strike a healthy balance by encouraging physical activity, direct social interaction, and deeper engagement with the country’s cultural and natural environment. Without

deliberate intervention, many indigenous sports and games risk being forgotten, resulting in the gradual erosion of an important aspect of Filipino cultural identity.

In this regard, this bill seeks to protect, preserve, and promote indigenous sports and games as part of the nation's living heritage. The proposed measure mandates the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, in coordination with other concerned government agencies, to initiate programs and policies for the documentation, preservation, and promotion of traditional sports and games. It further mandates the Philippine Sports Commission to institutionalize an annual regional and national indigenous sports competition to encourage participation, ensure continuity of practice, and raise public awareness of these traditional games.

By institutionalizing government support for indigenous sports and games, this measure aims to promote cultural pride, strengthen community participation, foster healthy and active lifestyles among the youth, and ensure that these time-honored traditions remain a vibrant and enduring part of Philippine heritage.

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



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Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

**AN ACT PRESERVING THE TRADITIONAL AND INDIGENOUS SPORTS
AND GAMES OF THE PHILIPPINES**

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 “Laro ng Lahi Preservation Act”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – Article II, Section 22 of the 1987 Constitution provides that the State shall recognize and promote the rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities within the framework of national unity and development. Furthermore, Article 31.1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples enjoins all State signatories to take effective measures to recognize and protect the exercise of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the maintenance and development of their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional expressions, oral traditions, literature, designs, sports, and traditional games, among others.

Pursuant to these mandates, it is incumbent upon the State to lay down specific policy directives to promote the interests of Indigenous Peoples and strengthen the country’s cultural heritage and historical roots. The State shall take the necessary steps to preserve traditional and indigenous sports and games, which serve as avenues of self-expression and promote peace, harmony, goodwill, and camaraderie among communities.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act:

- (a) Traditional and Indigenous Sports and Games (“TISG”) - refer to the sports, games, or physical activities rooted in the traditions, customs, and cultural practices of Indigenous Cultural Communities and other local communities

in the Philippines, which have been transmitted from generation to generation and form part of the country's intangible cultural heritage. These include, but are not limited to, tribal archery, blowpipe, sibat, dug-out canoe race, rock balancing, *sumpit*, *sungka*, *patintero*, *tumbang preso*, *siato*, and other games distinct to particular communities.

- (b) Indigenous Cultural Communities ("ICCs") - shall refer to communities as defined under Republic Act No. 8371, otherwise known as the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act ("IPRA").

SEC. 4. *National Registry of Traditional and Indigenous Sports and Games.* – The National Commission for Culture and the Arts ("NCCA"), in coordination with the Philippine Sports Commission ("PSC"), the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples ("NCIP"), the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos ("NCMF"), and other relevant agencies, shall establish and maintain a National Registry of Traditional and Indigenous Sports and Games.

The National Registry shall:

- (a) Identify and document traditional and indigenous sports and games practiced by various ICCs and local communities across the country;
- (b) Record the historical, cultural, and technical aspects of each sport or game;
- (c) Serve as the official reference for programs, competitions, and preservation initiatives under this Act.

The National Registry shall be reviewed and updated every three (3) years, or as often as may be necessary.

SEC. 5. *Establishing an Annual Regional and National Traditional and Indigenous Sports and Games Competition.* – The PSC, in coordination with local government units ("LGUs"), shall conduct annual regional and national traditional and indigenous sports and games competitions.

The host LGU, in consultation with the concerned ICCs and cultural institutions, shall determine which sports will be included in the competitions.

SEC. 6. *Accreditation Standards for Traditional and Indigenous Sports and Games.* – The NCCA, in coordination with the PSC, NCIP, NCMF, and relevant stakeholders, shall establish accreditation standards and guidelines for traditional and indigenous sports and games recognized under the National Registry.

Such standards shall include:

- (a) Criteria for recognizing official events and competitions;
- (b) Guidelines for preserving cultural authenticity and traditional practices;

- (c) Safety standards for the conduct of competitions; and
- (d) Mechanisms for accrediting organizations, cultural groups, and institutions promoting such sports and games.

SEC. 7. *Integration into the Educational Curriculum.* – The Department of Education (“DepEd”), in coordination with the NCCA, PSC, NCIP, and NCMF, shall ensure the integration of traditional and indigenous sports and games into the basic education curriculum, particularly in Physical Education and culture-based learning modules.

The Commission on Higher Education (“CHED”) shall likewise encourage higher education institutions to incorporate traditional and indigenous sports and games in relevant academic and athletic programs.

SEC. 8. *Incentives for Host Local Government Units.* – Local government units that host regional or national traditional and indigenous sports competitions may be granted incentives by the national government, subject to applicable laws, including:

- (a) Priority access to national sports development grants;
- (b) Technical and logistical support from the PSC and relevant agencies;
- (c) Recognition programs for LGUs that demonstrate exemplary efforts in promoting traditional and indigenous sports and games.

The PSC may likewise extend financial assistance to host LGUs to support the conduct of such competitions.

SEC. 9. *Other Means of Preserving Traditional and Indigenous Sports and Games.*
– The NCCA, NCIP, and NCMF, in coordination with the DepEd, CHED, and Philippine Information Agency (“PIA”), shall initiate measures to preserve traditional and indigenous sports and games in the country.

These measures may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Inclusion of such games in educational curricula;
- (b) Production of documentaries and educational materials;
- (c) Conduct of exhibitions, demonstrations, and cultural festivals featuring traditional and indigenous sports and games;
- (d) Demonstrations during the Palarong Pambansa and other national sporting events.

The NCCA shall likewise conduct research on the various sports traditionally played by different indigenous groups to ensure their preservation and development.

SEC. 10. *Funding.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The PSC may also utilize available funds from the National Sports Development Fund established under Republic Act No. 6847, as well as receive grants, donations, and other lawful funding support from government or private sources for purposes consistent with this Act.

SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The NCCA and PSC, as lead agencies, in coordination with NCIP, NCMF, DepEd, CHED, PIA, and the LGUs, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity.

SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, issuances, decrees, rules, and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,