



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10711



Introduced by Representative Ma. Victoria Co-Pilar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A person's name is a fundamental aspect of identity, dignity, and individuality. The principles of individual liberty and self-expression are among the hallmarks of our great vibrant democracy. Every person is afforded the freedom to define and express one's identity, so long as the exercise of such freedom does not prejudice the rights of others or the public interest. When we think of our first names, it is more than a mere entry in the civil registry; it is the name by which a person is identified in everything that matters. In school, employment, financial transactions, government records, and everyday social interactions, we are known by our first names. It is our very mark in society. Over the course of one's life, an individual may come to identify more closely with a different first name that better reflects one's identity rather than the name by which one has long been known.

Consistent with these principles, Republic Act No. 9048 authorized the administrative change of first name under specified circumstances, sparing thousands of Filipinos from costly and time-consuming judicial proceedings. Nevertheless, the law remains narrowly drawn, as it limits the administrative change of a first name to only three specific statutory grounds: the first name is embarrassing or impractical; the petitioner has long and consistently used another first name; or the change will prevent confusion. As a result, individuals who seek to adopt a first name solely as an exercise of personal autonomy remain without an appropriate administrative remedy. This limitation fails to reflect the evolving recognition that personal identity encompasses an individual's reasonable freedom to determine how one wishes to be known and identified as.

As society becomes more dynamic and individuals place greater importance on self-identification, the law should likewise evolve to accommodate legitimate requests that do not prejudice public order or the rights of third persons. This bill therefore proposes to amend Section 4 of Republic Act No. 9048 by recognizing the exercise of personal autonomy as an additional ground for the administrative change of a first name. To safeguard the integrity of the civil registry, the proposed ground is subject to clear limitations: the change may be availed of only once and only when it is not sought for any fraudulent, malicious, or unlawful purpose. These safeguards preserve the State's interest in preventing identity fraud while affording individuals reasonable latitude in determining the name by which they wish to be known.

Recognizing personal autonomy in matters of one's first name is consistent with the constitutional values of human dignity, liberty, and the free development of personality. Identity is not merely an administrative concern; it is a fundamental expression of personhood that deserves reasonable legal recognition. Or simply because for a lot of people: to be known matters.

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



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AN ACT

**PROVIDING ADDITIONAL GROUND FOR CHANGE OF FIRST NAME, THEREBY
AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTION 4 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9048**

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

Section 1. Section 4 of RA 9048 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 4. Grounds for Change of First Name or Nickname. – The petition for change of first name
or nickname may be allowed in any of the following cases:

(1) Xxx

**(4) THE PETITIONER EXERCISES THE RIGHT TO PERSONAL AUTONOMY,
PROVIDED THAT SUCH CHANGE SHALL BE ALLOWED ONLY ONCE AND IS
NOT MADE FOR FRAUDULENT OR MALICIOUS PURPOSES.**

Sec. 2. Separability Clause. – If any part, section, or provision of this Act is held invalid or
unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 3. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof,
inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Sec. 4. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official
Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,