


THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
FIRST REGULAR SESSION)

'04 JUN 30 P11:07

SENATE
S. B. No. 913

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II Section 17 of the Philippine Constitution states that "The State shall give priority to education, sciences and technology, arts, culture and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development."

The rich heritage of the Filipino people have attracted a number of scholars, both local and foreign, to venture into further studies in this area. Valuable books and chronicles, as well as historical artifacts and materials are very rich sources of information about our culture and tradition. A Filipino cannot boast of being a true Filipino if he is not aware of his cultural origin.

Filipinos who are permanent or temporary residents abroad, whether workers or students, are not exemptions to this responsibility. In cognizance of the role of the State in the promotion of the appreciation and awareness of the Philippine national heritage, this "Education and Heritage Program for Overseas Filipinos Act of 2004" is being proposed. This bill intends to teach Filipino language and Philippine history and institution in the Philippine diplomatic and consular establishments. It also provides for the establishment of the Philippine schools and Filipiniana Resource Centers in different Filipino communities abroad. These measures will equip the overseas Filipinos with knowledge about their very own culture and tradition.

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


JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA
Senator

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AN ACT
TO PROVIDE FOR THE PRESERVATION AND CULTIVATION OF THE
FILIPINO HERITAGE AMONG FILIPINOS OVERSEAS THROUGH THE
TEACHING OF FILIPINO LANGUAGE AND HISTORY, ASSISTANCE IN THE
ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF PHILIPPINE SCHOOLS AND
FILIPINIANA RESOURCE CENTERS ABROAD, AND THE CREATION OF A
COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE AND CULTURE FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINOS,
AN APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Title. This Act shall be known and cited as the "Education and Heritage Program for Overseas Filipinos Act of 2004."

SECTION 2. Declaration Policies. The State recognizes the importance of education, both formal and informal, as a means of promoting human development, fostering patriotism and nationalism, accelerating progress, and propagating knowledge about the Philippines' history and cultural heritage.

It is also the policy of the State to preserve, promote, and enhance the ties between the Philippine homeland and the Filipino communities overseas, in particular with younger generations of Filipinos overseas, in order to keep them from being alienated from their native country and to provide them with knowledge and values that would contribute to the shaping of their Filipino character and identity.

Toward this end, the State shall develop and promote the provision of critical educational needs, as well as the continued exposure of younger generations of Filipinos overseas to the Filipino language and Philippine history and institutions.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. For the purposes of this Act:

- a) "Overseas Filipinos" shall refer to Filipinos who are permanent or temporary residents abroad namely, Filipino emigrants who are defined as clientele of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas workers, and all Filipino youth and students abroad.
- b) "Philippine Schools Abroad" shall refer to any educational institutions abroad whose establishment is duly recognized, its educational program accredited, and upon meeting the minimum standards or criteria, given a permit to operate as a Philippine school by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

SECTION 4. Preservation of the Filipino Heritage. The State through its relevant agencies and instrumentalities, and in cooperation with communities or associations abroad, shall preserve and promote Filipino heritage and culture among Filipinos overseas through the following activities.

- a) Teaching of Filipino Language and Philippine History and Institutions. - All Philippine diplomatic and consular establishments shall provide assistance and support to Filipino communities and associations, as well as other organizations overseas, to encourage the conduct of regular or weekend classes in Filipino and in Philippine history and institutions for the benefit of children parentage and overseas Filipinos in general.
- b) Assistance in the Establishment and Operation of Philippine Schools Abroad. The Philippine schools to be established abroad pursuant to this Act shall be community-based institutions to provide courses of instruction in the elementary and secondary levels, consistent and in accordance with the Philippine educational system and other regulations as may be promulgated by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports.
- c) Establishment and Operation of Filipiniana Resource Centers. - All Philippine diplomatic and consular establishments shall allocate space for the establishment and maintenance of a permanent library and collection of Filipiniana materials such as books, films, video and audio tapes, journals, photographs, musical scores, artwork and artifacts, for reference and use by members of Filipino communities overseas.

SECTION 5. Role of Philippine Diplomatic and Consular Establishment Overseas.

All diplomatic and consular establishments shall make available to overseas Filipinos the services of an officer to promote programs and activities in furtherance of this Act. Among other duties, this officer shall perform the following:

- a) Organize, in coordination with community members, the conduct of regular classes in Filipino and Philippine history at embassy/consulate premises or other venues;
- b) Organize the conduct of special lectures and discussion meetings on Philippine history, culture, institutions and current events, and
- c) Assist members of the Filipino community in organizing regular community-based classes in Filipino and Philippine history.

SECTION 6. Establishment of a Committee on Heritage and Culture for Overseas Filipinos. - The cooperation among Government departments and agencies shall be vital in carrying out the objectives of this Act. Toward this end, a Committee on Heritage and Culture for Overseas Filipinos shall be established and composed of the heads of, but not limited to, the following agencies: the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), National Commission on the Culture and Arts (NCCA), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Commission on Filipino Language, and the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO).

- a) The Committee on Heritage and Culture for Overseas Filipinos shall be chaired by the Department of Education Culture and Sports, and co-chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- b) The Commission on Filipinos Overseas shall provide Secretariat support and take the lead in coordinating and implementing the programs and activities of the Committee on Heritage and Culture for Overseas Filipinos.

SECTION 7. Responsibilities of the Committee on Heritage and Culture for Overseas Filipinos. - The Committee shall have the following powers, duties and responsibilities.

- a) Formulate policies and guidelines to carry out the provisions of this Act, including the promulgation of rules and regulations necessary thereof;
- b) Develop appropriate strategies for the teaching of Philippine history and language among overseas Filipinos, including the use of innovative educational methods and advanced information technologies;
- c) Assign specific duties and responsibilities to Committee members as may be necessary in carrying out the policies and provisions of this Act;

- d) Provide periodic study, monitoring and assessment of the programs and services as provided for in this Act to advance Filipino heritage and culture among overseas Filipinos;
- e) Ensure effective and efficient implementation of policies and programs under this Act through the holding of regular meetings or consultative meetings and development of a coordinated reporting system for member agencies and other instrumentalities; and
- f) Call on any agency of the government, private sector, and the academe for support to the programs in this Act as may be established by the Committee.

SECTION 8. Participation of Filipino Associations and Communities

Abroad. - Filipino associations and Filipino communities abroad shall be activated as primary partners of government department and agencies concerned in the operationalization and implementation of this Act.

SECTION 9. Appropriations and Other Sources of Funding. To initially carry out programs under the provisions of this Act, the amount of Ten Million Pesos (P10,000,000.00) is hereby initially appropriated for the Committee Secretariat, of which Three Million Pesos (P3,000,000.00) shall come from revenues of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas; and Seven Million Pesos (P7,000,000.00) from travel tax collections, with such amounts to be automatically appropriated from the General Funds for subsequent years.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The Committee on Heritage and Culture for Overseas Filipinos, composed of Government departments and agencies charged with carrying out the provisions of this Act shall, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, formulate the necessary rules and regulations for effective implementation thereof.

SECTION 11. 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 12. Separability Clause. If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other sections or provisions shall not be affected thereby and shall continue to be operative.

SECTION 13. Effectivity Clause. This law shall take effect after (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation whichever, comes earlier.

Approved.