

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3376



Introduced by BAYAN MUNA Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE

AN ACT
DECLARING ANDRES BONIFACIO AS THE NATIONAL HERO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

With the recent nationalist films like “Bonifacio: Ang Unang Pangulo” and “Heneral Luna” enjoying numerous awards and millions of viewers, patriotism has been rekindled in the hearts of our people. We must seize this opportunity to further educate the youth on our true history and heritage, especially now that there are conscious efforts from some quarters to rewrite our history and present their revisionist versions to promote their self-serving interests.

In a time when the nation is challenged by foreign intervention, whether by force or by deceit, whether it be by the US or China, the need for a national symbol that would represent patriotism, nationalism and the resolve to fight against any foreign intervention and control becomes a vital element in nation-building.

However, there has never been a legislation declaring one a national hero. Instead there were only a number of proclamations that gave recognition and honor to a few historical figures for their contribution to society. The most famous of whom are Jose Rizal and Andres Bonifacio.

A Decree issued by Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo on December 20, 1898, declared December 30 of every year a day of national mourning in honor of Dr. Jose Rizal and other victims of the Philippine Revolution. The Taft Commission, the legislative body created by the American government, named a Province after Rizal to also honor him.

Meanwhile, it was the Philippine Legislature through Act No. 2964 issued on February 16, 1921 that made November 30 of each year a legal holiday to commemorate the birth of Andres Bonifacio. The Philippine Legislature also issued Act No. 2760 in 1918 authorizing the erection of a monument to the memory of Bonifacio.

In 1993, a National Heroes Committee was created through Executive Order No. 75 to “study, evaluate and recommend Filipino national personages/heroes in due recognition of their sterling character and remarkable achievements for the country.”

Soon, after a series of meetings, the Committee has come up with a list of candidates to become the National Hero. But since 1995, when the Committee Report was submitted to the then Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS), there has been no action yet. Some opinions say that deciding on a name might spur debates as to some historical controversies about the lives of our heroes.

It has long been a debate in schools and other venues of learning, and even among ordinary Filipinos, who between Rizal and Bonifacio must the title National Hero attach. A lot has also been said in favor or against both heroes. It is also a fact that both are heroes in their own respective right.

It is true that Jose Rizal through his writings was able to put across the need for changes in the country that was dominated by Spanish colonial power. His writings influenced intellectuals who actively participated in the fight for reforms in society.

Andres Bonifacio, on the other hand, was an intellectual impassioned by the need to change the oppressive and exploitative system not merely by writing about it but also by acting on it. Thus he organized the Katipunero's KKK.

The difference, in so far as contribution to society is concerned, lies in the ability of Bonifacio to translate Rizal's writings into a language understandable to the Filipino masses and to transform and develop them into practice. Because of his actual participation in the KKK, Bonifacio was able to organize and mobilize thousands of Katipuneros in a revolution that ended the regime of Spanish Colonization and led towards a Filipino nation's independence.

Bonifacio's heroism inspires in us the patriotism and nationalism that is resolute and uncompromising which the people and especially the youth must learn and imbibe.

In view of the foregoing, and in commemoration of the 153rd birth anniversary of Andres Bonifacio on November 30, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-list

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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 “Andres Bonifacio Act of 2016.”

SECTION 2. Andres Bonifacio is hereby declared as the National Hero.

SECTION 3. The National Commission For Culture and the Arts shall craft and execute pertinent policies under its mandate for the effective implementation of this Act. The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education shall likewise make the necessary policies to ensure that education on the life and heroism of Bonifacio be integrated in elementary, secondary and tertiary curriculum, history books be updated, and other pertinent information be disseminated, as well.

SECTION 4. The Department of Public Works and Highways, in coordination with the respective Local Government Units, shall erect an Andres Bonifacio bust in every Provincial City or Municipal plaza nationwide.

SECTION 5. *Appropriations.* – Considering that this Act, even if it is of national significance, does not require substantial or new appropriation. The amount necessary for the implementation shall be sourced from the regular budgets of the Department and LGUs concerned during the first year from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 4. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive and administrative orders or parts thereof, inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 4. *Effectivity.*– This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,