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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6513



Introduced by Honorable Danilo Ramon S. Fernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The great Filipino statesman, Carlos P. Romulo, in his address delivered at the First Commencement Exercises of the Emilio Aguinaldo College, on March 29, 1981 in Dasmariñas, Cavite, paid tribute to Generalissimo Emilio Aguinaldo, the president of the first Philippine Republic. He said Aguinaldo was a man whom we have not honored enough. The full measure of his worth, of his importance to his nation and history, lies obscured by controversy and legend. The full extent of the neglect by us of that part of our history is only now emerging, and we have missed the opportunity to recognize the great service to the nation by a leader while he was still with us. Quoting from his address, Romulo said:

"Ours antedated the Chinese Revolution, it was the first guerrilla war in Asia waged by a colonized people against not only one, but two, colonial powers, antedating Vietnam by a good fifty years.

Generalissimo Emilio Aguinaldo deserves a larger and more central place in the history of our struggle for self-determination and our national liberation. For he was the leader who made all these 'first' possible. His was a sustained drive toward the full independence of the Philippines, which came to grief only because at that time it was not yet fashionable for colonial peoples to be freed from the yoke of colonial rule, denying Aguinaldo the assistance of the International Community.

The habiliments of a traditional hero suited him ill - he was shy, prudent to a fault and remarkably unassertive. But he had one shining virtue: He had the will of iron in his undeviating pursuit of the ideals of his people.

National heroes come in different molds. Nehru and Washington were patricians. But to find the closest analogue to Aguinaldo, we have to go back to classical times. He was the Cincinnatus of the Philippines, called to action by popular acclaim and by his own sense of duty."

In short, Aguinaldo contributed immensely to the formation of the Filipino nation. He

1 bequeathed the Filipino people with our most important symbols—the national flag, our
2 national anthem, and the country's Independence Day.

3
4 He organized the first Filipino Republican Army and Navy, defeated the Spaniards in
5 1898 and held 9,000 of them prisoners.

6
7 Aguinaldo gave the Filipinos our first taste of independence and self-government
8 under a republic that he established after more than 300 years of Spanish subjugation.

9
10 He led the defense of this republic against American aggression forcing the United
11 States to deploy 125,000 troops and spend \$400 million for a war that took more than six
12 years to pacify.

13
14 Notwithstanding the calumnies and false accusations hurled against his person,
15 Aguinaldo will remain a great Filipino hero. His legacy shall be enduring because his
16 monument is not an imposing figure or obelisk, but, rather, according to Gen Douglas
17 MacArthur, it is the Republic of the Philippines.

18
19 The country rightfully celebrates our heroes who played significant roles in our history.
20 December 30 is a national holiday in honor of Dr. Jose Rizal, and November 30 is celebrated
21 to honor the Katipunan Supremo Andres Bonifacio. It is time to honor the Generalissimo and
22 the country's first president, Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy with a national day.

23
24 March 22, 1869 is the date Aguinaldo was born. At twenty-seven years old he won his
25 first battle against the Spaniards which was followed by more military successes culminating
26 in the liberation of the province of Cavite from Spanish rule, the first and only province to do
27 so at the time. He led a revolution that spread not only in the different provinces of Luzon but
28 also in some parts of the Visayas and Mindanao. At twenty-nine years old, he declared
29 Philippine independence and established the first Philippine republic in Malolos, the first in
30 Asia.

31
32 March 22, 1897 is another important date in our history. It is the date of the Tejeros
33 Convention that elected Aguinaldo as President of the joint forces of the revolution. He was
34 elected in absentia as he was at the frontlines of the Pasong Santol battlefield.

35
36 No other Filipino, past or present, can equal or even come close to his
37 accomplishments in the defense of our country's independence. It is, therefore, proper and
38 fitting for a grateful nation to mark March 22 of each year as a national day to honor
39 Generalissimo and first President Emilio Aguinaldo.

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DANILO RAMON S. FERNANDEZ
1ST District, Laguna

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6513

Introduced by **Rep. DANILO RAMON S. FERNANDEZ**

AN ACT
DECLARING MARCH 22 OF EACH YEAR AS A REGULAR NATIONAL HOLIDAY TO
HONOR GENERAL AND FIRST PRESIDENT EMILIO AGUINALDO TO BE KNOWN AS
AGUINALDO DAY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. It is hereby declared that March 22 of each year shall be a regular national holiday to honor the memory of a great Filipino, Generalissimo and first President, Emilio Aguinaldo.

SECTION 2. The National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) is hereby designated as the lead agency for the yearly observance of Aguinaldo Day. The NHCP may convene an inter-agency task force to plan, coordinate, and effectively implement programs, projects and activities relative to these celebrations.

Such programs, projects, and activities shall aim to instill among Filipinos, particularly the younger generations, a deeper appreciation of the country's struggle towards freedom and independence, and the important role that Generalissimo and first President Emilio Aguinaldo played in it.

SECTION 3. All departments, agencies, bureaus, offices and national government agencies, local government units and government-owned or -controlled corporations, as well as public educational institutions at all levels, shall give full support and assistance, consistent with their respective mandates, to the NHCP in the exercise of its responsibilities under this Act.

SECTION 4. All laws, orders presidential issuances, rules and regulations or part thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

1 **SECTION 5.** This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in
2 the Official Gazette and in at least two newspapers of general circulation.
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4 Approved,
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