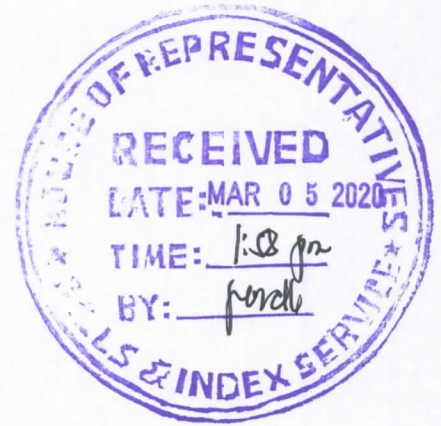


Republic of the  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES** Philippines  
Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session



**COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 274**

Submitted by the Committee on Local Government on **MAR 05 2020**  
Re: House Bill No. 2397

Recommending its approval without amendment  
Sponsors: Representatives Noel L. Villanueva and Lawrence Lemuel H. Fortun

Mr. Speaker:

The Committee on Local Government to which was referred House Bill No. 2397 introduced by Representative Lawrence Lemuel H. Fortun, entitled:

**“AN ACT  
DECLARING MAY 19 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN  
THE CITY OF BUTUAN IN CELEBRATION OF THE BALANGAY FESTIVAL”**

has considered the same and recommends that the said bill be approved without amendment with Representative Lawrence Lemuel H. Fortun as author thereof.

Respectfully submitted:

**NOEL L. VILLANUEVA**

Chairman

Committee on Local Government

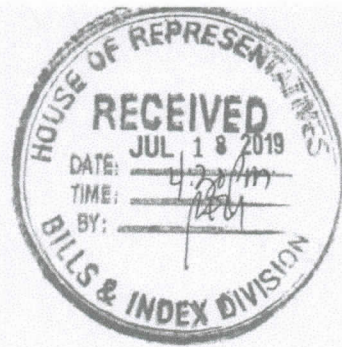
**THE HONORABLE SPEAKER  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**



Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2397



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Introduced by **Rep. LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Balangay Festival is a celebration in Butuan City that commemorates the rich history of Butuanons that is encapsulated in the *Balangay* boats. These vessels, where a flotilla was found in the city, are the first-ever wooden watercraft to be excavated in Southeast Asia that serve as evidences of the extensive and vibrant trade relations between our ancestors and neighboring countries and empires around Southeast Asia, even as far as China.

More than a proof of boatbuilding genius and sailing tradition of a thousand years, the Balangay is also a cherished symbol of Filipino communities as voyages in the high seas nurtured the values of solidarity, resilience, and fortitude. As such, it has been used even before the arrival of the Spaniards to refer to the smallest political unit in the Philippines – the *barangay*.<sup>1</sup> With the national historical significance of the balangay, it has become a pride and joy of every Filipino, especially the people of Butuan; thus, an indelible part of the Butuanon identity.

The festival was first known as the Mazaua Festival from 1981 to 1985. It was then dubbed the “Freedom Festival” upon the takeover of the transition Revolutionary Government in 1986. It was only in 1987 when the annual festivity was more aptly renamed Balangay Festival to celebrate the rich and colorful history of Butuan City.

During the Balangay Festival, the City of Butuan hosts an array of activities including the celebrated Balangay lighted float parade, indigenous street dances, sports competitions, trade fairs, musical concerts, art exhibits and competitions, alumni and *balikbayan* homecomings, the Search for the Mutya Hong Butuan (The Gem of Butuan), thanksgiving activities, and more. The conduct of the festival is at all times a multi-sectoral effort with the city government, government agencies, the academe, the business sector, the religious sector, and the civic society contributing to make each celebration a success.

The Balangay Festival is a month-long celebration with the pinnacle of its festivity on May 19. Due to its social and cultural importance, this bill seeks to declare May 19 of every year a special nonworking holiday in the City of Butuan to give the Butuanons the opportunity to take active and meaningful participation in this longstanding tradition of celebrating a monumental legacy of our ancestors that should be etched in the consciousness of every Butuanon.

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

**LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN**  
1<sup>st</sup> District of Agusan del Norte



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<sup>1</sup> Zamora, Mario D. "Political History, Autonomy and Change: The Case of the Barrio Charter." *Asian Studies Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia* 5, no. 1 (1967): 79-100. January 11, 2013. Accessed July 9, 2019. <https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-05-01-1967/zamora-political-history-autonomy-change-barrio-charter.pdf>.



Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2397

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Introduced by **Rep. LAWRENCE LEMUEL H. FORTUN**

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**AN ACT**  
**DECLARING MAY 19 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL NONWORKING HOLIDAY IN**  
**THE CITY OF BUTUAN, IN CELEBRATION OF THE BALANGAY FESTIVAL**

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

**Section 1.** May 19 of every year is hereby declared a special nonworking holiday in the City of Butuan, in celebration of the Balangay Festival. When the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the special nonworking day shall be observed on the Monday that follows.

**Section 2.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.