



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Constitution Hills, Batasan Complex, Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3012

Introduced by Representative **ADOLPH EDWARD G. PLAZA**
2ND District, Agusan del Sur

**“AN ACT
ESTABLISHING LOCAL LANGUAGE AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT TOWARDS PEOPLE’S GREATER PARTICIPATION IN
GOVERNANCE”**

Explanatory Note

At the root of a strong nation are an empowered people. Language is the most basic instrument with which people and society express and exercise power. Our own history taught us how language was used as an instrument of domination and liberation. For more than 300 years Spanish language reduced us into *salvajes* (savages) providing the rationale for Spain’s civilizing and Christianizing missions. Bonifacio’s Tagalog liberated our land from the yoke of Spanish colonialism but was short lived. The coming of the Americans at the turn of the 20th century introduced English as the new language of power that defined Filipinos as barbarians and illiterates needing civilization and education. American English shaped our minds, created America’s “Little Brown Brothers” ----Filipinos who think, speak and act like Americans while despising their native self.

Beginning with the Commonwealth Constitution, Filipino was made a national language based on Tagalog but never made it as the official language of Government. The present Constitution upholds Filipino as the national language but the absence of enabling law had English continue to be the language of government, thus the language of power. With majority of our people naturally speak and think in their local languages, the hegemonic presence of English greatly reduces people’s participation in government.

The bill seeks to preserve and promote the people's everyday language by making it the official language of local governance in both oral and written form.

This bill will also contribute and help facilitate the enrichment process of Filipino language in Section 6, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution which provides:

"The national language of the Philippines is Filipino. As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages. xxx"

Facilitate and make communications efficient and effective between people and government minimizing, if not completely avoiding miscommunications, lost in translation and misunderstandings; and,

By making the people's language as the language of power, at least in their respective localities, the bill aims to encourage more people to participate in governance and towards contributing to people's empowerment nationwide.

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



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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Local Governance Language Act”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. Section 6, Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution states that the national language of the Philippines is Filipino, and its development and enrichment shall be made based on existing Philippine and other languages. The Constitution further mandates the Government to take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication.

It is vital that these existing regional languages be preserved and promoted as it a means of enriching and shaping the “Filipino” language. The preservation and promotion of these languages are accomplished through its usage such as creating recorded and printed resources and in speaking the same.

The usage of these regional languages in official communication molds individuals into becoming well-informed citizens strengthening the people’s participation in local governance and, hence, empowers the people as intended by the framers of the 1987 Constitution. These objectives are also enunciated in the provision relating to the State policy which recognizes the vital role of communication

and information in nation-building.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* The following terms as used in this Act shall be defined as follows:

- a.) **Aliens-** refers to natural and juridical persons who are not citizens of the Philippines.
- b.) **Communication-** refers to the transmission, conveyance, sharing, exchanging of verbal and written messages within, among and between local government units. It includes, but not limited to letters of correspondence, letters of instructions, circulars, memorandums, orders, resolutions, ordinances, veto messages of the local chief executives, and other similar documents. It also refers to transactions made between natural and/or juridical persons and the concerned local government units.
- c.) **Local Governance-** refers to the organizations, duties and responsibilities, functions of public authorities who participate in the administration of local government units. It covers the relations between the local government units and its constituents, between the local government units and the non-governmental entities.
- d.) **Local Language-** refers to the language dominant and commonly spoken in barangays.
- e.) **Non-residents-** refers to natural and juridical persons residing outside the territory of the local government unit.
- f.) **Non-speakers –** refers to natural persons who are not speakers of the language dominant in the territory of the local government unit.
- g.) **Regional Language-** refers to the language dominant and commonly spoken in the province and recognized as such by pertinent departments, commissions, agencies of the government.

SECTION 4. *Usage of the Regional Language.* This Act declares the usage of the regional language in all official communications within, among and between the municipal governments and provincial governments; to wit: between municipal governments, between provincial governments and between municipal governments and provincial governments.

Official communications within, between and among barangay units shall be made in the local language known to the parties; otherwise, the regional language shall be utilized if the former is unknown.

Natural and juridical persons shall communicate with the concerned local government units using regional or local language, as the case maybe.

SECTION 5. *Scope.* This Act shall apply to all forms of communications, verbal and written within, among and between the local governments; to wit, communications between barangays, between municipalities, between provincial governments, exchanges between barangays and municipalities; municipalities to their respective provincial governments and vice-versa.

SECTION 6. *Exceptions.* The following entities and persons are excepted to the application of this Act:

- a.) **The National Government.** Communications between the National Government and the local government units shall be made in the official language of the Philippines which are Filipino and English.

Standard Government Forms and the like documents shall not be affected by this Act and shall remain as it is, unless otherwise provided by law.

- b.) **Non-residents, Non-speakers and Aliens.** Communications between the local government units and the non-residents of the place where the LGU is located, non-speakers of the regional language and aliens may be made in the official language of the Philippines which are Filipino and English.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned exceptions, there is nothing in this provision which prohibits the usage of the regional and local language by the foregoing, and hereby, recommends the usage of these languages, if known.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Department of Interior and Local Government, together with the National Language Commission in partnership with pertinent academic institutions, shall craft the necessary implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

Within six (6) months following the approval of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Interior of Local Government (DILG) shall issue the implementing rules and regulations and circulars necessary to effectively implement the provisions hereof.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or the application of such provision to other person or circumstance shall not be affected by such declaration.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* -All laws, decrees, letters of instructions, executive orders and rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof in consistent or in conflict with any provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* -This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,