

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2139

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Introduced by Hon. LEOPOLDO N. BATAOIL

EXPLANATORY NOTE

"If I learn to write well, my language will never disappear."

-- Machiguenga man at a writer's workshop in Peru

"While a people preserve its language; it preserves the marks of liberty."

-- EL FILIBUSTERISMO, 1887

Pedro Chirino (1557-1635) served in the Philippines for 12 years. He arrived in May 1590 and left in July 1602, and thus saw and described the Philippines and the Filipinos during the early years of the Spanish conquest. Perhaps the most cited chapter in his work concerns the pre-Spanish writing or baybayin.

In "Relacion de las islas Filipinas" by Pedro Chirino, which was originally published in Rome in 1604 and made more accessible in a bilingual edition of 1969 with a translation from the original Spanish by Ramon Echevarria.

Here Chirino stated that: "So accustomed are all these islanders to writing and reading that there is scarcely a man, and much less a woman, who cannot read and write in letters proper to the island of Manila, very different from those of China, Japan, or India." He even drew the various letters of the baybayin, explaining how this was written and read.

Dr. Ambeth R. Ocampo is the chair of the Department of History at Ateneo de Manila University wrote an article in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on August 22, 2011 titled, Did young Rizal really write poem for children? In 1892, Jose Rizal began a new novel in Tagalog. He realized that in order to reach a wider readership in his country, he had to write in his native tongue. During this time of exile in Hong Kong, his elder brother, Paciano, had completed a translation of the "Noli Me Tangere" from the original Spanish into Tagalog that was corrected and finalized by Rizal. Envisioned as a popular edition with illustrations by Juan Luna, this book was never to be. The original manuscript translation by Paciano has since been missing.

Rizal spoke and wrote in Tagalog fluently and writes this poem at 8 years old, "Sa Aking Mga Kabata," traditionally believed to be his first poem. Isn't the most quoted line from Rizal's many poems that from "Sa Aking Mga Kabata" that goes, "Ang hindi marunong magmahal sa sariling wika/masahol pa sa hayop at malansang isda." (He who loves not his own language/is worse than a beast and a stinking fish.)

SA AKING MGA KABATA

Jose Rizal, 1869

*Kapagka ang baya'y sadyang umiibigsa kanyang salitang kaloob ng langit.
Sanlang kalayaan nasa ring masapit katulad ng ibong nasa himpapawid.*

*Pagka't ang salita'y isang kahatulan sa bayan, sa nayo't mga kaharian,
at ang isang tao'y katulad kabagay ng alinmang likha noong kalayaan.*

*Ang hindi magmahal sa kanyang salita mahigit sa hayop at malansang isda,
kaya ang marapat pagyamaning kusana tulad sa inang tunay na nagpala.
Ang wikang Tagalog tulad din sa Latin, sa Ingles, Kastila, at salitang angel,
ang Poong maalam tuminginang siyang nag-gawad, nagbigay sa atin.*

*Ang salita nati'y tulad din sa iba na may alfabeto at sariling letra
na kaya nawala'y dinatnan ng sigwa ang lunday sa lawa noong dakong una.*

To honor the memory of the Rizal family and Rizal's way of thinking, to celebrate the birthday of my hero, let me tell you about a neglected poem of his. It is now my favorite example of misplaced emphasis on detail, this poem that Jose Rizal wrote when he was only 8 years old (Asuncion Lopez-Rizal, 1994, Indio Bravo, page 24).

Rizal subtly imparted what he knew in Baybayin in many forms and the most explicit was his Catapusan or end notes of Rizal's translation from German to Tagalog of Wilhelm (1804), Ramon Guillermo (PhD) 2005.

Through his Novels, On Pilosopo Tasyo: One is tempted to smile at the philosopher's timidity. He lives in subterfuge, writing in hieroglyphics (actually Baybayin) to hide from the authorities and their collaborators. He writes, he said, for future generations, which he knows will be enlightened enough to understand him. (Manila Bulletin Editorial 2004)

On the cover of Noli Me Tangere, Jose Rizal imbedded Baybayin scripts on the cover of his novel Noli Me Tangere to mislead the Spanish authorities of the real intent of his writing. The novel depicts the status of the Philippines as shown by the Baybayin scripts *ba ya a ni u* or "anyong bayan." Rizal finished Noli me Tangere in 1887 when he was just 23 years old and while in Germany.

It is therefore fitting to commemorate the birth Anniversary of Dr. Jose P. Rizal by declaring June 19 of every year as "Araw ng Pagsulat". Araw ng Pagsulat aims to promote baybayin and writing, motivate our people to learn from the life and writings of Dr. Jose P. Rizal, uphold our own heritage and values, and generate awareness about our cultures and philosophies. It also seeks to make writing and writing baybayin a shared physical experience, thereby increasing its relevance amidst the proliferation of online activities specifically the youth.

Thus, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



HON. LEOPOLDO N. BATAOIL

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Introduced by Hon. LEOPOLDO N. BATOIL

**AN ACT DECLARING EVERY 19th DAY OF JUNE AS “ARAW NG PAGSULAT”,
A SPECIAL WORKING HOLIDAY**

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

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as “Araw ng Pagsulat”.

SEC. 2. The State recognizes and supports endeavors that promote "baybayin" and writing, motivate awareness and uphold our Filipino heritage and culture, including educational activities focusing on the life of Dr. Jose Protacio Rizal, whose role in our country's history was influenced by great writings of different individuals.

The State likewise recognizes the importance of promoting writing as a shared activity among the youth, families, educators and the private sector, thereby emphasizing personal interaction and facilitating the exchange of ideas throughout the country.

SEC. 3. June 19 of every year is hereby declared as “Araw ng Pagsulat”, which shall be a special working holiday, to be celebrated in all elementary and secondary schools in the country. In the event that the holiday falls on a weekend, the holiday shall be observed on the Friday of that week.

SEC. 4. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, other government agencies and units, and writing associations concerned, shall plan and implement activities for the observance of “Araw ng Pagsulat”, such as writing-sessions and writing skills modules. In addition to Filipino Orthography, "baybayin" as our ancient, pre-Spanish writing system and the use of regional languages in the celebration shall be encouraged.

SEC. 5. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,