

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 160



Introduced by Hon. LEOPOLDO N. BATAOIL

EXPLANATORY NOTE

A country without a past has the emptiness of a barren continent; and a city without old buildings is like a man without a memory."

-- Graeme Shankland

Before the Spanish conquest, the Filipino men and women were known for their advanced knowledge and skill in our indigenous written language, the "baybayin". We were not indios as the Spaniards claimed us to be. We had a sophisticated written language that was used to conduct commerce and trade with Malaysia, Indonesia, and even the middle eastern countries. Our ancestors were proud of their race, have a cultural and national identity that were at par with other advanced countries. In 1848, an Englishman noted that Filipino seamen were literate, unlike his countrymen.

As early as 15th century, we had been known for our written language, the baybayin. Francisco Alcina highlighted this fact:

The characters of these natives, or, better said, those that have been in use for a few years in these parts, an art which was communicated to them from the Tagalogs, and the latter learned it from the Borneans who came from the great island of Borneo to Manila, with whom they have considerable traffic... From these Borneans the Tagalogs learned their characters, and from them the Visayans, so they call them Moro characters or letters because the Moros taught them... [the Visayans] learned [the Moros'] letters, which many use today, and the women much more than the men, which they write and read more readily than the latter.

Dr. Bonifacio Comandante Jr., a multi-awarded marine scientist and anthropologist claimed that the Angono-Binangonan Petroglyphs is one of the best ancient evidence of "Baybayin", the advance writing system in the Philippines which dates back to Pre-Spanish Colonization Period. Jose Rizal used the baybayin script in his book, *Noli me Tangere*, and other writings. He proudly declared in "Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas" circa 1609 that the "Philippines had an established Barangay government system, a flourishing inter-island and regional barter trade and **a writing system well known and practiced in the land.**

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In one of Jose Rizal's writings, "To My Fellow Children" (1869), he said,

This language of ours is like the rest, it once had a syllabic form and its own letters that vanished as though whirlwind had set upon a boat on a lake a long gone.

Furthermore, even **Don Pedro Paterno and Don Trinidad Pardo De Tavera** wrote two (2) volumes of dictionary (circa 1884-1887) now found at the National Library detailing the script, strokes and pervasive use of Baybayin in the Philippines prior to the introduction of the Latin-Roman scripts that we are using popularly today. The Baybayin scripts were culled from our giant shells, the Taklobo, in which our forefathers gathered giant pearls, that is the very reason why we were called the "Pearl of the Orient".

Recently, foreign anthropologists and sociologists have become interested with our baybayin script. They claim that the baybayin script is in danger of becoming extinct. If we are doing our best to preserve our endangered species, how much more should we do all means to preserve our endangered national treasure, the baybayin script?

Scholars showed that culture had something to do with the Asian miracle, and the rise of east. We must not allow our country to be left again by the rising tide of development across Asia.

A new wave of nationalism must rise for the development of our nation. It is time that we reclaim a national heritage that is threatened by globalization, and the rapidly changing times. It is time that we establish our national identity. The declaration of baybayin as our national script would be a unifying element for us Filipinos. We owe it to our children and the generations to come to establish an identity uniquely Filipino.

Hence, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought for.



LEOPOLDO N. BATAOIL

Representative, 2nd District of Pangasinan

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF BAYBAYIN, AND
DECLARING BAYBAYIN AS THE NATIONAL SCRIPT OF THE PHILIPPINES

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "National Script Act of 2011".

SECTION 2. It is a declared policy of the state to inculcate, propagate and preserve our cultural heritage and treasures for the evolution and development of patriotism among our citizenry. The state shall give utmost priority to the conservation and promotion of arts, letters and culture of our nation as a tool for cultural and economic development.

SECTION 3. Baybayin also known as Alibata is hereby declared the national script of the Philippines. The official adoption of Baybayin as the national script shall be promulgated by inscribing Baybayin in all products locally produced or processed in the Philippines. Manufacturers of processed or food products shall include on the label a translation in Baybayin. The Department of Trade and Industries shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 4. Baybayin shall also include in the curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools. The Department of Education shall likewise promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. Any provision of law, decree, executive order, rule or regulation in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions and/or purposes of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.