Senate
Office of the Secretary

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

26 NOV 10 A10 :04

SENATE

RECEIVED BY:

S. No. 2600

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE TRANSLATION AND DISSEMINATION OF, AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO, THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Section 8 of the 1987 Constitution requires the Constitution to be promulgated in Filipino and English and translated into major regional languages, Arabic, and Spanish. This mandate recognizes that access to the country's fundamental law should not be limited by language. The Constitution sets out the rights of citizens and the powers and duties of government; it should therefore be reasonably accessible to the people it governs.

While the Constitution prescribes the languages into which it must be translated, it does not set out the practical arrangements for identifying available translations, completing remaining work, and making these texts accessible to the public. Without coordinated implementation and distribution, the availability of constitutional texts may remain uneven.

This measure provides a simple framework for implementation through the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), consistent with its existing mandate under Republic Act No. 7104. KWF shall identify available translations and prepare a phased plan for any remaining work, with indicative timelines and estimated costs. KWF shall determine the major regional languages to be covered in accordance with the Constitution, Republic Act No. 7104, and official language data, while considering other Philippine languages where practicable and resources permit. Completed government translations shall be made available through existing government websites and, subject to available appropriations, through public libraries and reading centers in coordination with the National Library of the Philippines and concerned local government units.

The bill also allows the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education to make constitutional translations available as supplementary educational references. It provides for KWF to seek the participation of the Supreme Court, the Philippine Judicial Academy, and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in public access and legal education through existing institutional programs. Implementation relies on existing offices, facilities, and regular appropriations, without requiring a new government office or school subject.

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

LOREN LEGARDA

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Constitutional Translation and Access Act".

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote public access to the Constitution in the languages specified in Article XIV, Section 8 thereof, through the use of existing translations, completion of remaining translations, and reasonable public dissemination.

Section 3. *Implementation by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino.* – The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), consistent with its mandate under Republic Act No. 7104, shall coordinate the translation and dissemination of the Constitution in Filipino, major regional languages, Arabic, and Spanish.

Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, KWF shall identify existing translations and prepare a phased plan for the remaining translations, including indicative timelines and estimated costs. In preparing the plan, KWF shall determine the major regional languages to be covered, consistent with Article XIV, Section 8 of the Constitution, Republic Act No. 7104, and the latest available official language data. KWF may likewise include other Philippine languages, taking into consideration the linguistic needs of communities, existing translations, technical feasibility, and available resources. Existing published translations shall be utilized and shall not be retranslated solely by reason of this Act. The plan shall be made publicly available through the official website of KWF.

Section 4. *Public Access and Distribution.* – KWF shall make completed government translations of the Constitution available without charge through its official website or other existing government websites, subject to applicable law. Subject to available appropriations, it shall coordinate with the National Library of the Philippines and concerned local government units to make print or electronic copies available in public libraries and reading centers. Accessible digital formats shall be provided where practicable.

Section 5. *Educational Use and Legal Outreach.* – The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education may, in coordination with KWF and within their respective mandates, make constitutional translations available as supplementary reference materials through existing educational programs. Nothing in this Act shall require a new school subject or changes to existing curricula.

KWF shall seek the participation of the Supreme Court of the Philippines and the Philippine Judicial Academy (PHILJA) in making constitutional translations accessible through appropriate judicial education and public-information channels, and of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) in public legal information activities. Such participation shall be subject to appropriate arrangements, their respective mandates, available resources, and the institutional independence of the Judiciary.

Section 6. *Reporting.* – KWF shall include in its annual report under Republic Act No. 7104 a brief account of the translations completed or made available, dissemination activities undertaken, and funds utilized in implementing this Act.

Section 7. *Appropriations.* – The initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of KWF, subject to existing budgeting, accounting, and auditing laws, rules, and regulations. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, rules, regulations, and issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved.