Senate
Office of the Secretary

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

26 NOV 10 P4 :14

RECEIVED BY:

SENATE
S. No. 2608

Introduced by Senator Loren Legarda

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING THE MUSEUM OF FILIPINO WOMEN WITHIN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES, PROVIDING FOR ITS PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC ACCESS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Philippine history has been shaped by women whose names we know and by countless others whose work, ideas, struggles, and care for their communities are rarely recorded. Women defended the country, built livelihoods, raised families, organized workers, advanced science and culture, protected natural resources, and sustained communities through war, displacement, disaster, and change. Their *herstory* deserves a permanent place in our national memory.

The proposed Museum of Filipino Women will preserve these stories across generations. It will honor heroines and women who resisted colonial rule, dictatorship, and violence, while documenting the everyday contributions of farmers, fisherfolk, weavers, caregivers, domestic workers, migrant workers, artists, teachers, scientists, and community leaders. It recognizes the distinct experiences of Indigenous and Moro women, women with disabilities, and women of diverse backgrounds.

The Museum will also preserve the more painful chapters of Filipino women's *herstory* with sensitivity, integrity, and respect for their dignity. The experiences of survivors of wartime sexual slavery, political repression, discrimination, and gender-based violence must be presented with appropriate safeguards for their privacy, dignity, and consent.

Republic Act No. 11333 mandates the National Museum of the Philippines to manage and develop museums and collections of national significance. Accordingly, this measure establishes the Museum within the National Museum system, with the Philippine Commission on Women as a principal partner for its content and public programs. This arrangement builds on existing institutional expertise and governance

without creating a separate government agency. It also complements Republic Act No. 9710, or the Magna Carta of Women, and the cultural heritage protections under Republic Act No. 10066, as amended by Republic Act No. 11961.

The Museum will begin through exhibitions, oral histories, educational partnerships, and a public digital collection, with regional and traveling programs so that women outside Metro Manila can contribute their histories and see them represented. Its phased development will ensure that the Museum grows into an accessible and enduring institution dedicated to preserving the contributions of Filipino women to our nation's history.

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 "Museum of Filipino Women Act."

Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State shall preserve and make accessible the histories, or *herstories*, of Filipino women and girls, including their achievements, experiences, and contributions, particularly those that have been overlooked. Historical representation shall be evidence-based, inclusive, respectful of human dignity, and open to different perspectives.

Sec. 3. Establishment of the Museum. - The Museum of Filipino Women, or Museo ng Kababaihang Pilipino, is hereby established as a specialized museum of the National Museum of the Philippines. It shall be governed and administered by the National Museum under Republic Act No. 11333. No separate governing board or government agency is created by this Act.

Sec. 4. Scope. - The Museum shall present the diverse histories and contemporary contributions of Filipino women and girls in public life, family and community life, culture, science, labor, the care economy, peacebuilding, environmental protection, and other fields. It shall include women from different regions, generations, faiths, social and economic circumstances, abilities, and identities.

Special attention shall be given to the experiences of women affected by colonialism, war, wartime sexual slavery, dictatorship, displacement, discrimination, and gender-based violence, without reducing their lives to those experiences.

Sec. 5. Functions. - Consistent with existing laws and the mandate of the National Museum, the Museum shall:

a) Collect, document, preserve, study, and exhibit materials and accounts concerning Filipino women, including oral histories and intangible heritage;

b) Develop permanent, temporary, traveling, and digital exhibitions, including community-led exhibitions;

c) Maintain a searchable public digital collection, subject to privacy, cultural restrictions, and intellectual property rights;

d) Work with schools, universities, local museums, libraries, and communities on research, educational materials, and public programs;

e) Support documentation of women's contributions to local history, including unpaid care work and community knowledge, without duplicating existing cultural mapping programs; and

f) Promote the transmission of women's histories, experiences, knowledge, and cultural traditions across generations through educational initiatives, storytelling, mentorship, and community-based programs.

Sec. 6. Consent, Dignity, and Cultural Rights. - The Museum shall adopt ethical standards for collecting, recording, acquiring, displaying, and publishing materials. These shall include informed consent for newly recorded personal testimonies and their public use, safeguards for children and survivors of violence, accurate attribution, and procedures for correcting factual errors. No survivor shall be required to disclose their identity or experience.

The rights of Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples over their cultural heritage and community knowledge, including applicable requirements for free, prior, and informed consent, shall be respected. All activities shall comply with applicable heritage, privacy, and intellectual property laws.

Sec. 7. Coordination and Community Participation. - The National Museum shall implement this Act in close coordination with the Philippine Commission on Women, National Historical Commission of the Philippines, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and, where appropriate, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Department of Education, and Commission on Higher Education.

Women historians, artists, culture bearers, survivors, youth, and organizations representing marginalized women shall have meaningful opportunities to help shape exhibitions and programs. The National Museum, through its Board of Trustees, may constitute advisory groups within its existing organizational structure to support the

development of the Museum's exhibitions and programs, without creating a separate permanent governing body.

Sec. 8. Public and Regional Access. - The Museum shall provide free access to its regular exhibitions and publicly available digital materials, subject to applicable law and reasonable restrictions needed to protect collections and personal or community rights. Programs shall use accessible formats and, where practicable, Filipino and relevant Philippine languages.

The Museum shall reach communities outside Metro Manila through the National Museum's existing regional network, partnerships, traveling exhibitions, and online services.

Sec. 9. Phased Implementation and Reporting. - Within one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act, the National Museum, in coordination with the Philippine Commission on Women, shall publish a phased implementation plan covering initial collections, programs, staffing needs, facilities, cost estimates, and regional access.

The Museum may begin operations through existing facilities and digital platforms pending a suitable permanent venue. The National Museum shall publish an annual progress and financial report on the implementation of this Act.

Sec. 10. Appropriations. - The initial implementation of this Act shall be funded from available appropriations of the National Museum of the Philippines, subject to applicable budgeting rules. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act. Grants, donations, and partnerships may be accepted under Republic Act No. 11333 and other applicable laws, subject to auditing and transparency requirements.

Sec. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. - Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the National Museum of the Philippines, through its Board of Trustees and in consultation with the Philippine Commission on Women and the agencies and stakeholders identified in Section 7, shall issue the rules and regulations necessary for its implementation.

Sec. 12. Separability Clause. - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Sec. 13. Repealing Clause. - All laws, rules, regulations, and issuances inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 14. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.