

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 448



Introduced by
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative Antonio L. Tinio

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On February 4, 2013, the country commemorated the 114th anniversary of the outbreak of the Philippine-American War.

The struggle waged by Filipinos to defend the freedom newly-won from Spain and uphold the First Republic of the Philippines against the occupation forces of the United States of America has been described as "one of the most heroic struggles ever waged in modern times; a struggle waged against implacable odds and at terrible cost."

The war demonstrated Filipino solidarity and the resolute refusal to submit to imperial aggression. Enjoying the overwhelming support of the people throughout the archipelago, the armed forces of the First Republic, led by President Emilio Aguinaldo, waged a fierce and determined war of resistance as the invading forces launched major campaigns, notably in the provinces of Central Luzon, the Ilocos and Cordillera, Panay and Eastern Visayas, Southern Tagalog, and Mindanao.

With their overwhelming military and economic advantages, the occupation forces of the United States unleashed a brutal military campaign to suppress popular resistance to the imposition of colonial rule. Thousands of Filipino combatants were killed in lopsided battles, and when Filipino forces shifted to guerilla warfare, the invading forces turned their aggression on the general populace, employing a scorched-earth policy, the forced displacement of civilian populations into concentration camps, the use of water-boarding and other forms of torture, and the indiscriminate killing of civilians, as in the 1901 campaign in Samar.

Even after the capture of Aguinaldo and the formal end of the war in April 1901, popular resistance to the imposition of U.S. colonial rule continued. Notable leaders of these resistance movements, branded as brigands and common criminals by the colonial government, included Faustino Guillermo and his new *Katipunan*, Simeon Ola and the guerillas of Bicol, Papa Faustino and the *Pulajanes* of Leyte, Papa Isyo of Negros, Apo Ipe of

Bulacan, and Macario Sakay, who declared a *Republika ng Katagalugan* in 1902. In Mindanao, Moro resistance to the U.S. occupation, marked by the massacres of Bud Dajo in 1906 and Bud Bagsak in 1913, went unabated until 1916.

There are no definitive figures on the number of Filipinos who died as a result of the war. One conservative estimate places the number of Filipino soldiers killed at 34,000 together with at least 200,000 civilian deaths directly or indirectly (mainly through disease) brought about by the war. By comparing population figures before and after the war, others have claimed that over one million Filipinos lost their lives as a result of the conflict. Nevertheless, the Philippine-American War stands as one of the bloodiest chapters in our nation's history. Filipinos of the present generation are charged with Rizal's admonition "to forget not those who have fallen during the night."

Sadly, February 4 passes yearly with hardly an official acknowledgment of the Philippine-American War and its tremendous significance in our history. Any memory of the events, heroes, and martyrs of the war has nearly been obliterated from the collective consciousness of our people. This bill thus seeks to declare February 4 as a special working holiday to honor the memory of our ancestors, the men and women who fought in the face of overwhelming odds and gave up their lives to defend the ideal of a truly independent and sovereign Philippines. Their sacrifice had been indispensable in the forging of the modern Filipino nation, and every Filipino citizen owes them a debt of gratitude.

National commemoration of the Philippine-American War through the remembrance of the patriotism and self-sacrifice of its heroes and martyrs will reconcile us with our past, clarify our present, and point the way to our future.

For the foregoing reasons, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



ANTONIO L. TINIO

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AN ACT
DECLARING FEBRUARY FOUR OF EVERY YEAR AS "PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR DAY"

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

SECTION 1. February 4 of every year is hereby declared as a special working holiday in commemoration of the beginning of the Philippine-American War. This holiday shall be referred to as the "Philippine-American War Day" or "*Araw ng Digmaang Pilipino-Amerikano.*"

SECTION 2. The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education shall ensure that appropriate activities are held in schools at all levels to commemorate "Philippine-American War Day."

SECTION 3. The National Historical Commission of the Philippines shall be responsible for providing the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, and the general public with the necessary information to enable a meaningful commemoration of "Philippine-American War Day."

SECTION 4. Funds necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be drawn from the current appropriations of the agencies concerned.

SECTION 5. If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is held to be unconstitutional or invalid, the validity of other sections herein shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,