

Friday, January 26, 2018

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Senate okays January 23 as national holiday in honor of 1st PH Republic

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The Senate has approved on second reading the measure which, if enacted into law, would declare January 23 of every year a special working holiday nationwide in celebration of the inauguration of the First Philippine Republic.

Senate Bill No. 1525, passed on second reading Wednesday, seeks to commemorate the establishment of the Philippine Republic on Jan. 23, 1899.

Senator Joel Villanueva, author of the bill, said it is important to commemorate the inauguration of the Republic of the Philippines "to remind us of the beginning of Filipino Democracy and the fight towards our freedom."

"The establishment of the First Philippine Republic proved that Filipinos were capable of self-rule and deserved their longed-for freedom after more than 300 years of bondage from Spanish rule,"

Villanueva said in a statement.

He added that the First Philippine Republic also placed the country in the world's consciousness for being the first constitutional republic in Asia.

Last Tuesday, while this province celebrated the 119th anniversary of the First Philippine Republic held at the historic Barasoain Church, Bulacan First District Representative Jose Antonio R. Sy-Alvarado announced that some senators, in-

cluding Aquilino Pimentel III, Loren Legarda, Grace Poe, Nancy Binay, Vicente Sotto, Joseph Victor Ejercito, Richard Gordon and Miguel Zubiri have already shown their support in the bill to make January 23 a national holiday. (With a report from Freddie C. Velez)

* SENATE BILL