
By: **Delegate C. Davis**

Introduced and read first time: February 1, 2006

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education - Public Schools - Philippine-American War of 1899-1902**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring a county board of education to establish a certain
4 program to teach students about the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902;
5 requiring the program to teach certain historical facts; providing for the
6 application of this Act; and generally relating to education about the
7 Philippine-American War.

8 BY adding to
9 Article - Education
10 Section 7-116
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2004 Replacement Volume and 2005 Supplement)

13 **Preamble**

14 WHEREAS, There are two church bells from the town of Balangiga in Samar,
15 Philippines that are encased in a monument at the Warren Air Force Base in
16 Cheyenne, Wyoming; and

17 WHEREAS, The church bells were taken by the U.S. Cavalry as a war prize
18 after an attack at Balangiga during the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902; and

19 WHEREAS, The confiscation of the Bells of Balangiga remains a blot on the
20 otherwise strong alliance between the Republic of the Philippines and the United
21 States of America; and

22 WHEREAS, Opponents of returning the Bells of Balangiga regard them as a
23 memorial to the American soldiers killed in a surprise attack at Balangiga by Filipino
24 citizens and soldiers on September 28, 1901; and

25 WHEREAS, Filipino citizens regard the Bells of Balangiga as cultural artifacts
26 made by and for the people of the Philippines and they have taken on added
27 significance as a symbol of the struggle of the Filipino people against colonization and
28 for continuing independence; and

1 WHEREAS, The United States possesses the means to build a fitting memorial
2 to those soldiers who were killed at the attack at Balangiga without using artifacts
3 from the Philippines; and

4 WHEREAS, While American historians later described the surprise attack at
5 Balangiga as "unprovoked", the attack must rightfully be viewed in the context of the
6 Filipino struggle for independence from Spain and the United States and it should be
7 acknowledged that Americans may have employed no less "surprising" and
8 "unprovoked" means to fight for their own independence from Great Britain during
9 the Revolutionary War; and

10 WHEREAS, While atrocities were perpetrated on American soldiers during the
11 Balangiga attack, atrocities were also perpetrated on Filipino soldiers, as well as
12 women and children in retaliation for that attack, resulting from the command by
13 General "Jake" Smith to transform Balangiga into a "howling wilderness" of burning,
14 looting, rape, torture, and killing; and

15 WHEREAS, The resulting annihilation in Balangiga was so brutal that General
16 Jake Smith was later court-martialed and forced to retire from military service; and

17 WHEREAS, The presence of American troops in the Philippines in 1899 resulted
18 from the goal of the United States to colonize and own the Philippine Islands,
19 although the United States of America was founded on the principles of independence,
20 sovereignty, and freedom for people throughout the world and had just recently
21 assisted Cuba in its struggle for independence; and

22 WHEREAS, The United States government can afford to be merciful, gracious,
23 and generous and complete the healing process for those war actions taken over a
24 century ago; and

25 WHEREAS, Returning the Bells of Balangiga to the Philippine nation would
26 immeasurably enhance the standing of the United States in the world community and
27 would be a gesture of great respect from a large, powerful, wealthy nation to a small,
28 but no less sovereign nation; now, therefore,

29 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
30 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

31 **Article - Education**

32 7-116.

33 (A) THE PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION IS TO INSTILL IN STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE
34 OF THE HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES AS IT INTERTWINES WITH
35 THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

36 (B) (1) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL ESTABLISH A PROGRAM OF
37 EDUCATION TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR OF
38 1899-1902.

1 (2) THE PROGRAM OF EDUCATION DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF
2 THIS SUBSECTION SHALL INCLUDE:

3 (I) THE ORIGIN AND CURRENT LOCATION OF THE BELLS OF
4 BALANGIGA; AND

5 (II) THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE "SURPRISE" ATTACK AT
6 BALANGIGA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FILIPINO STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE
7 FROM SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

8 (C) THIS SECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE OR AUTHORIZE THE
9 INDOCTRINATION OF STUDENTS IN ANY PARTICULAR POLITICAL BELIEF.

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 July 1, 2006.