

'21 MAR -2 P4 :04

SENATE

Senate Bill No. 2081

RECEIVED BY _____

Introduced by Senator Juan Miguel F. Zubiri

**AN ACT
DECLARING THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS NATIONAL
HIJAB DAY AND PROMOTING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MUSLIM
TRADITION OF WEARING A HIJAB**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article III, Section 5 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution affirms that *No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.*

The wearing of a hijab is every Muslim woman's right. It has been explained in the holy book of Qur-an that it is imperative upon every Muslim woman to guard their chastity and modesty. The hijab is not just a piece of clothing, it is a way of life.

This measure aims to raise awareness and to stop the stigma that is associated with wearing a hijab. It also intends to clear misconceptions about the hijab being a symbol of oppression. Across the globe, Muslim women wearing the hijab face discrimination by being labeled terrorists. In some countries, even some institutions in the country, wearing a hijab in public spaces is prohibited, thus trampling on their rights to exercise and practice their religion.

This bill seeks to protect the religious freedom of our Filipino Muslim sisters as we join 190 nations around the world in celebrating February 1 of every year as the National Hijab Day. This is in recognition of millions of Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab.

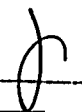
In view of the foregoing, the swift passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI

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

1 **Section. 1. Short Title.** - The first day of February of every year is hereby
2 declared as "National Hijab Day."

3 **Sec. 2. Declaration of Policy.** - The State recognizes the role of women in
4 nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality of women and men before the
5 law. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without
6 discrimination and or preference, shall be forever allowed.

7 **Sec 3. Definition of Terms.** - As used in this Act, "*hijab*" refers to a veil that
8 covers the head and chest, which is particularly worn by a Muslim female beyond the age
9 of puberty in the presence of adult males outside of their immediate family. It may further
10 refer to any head, face, or body covering worn by Muslim women that conforms to a
11 certain standard of modesty.

12 *Hijabi* refers to a Muslim woman wearing the hijab.

13 **Sec. 4. Objectives.**

- 14 a.) To encourage Muslim and non-Muslim women to wear the *hijab* and experience
15 the virtue in wearing it;
- 16 b.) To remove the misconception of wearing the hijab that has been misunderstood
17 as a symbol of oppression, terrorism and lack of freedom;
- 18 c.) To stop discrimination against Muslim *hijabi*;
- 19 d.) To protect the freedom of religion and the right of Muslim women to practice their
20 religion;

1 e.) To promote and deepen understanding amongst non-Muslims about the value of
2 wearing a *hijab* as an act of modesty and dignity of Muslim women;

3 f.) To promote appreciation for diversity in expression of oneself and one's faith and
4 religion, and

5 g.) To promote tolerance and acceptance of other lifestyles amongst the citizenry.

6 **Sec. 5. Awareness Program.** - The National Hijab Day shall be observed every
7 first day of February to showcase *Hijabis'* rights and the Muslim tradition of wearing a
8 *Hijab*. Muslim and non-Muslim women shall be encouraged to don the *hijab* on this day.

9 Government institutions, schools, and the private sector shall be encouraged to
10 observe this event in a manner that promotes understanding and awareness among its
11 employees and students of the objective of the campaign.

12 **Sec. 6. Implementing Agency.** - The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos
13 (NCMF) is hereby mandated as the lead agency in promoting and raising consciousness
14 about the practice of wearing a *hijab*. It shall conduct activities that shall aim to deepen
15 understanding of the *hijab* as a lifestyle choice amongst Muslim women. Towards this
16 end, it may conduct fora, information dissemination campaigns and other educational
17 drive to effectively meet the objectives of this Act.

18 **Sec. 7. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
19 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,