


NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



22 OCT 27 P3:46

SENATE
S. No. 1418

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

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 Philippine Constitution states 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."

Muslim women wear a veil called "hijab" over the head and chest to retain their modestly and in the belief that it helps them avoid harassment from men. Wearing hijab is required when women are in the presence of men who are not part of their immediate family. Some women prefer to continue wearing hijab based on their perception that it is a religious requirement. Wearing it also promotes cultural solidarity. The term "hijab" means partition or curtain.

World Hijab Day is an annual event celebrated to honor Muslim women who wear hijab and to urge women of various origins and beliefs to try it on. It is observed every 1st day of February. The first World Hijab Day was declared on February 1, 2013 by Nazma Khan, a Muslim woman from New York City who suffered discrimination because of wearing a headscarf. At present, there are 190 countries who are celebrating World Hijab Day.

This measure seeks to make the Philippines join the international community in this celebration by declaring the first day of February every year as National Hijab Day. The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) is mandated to be the lead agency in promoting and raising consciousness about the practice of wearing hijab. This bill was reported out by the Committee on Cultural Communities in the 18th Congress.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR. 

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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.* - This Act shall be known as the "National Hijab Day".

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

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

11 The term "*hijab*" refers to a Muslim woman wearing the hijab.

12 Sec. 4. *Objectives.* - This Act shall have the following objectives:

13 (a) Encourage Muslim and non-Muslim women to wear the hijab and
14 experience the virtue in wearing it;

- 1 (b) Remove the misconception of wearing the hijab that has been
2 misunderstood as a symbol of oppression, terrorism, and lack of
3 freedom;
- 4 (c) Stop discrimination against Muslim hijabi;
- 5 (d) Protect the freedom of religion and the right of Muslim women to
6 practice their religion;
- 7 (e) Protect and deepen the understanding amongst non-Muslims about the
8 value of wearing a hijab as an act of modesty and dignity of Muslim
9 women;
- 10 (f) Promote appreciation for diversity in expression of oneself and one's
11 faith and religion; and,
- 12 (g) Promote tolerance and acceptance of other lifestyles amongst the
13 citizenry.

14 *Sec. 5. Awareness Program.* – The National Hijab Day shall be observed every
15 first day of February to showcase hijabi's rights and the Muslim tradition of wearing a
16 hijab. Muslim and non-Muslim women shall be encouraged to don the hijab on this
17 day.

18 Government institutions, schools, and the private sector shall be encouraged to
19 observe this event in a manner that promotes understanding and awareness among
20 its employees and students of the objectives of the campaign.

21 *Sec. 6. Implementing Agency.* – The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos
22 (NCMF) is hereby mandated as the lead agency in promoting and raising
23 consciousness about the practice of wearing a hijab. It shall conduct activities that
24 shall aim to deepen understanding of the hijab as a lifestyle choice amongst Muslim
25 women. Towards this end, it may conduct fora, information dissemination campaigns
26 and other educational drives to effectively meet the objectives of this Act.

27 *Sec. 7. Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
28 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise
29 affected shall remain in full force and effect.

30 *Sec. 8. Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
31 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or

1 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended
2 accordingly.

3 Sec. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
4 complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general
5 circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,