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SENATE

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S. NO. 3083

Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

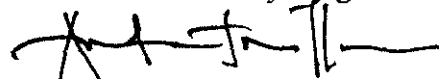
EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article III, Section 5 of the Constitution provides that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. Furthermore, Article IV, Section 1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief asserts that all States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life. It is in this light that this bill seeks to prohibit the use of the words "Muslims" and "Christians" in mass media to describe any person subjected or convicted for having committed criminal or unlawful acts.

Religious tagging of criminals spuriously correlates the propensity of a person to commit a crime to her/his faith. Often, the media is guilty of such misrepresentation, and viewers are thereafter left vulnerable to make hasty generalizations. Our Muslim brethren are time and again the victim of such irresponsible discriminatory remarks, as media – consciously or not – suggest prefixes to the word "Muslim". This only seeks to exacerbate the polarization between the predominantly Christian populace and the Muslim minority in the country.

It is hoped that the passage of this bill will make the media more conscious of the significant role they play in nation building, especially in creating a more understanding rapport and in forging goodwill among religious communities.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.



ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator

9 FEB 23 10:08

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S. NO. 3083

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AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE USE OF THE WORDS "MUSLIM" AND "CHRISTIAN" IN MASS
MEDIA TO DESCRIBE ANY PERSON SUSPECTED OF OR CONVICTED FOR
HAVING COMMITTED CRIMINAL OR UNLAWFUL ACTS, AND PROVIDING
PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Prohibited Act.*** – It is hereby declared unlawful for any person to use in
2 mass media, the words "Muslim" and/or "Christian" or any other word that would denote
3 religious, regional or ethnic affiliation to describe any person suspected of or convicted for
4 having committed criminal or unlawful acts.

5
6 **SEC. 2. *Penalties.*** – The penalty of 6 months imprisonment and/or a fine ranging from
7 Five thousand pesos (P1,000.00) to Ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00), or both, at the discretion
8 of the court, shall be imposed upon any person found guilty of violating Section 1 hereof.

9 The editor-in-chief, in the case of print media, and the news editor, in the case of
10 broadcast media and other forms of mass media, shall be imposed a fine not lower than Fifty
11 thousand pesos (P50,000.00). The juridical entity violating this Act shall be imposed a fine not

1 lower than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) for every violation. For the second and succeeding
2 offenses, the penalties shall be doubled.

3

4 **SEC. 3. *Implementing Rules.*** – The Philippine Information Agency, in coordination with
5 the concerned sectors and entities, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement this
6 Act within three (3) months after its effectivity.

7

8 **SEC. 4. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts
9 thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended
10 accordingly.

11

12 **SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional,
13 the other parts or provisions thereof not affected thereby shall remain valid and effective.

14

15 **SEC. 6. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its
16 publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,