



S E N A T E

S. No. 2613

(In substitution of Senate Bill No. 2462, taking into  
consideration House Bill No. 9045)

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PREPARED AND SUBMITTED JOINTLY BY THE COMMITTEES ON  
CULTURAL COMMUNITIES AND MUSLIM AFFAIRS; JUSTICE  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS; CIVIL SERVICE, GOVERNMENT  
REORGANIZATION AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION; AND  
FINANCE WITH SENATORS PADILLA, TOLENTINO,  
REVILLA JR., ANGARA, GATCHALIAN, VILLANUEVA,  
TULFO, AND ZUBIRI AS AUTHORS THEREOF

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AN ACT PROVIDING FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO  
SHARIAH COURTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE  
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9997, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS  
THE “NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MUSLIM  
FILIPINOS ACT OF 2009”

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

- 1           SECTION 1. Section 8 of Republic Act No. 9997 is  
2   hereby amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 8. *Powers and Functions.* – To accomplish its mandate, the Commission shall have the following powers and functions:

x x x

(p) Assist the ~~[National Statistics Office (NSO)]~~ PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY (PSA) in conducting census on the actual population of Muslim Filipinos in the country;

x x x

(z) x x x

(AA) FACILITATE THE FILING OR SUBMISSION OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS FOR CASES FILED IN THE SHARI'AH COURTS;

~~(aa)~~ (BB) Promulgate such rules and regulations and exercise such powers and functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives outlined in this Act; and

~~(ab)~~ (CC) Perform such other functions as may be necessary for its effective operations

1 and continued enhancement as a government  
2 entity.”

3 SEC. 2. Section 11 of the same Act is hereby  
4 amended to read as follows:

5 “SEC. 11. *Bureaus.* – x x x

6 (g) Bureau of Legal Affairs. – The Legal  
7 Affairs Bureau shall be responsible for  
8 providing Muslim Filipinos with legal  
9 education and assistance in case of litigation  
10 involving their persons or interests; act as the  
11 legal counsel of the Commission; and  
12 investigate cases involving its personnel and  
13 submit appropriate recommendations  
14 pertaining thereto. The Bureau shall also  
15 investigate valid complaints brought before the  
16 Commission.

17 THE BUREAU SHALL ALSO ENSURE  
18 EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SHARI’AH  
19 COURTS. IT SHALL, UPON REQUEST,  
20 FACILITATE THE FILING OR SUBMISSION

1           OF PLEADINGS AND OTHER COURT  
2           SUBMISSIONS WITH THE PROPER  
3           SHARI'AH COURT FOR LITIGANTS WHO  
4           RESIDE IN A REGION WHERE THERE IS  
5           NO EXISTING SHARI'AH COURT.

6           THE COMMISSION SHALL, IN  
7           COORDINATION WITH THE SUPREME  
8           COURT, ESTABLISH A MECHANISM FOR  
9           THE FILING OR SUBMISSION OF LEGAL  
10          DOCUMENTS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION  
11          OF THE SHARI'AH CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT  
12          COURTS, INCLUDING THOSE PROVIDED  
13          UNDER TITLE VI, CHAPTER ONE OF  
14          PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1083,  
15          OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CODE OF  
16          MUSLIM PERSONAL LAWS OF THE  
17          PHILIPPINES". THE MECHANISM SHALL  
18          BE FACILITATED AND ADMINISTERED BY  
19          THE COMMISSION THROUGH THE  
20          BUREAU OF LEGAL AFFAIRS.

1           THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AND  
2           LEGAL OFFICERS NECESSARY FOR THE  
3           EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS  
4           SUBSECTION SHALL BE DETERMINED BY  
5           THE COMMISSION.”

6           SEC. 3. A new section designated as Section 11-A is  
7           hereby inserted after Section 11 of the same Act to read as  
8           follows:

9           “SEC. 11-A. *DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION*  
10          *FOR SHARIAH COURT SERVICES.* – THE  
11          COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF  
12          INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS  
13          TECHNOLOGY (DICT) SHALL, IN  
14          COORDINATION WITH THE SUPREME  
15          COURT, CREATE A DIGITAL PLATFORM  
16          THAT ALLOWS PAPERLESS FILING OF  
17          PLEADINGS AND OTHER COURT  
18          SUBMISSIONS.

19          THE COMMISSION SHALL FACILITATE  
20          THE PAPERLESS FILING OF PLEADINGS

1           AND OTHER COURT SUBMISSIONS. THE  
2           COMMISSION SHALL RESPECT THE RIGHT  
3           TO PRIVACY OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED  
4           AND SHALL NOT RETAIN ANY COPY OF THE  
5           DIGITAL DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO  
6           HEREIN.”

7           SEC. 4. A new section designated as Section 17-A is  
8           hereby inserted after Section 17 of the same Act to read as  
9           follows:

10                   “SEC. 17-A. *STATISTICAL DATA ON*  
11                   *MUSLIM FILIPINOS.* – THE COMMISSION  
12                   AND THE PSA SHALL COORDINATE ON  
13                   THE PROPER COLLECTION OF  
14                   STATISTICAL DATA FOR MUSLIM  
15                   FILIPINOS IN THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL,  
16                   PROVINCIAL, CITY, AND MUNICIPAL  
17                   LEVELS. THE COMMISSION AND THE PSA  
18                   SHALL PREPARE AN ANNUAL REPORT  
19                   WHICH SHALL INCLUDE THE DATA ON  
20                   MUSLIM BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND

1 DEATHS FOR THE YEAR BASED ON THE  
2 TRANSMITTED REGISTERED CIVIL  
3 REGISTRY DOCUMENTS FROM LOCAL  
4 CIVIL REGISTRY OFFICES, SHARIAH  
5 CIRCUIT REGISTRARS, AND THE  
6 PHILIPPINE FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS  
7 ABROAD.”

8 SEC. 5. A new section designated as Section 23-A is  
9 hereby inserted after Section 23 of the same Act to read as  
10 follows:

11 “SEC. 23-A. *REPORTORIAL REQUIREMENTS.* –  
12 THE SECRETARY SHALL SUBMIT AN ANNUAL  
13 REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS  
14 ACT TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, THE  
15 SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
16 REPRESENTATIVES, THE CHAIRPERSON OF  
17 THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL  
18 COMMUNITIES AND MUSLIM AFFAIRS, AND  
19 THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE HOUSE  
20 COMMITTEE ON MUSLIM AFFAIRS.”

1           SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* –

2   Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the  
3   Commission, in coordination with the Department of  
4   Budget and Management, the Supreme Court of the  
5   Philippines, and the PSA shall promulgate the necessary  
6   rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this  
7   Act.

8           SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All existing laws,

9   executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and  
10   regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the  
11   provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or  
12   modified accordingly.

13          SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)

14   days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a  
15   newspaper of general circulation.

          Approved,