

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



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

22 JUL 18 P1:45

**SENATE**  
S. No. 708

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

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**AN ACT  
DECLARING MAY 17 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE NATIONAL DAY AGAINST  
HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND PHOBIAS FOR PERSONS  
OF DIVERSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION,  
OR SEX CHARACTERISTICS (SOGIESC)**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

On May 17, 1990, the World Health Organization declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder.<sup>1</sup> This occasion is the culmination of a decades-long campaign from queer activists, doctors and medical practitioners who have dedicated their lives to ensuring that homosexuals are not viewed and treated differently from their heterosexual counterparts.

To refer to May 17, 1990 merely as a historic day would be a gross understatement. To our queer brothers and sisters, that day meant everything. It meant that they can begin living their lives normally, and without fear of prosecution. It meant that they can keep working in their chosen professions without being subjected to prejudice and oppression. But most of all, it meant that they can be free to be who they truly are.

But the fight of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) brothers and sisters is far from over. Up to this day, they still face numerous setbacks in their lives just by virtue of their sexuality. For choosing to be true to themselves, most face economic ruin, social exclusion and physical threats, while some are even killed.

By celebrating May 17 of every year as the "National Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia and Phobias for Persons of Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity or Expression, or Sex Characteristics," we are signaling to everyone belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community that they have nothing to be fearful about. No matter who they are, our country is prepared to provide them with the necessary safe space where they can thrive and achieve their full potential.

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<sup>1</sup> Barris, S. (2005, April 5). May 17th is the Intl Day Against Homophobia. International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans And Intersex Association. [web.archive.org/web/20140704014026/http://ilga.org/ilga/en/article/546](http://web.archive.org/web/20140704014026/http://ilga.org/ilga/en/article/546)

The bill also enjoins all government offices, private institutions, schools, colleges and universities to extend their full support for the activities to be conducted in the observance, promotion and protection of the human rights of LGBTQIA+ persons. Further, the Commission on Human Rights and the Philippine Commission on Women are tasked to issue the necessary guidelines for this annual observance. The cooperation of everyone is necessary because it takes a village to create the safe space every human being deserves.

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



GRACE POE

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grace Poe". Below the signature, the name "GRACE POE" is printed in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the printed name, there is a small, stylized handwritten mark that appears to be a lowercase "g" or a similar flourish.



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**DECLARING MAY 17 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE NATIONAL DAY AGAINST**  
**HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND PHOBIAS FOR PERSONS**  
**OF DIVERSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY OR EXPRESSION,**  
**OR SEX CHARACTERISTICS (SOGIESC)**

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

1 Section 1. In accord with the observance of the International Day against  
2 Transphobia and Homophobia, which was first commemorated on May 17, 1990  
3 after the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its International  
4 Classification of Mental Disorders, the "National Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia,  
5 Transphobia and Phobias for Persons of Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity  
6 or Expression, or Sex Characteristics (SOGIESC)" shall be observed in the Philippines  
7 on May 17 of every year in recognition of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
8 transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual or allied (LGBTQIA+)  
9 persons in the country and the need to end the discrimination, oppression and  
10 intolerance they are faced with in society.

11 Sec. 2. All government offices, private institutions, schools, colleges and  
12 universities are hereby enjoined to extend their full support for the activities to be  
13 conducted in the observance, promotion and protection of the human rights of  
14 LGBTQIA+ persons. The Commission on Human Rights and the Philippine  
15 Commission on Women, as lead agencies, shall issue jointly the necessary guidelines  
16 for this annual observance through a multi-media information campaign.

1           Sec. 3. *Effectivity*. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its online  
2 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,