

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



'22 SEP -5 A11 :05

SENATE
S. No. 1272

RECEIVED BY: _____

Introduced by Senator Robinhood Padilla

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

Section 5, Article III of the 1987 Constitution declares 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."*

Islam is practiced by approximately 1.75 billion people in the world and is estimated to grow to 3 billion in 2060.¹ The wearing of the hijab—a visible and distinguishable expression of the Islamic faith—has been unjustifiably used as a source of discrimination and prejudice against Muslim women. This unfortunate reality motivated the yearly commemoration of World Hijab Day every first day of February since 2013 as a global movement that introduces activities aiming to dismantle discrimination against Muslim women through awareness, education, and empowerment. To date, it is estimated that volunteers and ambassadors from 190 countries worldwide take part in the commemoration of World Hijab Day every year.

¹ Pew Research Center (2019). Accessed at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/01/the-countries-with-the-10-largest-christian-populations-and-the-10-largest-muslim-populations/>

This annual observance serves as a pathway to deeper understanding and an avenue to counteract the colonial mentality of the hijab being a symbol of oppression against women. However, despite the fact that this movement was initiated almost a decade ago, the awareness regarding the hijab is relevant now more than ever. Across the globe, Muslim women are facing serious challenges regarding the display of their faith through the hijab.

Stereotypical representations lead to misconceptions and one-dimensional view that Muslim women are powerless and oppressed.² Recent controversies in different parts of the world—from hijabis being denied entry on school grounds³ to Muslim women getting assaulted for wearing hijab⁴—have been polarizing and detrimental to Muslim women. Domestically, Filipino Muslim women are no strangers to these challenges.

It is our aim to declare the first day of February of every year as National Hijab Day to recognize the millions of Muslim women around the world, and in the Philippines especially, who choose to wear the hijab and embody a life of modesty. It likewise aims to foster cultural understanding and inclusivity in our country.

A similar measure in the House of Representatives, House Bill No. 8249, was already approved in third and final reading in the 18th Congress. A counterpart bill in the Senate, Senate Bill No. 2081, was also filed by Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri in 2021. Both bills were already consolidated under Committee Report No. 370, sponsored by Senator Imee Marcos.

The passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ROBINHOOD PADILLA
Senator

² Alexander, C. (2016) *"The Motivations Behind Westerners' Obsession with the Islamic Veil"*. <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=islamandwomen>

³ *Karnataka's hijab controversy explained*. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/watch-karnatakas-hijab-controversy-explained/article38397744.ece>


⁴ *Muslim woman attacked in Austria for wearing hijab*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/muslim-woman-attacked-in-austria-for-wearing-hijab/2375507>

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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 “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 forever be allowed.
- 6 Sec. 3. *Definition of Terms.* — As used in this Act:
- 7 a) *Hijab* refers to a modest garment worn by Muslim women to cover the
8 hair and neck; and
- 9 b) *Hijabi* refers to a Muslim woman wearing a *hijab*.
- 10 Sec. 4. *Objectives.* — The objectives of this Act are as follows:
- 11 a) To promote tolerance and inclusivity in order to ensure the free exercise
12 of *hijabis* in practicing their religion;
- 13 b) To prevent discrimination against *hijabis*;
- 14 c) To encourage women to show their solidarity by wearing *hijab* during
15 the National Hijab Day; and

1 d) To remove the misconception in the wearing of *hijab* and deepen the
2 understanding of the value of wearing *hijab* as an act of modesty and
3 dignity for *hijabis*.

4 Sec. 5. *National Hijab Day*. — The first day of February of each year is hereby
5 declared as the observance of National Hijab Day to foster solidarity with *hijabis* by
6 encouraging the wearing of *hijab* by women in public.

7 Sec. 6. *Public Awareness*. — Government agencies, schools, and the private
8 sector are encouraged to observe National Hijab Day in an appropriate manner that
9 promotes the objectives of this Act through awareness activities.

10 Sec. 7. *Implementing Agency*. — The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos
11 (NCMF) is hereby mandated as the lead agency in observance of National Hijab Day
12 in consultation with the Bangsamoro Women Commission. It shall actively coordinate
13 with government agencies, schools, and the private sector to encourage them to
14 observe National Hijab Day. The NCMF shall conduct nationwide activities that shall
15 aim to deepen understanding of the *hijab* as a lifestyle choice through fora,
16 information dissemination campaigns, and other educational drives to effectively
17 attain the objectives of this Act.

18 Sec. 8. *Separability Clause*. — If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
19 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall
20 remain in force and effect.

21 Sec. 9. *Repealing Clause*. — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive
22 order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this
23 Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

24 Sec. 10. *Effectivity*. — This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following
25 its complete publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,