13TH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Bill No. 1220

INTRODUCED BY **HON. CYNTHIA A. VILLAR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The performance of the Hajj rite to Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a fundamental duty of all Muslims worldwide as it is the Fifth Pillar of Islam.

In the Philippines, the conduct of the annual Muslim pilgrimage has been institutionalized since 1978 when the defunct Philippine Pilgrimage Authority (PHILPA) was created pursuant to P.D. No. 1302. The institutionalization of the annual Hajj was aimed at providing for a systematic administration of the annual undertaking and eliminating malpractice perpetrated in the past.

Following the bloodless revolution in 1986, PHILPA was abolished and its functions were transferred to the Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA) by virtue of Executive Order. No. 122-A, under the office's Bureau of Pilgrimage and Endowment (BPE). The Bureau is primarily responsible for the supervision of the annual Muslim pilgrimage.

In the past years, the conduct of Hajj was marred with irregularities and charges of mismanagement as aired in various complaints from Muslim pilgrims. The perennial problems encountered ranged from the failure of intending pilgrims to join the Hajj citing administrative lapses by responsible government agency, the amount of fees required, delays in the processing and issuance of travel documents, to airline and billeting accommodations, among others. An examination of these problems pointed to certain loopholes in E.O. 12-A, which failed to provide for a clear responsibility and safeguards against abuse in the management discretion.

In view of the foregoing and the urgency of the measure with the view of its annual observance, approval of this Bill is earnestly urged.

CYNTHIA A. VILLAR

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AN ACT AMENDING EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 122-A, AS AMENDED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 295, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ACT CREATING THE OFFICE ON MUSLIM AFFAIRS

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

SECTION 1. Section 4 of Executive Order No. 122-A, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 16. *Bureau of Pilgrimage and Endowment.* – The Bureau of Pilgrimage and Endowment shall be primarily responsible for the administration of the annual Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia; the formulation and implementation of programs, projects and activities for the efficient and effective administration and supervision of the conduct of pilgrimage activities: ***PROVIDED,* THAT THE SUPERVISION ACCORDED THE BUREAU UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL NOT INCLUDE CONTROL,** *Awqaf* (endowment) properties and institutions; and the conduct of researches x x x."

"IN THE PURSUANCE OF THE ABOVE RESPONSIBILITIES, THE BUREAU SHALL

FORMULATE THE NECESSARY GUIDELINES TO INSURE: THE TIMELY PROCESSING OF PILGRIMS' TRAVEL DOCUMENTS; EQUITABLE AND REASONABLE FEES: *PROVIDED*, THAT COLLECTION OF FEES SHALL BE LIMITED TO *MUTAWIFF* AND PASSPORTING/PROCESSING ONLY: *PROVIDED, HOWEVER*, THAT, COLLECTED FEES SHALL BE DEPOSITED IN SPECIAL TRUST FUND WHICH SHALL BE ESTABLISHED BY THE OFFICE AND THE EXPENSES FROM WHICH SHALL BE SUBJECT TO EXISTING AUDITING LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS; THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL AND PROVINCIAL *HAJJ* COORDINATING AND MONITORING UNITS; ACCREDITATION OF QUALIFIED AND DESERVING SHEIKS; AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE, STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE FORMULATED TIMETABLE OF *HAJJ* ACTIVITIES; FREE CHOICE OF TRAVEL AGENCIES AND AIRLINES OR OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION BY PILGRIMS TO AND FROM THE SITE OF PILGRIMAGE: *PROVIDED, FURTHER*, THAT PILGRIMS COULD COMPLY WITH THE PRESCRIBED ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE SCHEDULES FIXED BY THE MINISTRY OF *HAJJ* OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA.

x x x."

SEC. 2. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 3. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days after its publication in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,