

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3430

Introduced by Hon. Rozzano Rufino B. Biazon

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II Section 9 of the Constitution states, "The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all."

There is no suggestion, whatsoever, that this policy is intended to promote the welfare of a certain class or group of Filipinos for, in fact, it is intended to improve the lives of all Filipino citizens regardless of religious affiliation, cultural identity or whatever differentiations may exist.

It is, therefore, a great travesty that Muslim Filipinos have not fully enjoyed the benefits of this policy, largely due to many misconceptions about them.

Historically our Muslim brothers have been victims for years of merciless and senseless wars that ravaged the Mindanao countryside and killed and maimed thousands, and orphaned a great many Muslim and even Christian children.

Sadder still, the travails of our Muslim brothers do not begin and end within the geographic confines of Mindanao. In Metro Manila, where there is greater tolerance for cultural and religious differences, Muslims still struggle to have their voices heard and obtain services that by law they should have access to.

There are approximately over eight million Muslim Filipinos, as per unofficial survey conducted by the Office on Muslim Affairs (OMA), widely distributed throughout the archipelago, belonging to no less than fifteen (15) tribes, five of these dominant: the Maranao, Maguindao, Tausug, Sama, and Yakan. Many Muslims, especially from the Maranao tribe, have become entrepreneurs or businessmen and have been intermingling and socializing with non-Muslims resulting in various kinds of relationships.

However, by virtue of their religious affiliation, it is not uncommon for Muslims to contend with and suffer many forms of discrimination and bias from government agencies, including local government units, when they try to avail of services or, for example, apply for permits for their businesses.

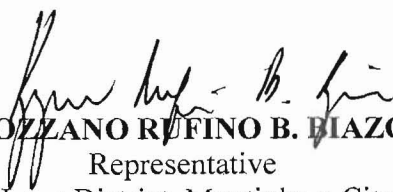
In 1987, President Corazon C. Aquino, pursuing the reconciliatory thrust of her administration, signed Executive Order No. 122-A, creating the OMA. The said Executive Order gave the OMA the mandate to preserve and develop the culture, traditions, institutions and well-being of Muslim Filipinos in conformity with the country's laws and in consonance with national unity and development, and the powers

and functions to effectively accomplish the same. Thus far, eleven (11) regional offices and several field offices have been created to pursue this mandate.

The intent of the EO is noble and its coverage wide, but precisely due to its nature, the ease with which it may be repealed or amended for whatever reason, motive or persuasion, remains an appalling possibility. Moreover, an office that caters to the many, varied, and, more importantly, local concerns of Muslim Filipinos within the local government unit where they belong is perhaps not only more desirable but more effective precisely due to its physical proximity to the administering power.

To this end, this bill proposes therefore the creation of the position of Muslim Affairs Officer in all cities and municipalities where significant numbers of Muslims reside.

In view of the premises cited above, the immediate passage of this bill is respectfully requested.



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AN ACT
CREATING THE POSITION OF MUSLIM AFFAIRS OFFICER IN ALL CITIES
AND MUNICIPALITIES WHERE SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF MUSLIM
FILIPINOS RESIDE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT
NUMBERED SEVENTY-ONE HUNDRED SIXTY, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF 1991

Section 1. The following sections of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, are hereby amended to read as follows:

“Book III. Title II. Chapter 2. Section 443. *Officials of the Municipal Government.* – (a) There shall be in each municipality a municipal mayor, a municipal vice mayor, sangguniang bayan members, a secretary to the sangguniang bayan, a municipal treasurer, a municipal assessor, a municipal accountant, a municipal budget officer, a municipal planning and development coordinator, a municipal engineer/building official, a municipal health officer, [and] a municipal civil registrar[.], AND A MUNICIPAL MUSLIM AFFAIRS OFFICER, PROVIDED THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF MUSLIMS IN THE MUNICIPALITY.”

“Book III. Title III. Chapter 2. Sec. 454. *Officials of the City Government.* – (a) There shall be in each city a mayor, a vice mayor, sangguniang panlungsod members, a secretary to the sangguniang panlungsod, a city treasurer, a city accountant, a city budget officer, a city planning and development coordinator, a city engineer, a city health officer, a city veterinarian, a city social welfare and development officer, [and] a general services officer[.], AND A CITY MUSLIM AFFAIRS OFFICER, PROVIDED THAT THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF MUSLIMS IN THE CITY.”

Section 2. All laws, decrees, Executive Orders, Letters of Instruction, Rules and Regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, superseded or amended accordingly.

Section 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.