

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3701

Introduced by Representative Faysah RPM Dumarpa

EXPLANATORY NOTE

After the 9-11 attacks on key states of America, different misconceptions about Islam and the Muslims had cropped up. The attack on Iraq and the toppling down of Saddam Hussein's regime by the joint American and British troops and other allies caused the Muslims, in general, to be branded as terrorists and Islam as a religion of terror. Recently, the beheading by the alleged Iraqi rebels and extremists of their prisoners had shocked the senses of many people. With these, misconceptions about Islam and the Muslims developed that further aggravate the discrimination all Muslims in the world had been experiencing. Thus, world peace is prevented taking its course.

In our country, Mindanao is wracked by the Abu Sayyaf terror in southwestern Mindanao, the still unresolved peace negotiations between the government and the MILF forces in Central Mindanao and the alleged terrorist activities of alleged terrorist organizations. These scenarios tarnish the name and image of Islam and its believers. Most Filipinos in Luzon, Visayas and even some part of Mindanao have pictured the Muslim populace as barbaric, uncivilized, terror-loving and violent people. It is sad to note that even well-schooled individuals have a very wrong notion about the Muslim Filipinos or worse, they do not even know who the Muslim minorities are, where they live or if they are Filipinos. Most of them become "fall guys", accused of crimes which they did not commit. Islamic learning institutions and centers are suspected to be havens for terrorists. To some, the Muslim populace is the worst problem of this country, as if eradicating the Muslims will bring peace.

Clearly, this shows that the level of cultural awareness of the most Filipino people is at its lowest. It is said that cultural sensitivity and awareness are very important, as these are powerful tools for the achievement of peace and development. Thus, the awareness about Islam and the Muslims is called for to fully grasp the real issues on Mindanao problem and accord it its ultimate remedy.

How do we address this seemingly lack of cultural sensitivity and awareness?

This representation believes that requiring all state colleges and universities to integrate in their curriculum a subject on Islam and the Muslim is a very feasible and credible answer. An understanding of the history of the Muslim Filipinos and the basic teachings of Islam will enlighten and strengthen our eternal quest for peace.

This proposal may be looked at as favoring religion, thus a violation of the mandate of the Constitution. However, the teaching of Islam and the History of Muslim Filipinos in all colleges and universities is envisioned to provide information to non-Muslims, making them culturally and historically sensitive.

Considering the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


FAYSAH RPM DUMARPA

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3701

Introduced by Representative Faysah RPM Dumarpa

AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO INTEGRATE A
SUBJECT ABOUT ISLAM AND THE MUSLIMS IN THEIR CURRICULUM

Be it enacted in the Senate and the House of Representatives:

Section 1. *Preliminary Provision.* There shall be integrated a course on Islam and the Muslims in the curriculum of all tertiary levels of the different colleges and universities in the Philippines.

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the declared policy of the State in conformity with the mandate of the Constitution that all educational institutions shall ***inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline,*** encourage critical and creative thinking, broaden scientific and technological knowledge, and promote vocational efficiency.

Section 3. *Coverage.* - This Act shall apply to all colleges and universities in the Philippines.

Section 4. *The Course Description.* – The course is a brief study of the basic teachings of Islam and the history of the Muslim Minorities in the country. The course is either taken as cognate or elective.

Section 5. *Administrative Sanctions.* - The Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education shall prescribe and impose such administrative sanctions as suspension and/or termination, as he may deem reasonable and appropriate in the implementing rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to this Act against any officials of the different state

colleges and universities who violate any provisions of this Act, without prejudice to any other criminal and/or civil sanctions as may be imposed by existing laws, rules and/or regulations.

Section 6. *Rule-making Authority* - The Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education charged with the administration and enforcement of this Act, shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations consistent with the policy and spirit of the Act.

Section 7. *Separability Clause* - Any part or provision of this Act which may be held invalid or unconstitutional shall not affect its remaining parts or provisions.

Section 8. *Repealing Clause* - All laws or parts thereof inconsistent with any provision of this Act is hereby repealed or modified, as the case may be.

Section 9. *Effectivity*. -This Act shall take effect after fifteen days (15) days following its complete publication in at least two national newspapers of general circulation. The publication shall not be later than seven (7) days after approval hereof.

Approved,