

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 1103

Introduced By Representative Pangalian M. Balindong

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The term "Muslim" had in some occasions been used by some members of the media to describe criminal suspects and persons convicted of criminal acts such as "Muslim criminals", "Muslim terrorists", "Muslim drug pushers", "Muslim bandits", "Muslim holduppers" and a host of other offenses connoting a negative message or interpretation of the term "Muslim".

The use of the word "Muslim" and "Islamic" in association with suspected or convicted criminals and unlawful acts are offensively biased against all Muslims in the country. This practice in the mass media is highly offensive to the Muslim culture, the Muslim as individual and to the Muslim Ummah since Muslim and Islam as a faith is a religion of peace and compassion. Likewise, the practice is so divisive and contrary to the national effort of unifying our multi-cultural and multi-ethnic people comprising the Filipino society.

The prohibition of this practice in the media will redound to increased understanding and social integration among the Muslim and non-Muslim communities in our country.

The immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


PANGALIAN M. BALINDONG

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AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE USE OF THE WORDS "MUSLIM AND "CHRISTIAN" IN
MASS MEDIA TO DESCRIBE ANY PERSON SUSPECTED OF OR
CONVICTED FOR HAVING COMMITTED CRIMINAL OR UNLAWFUL
ACTS, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF

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

SECTION 1. Prohibited Act – It is hereby declared unlawful for any person to use in mass media the words "Muslim" and/or "Christian" or any other word that would denote religious, regional or ethnic affiliation to describe any person suspected of or convicted for having committed criminal or unlawful acts.

SEC. 2. Penalties – The penalty of arresto mayor or a fine ranging from one thousand pesos (P1,000.00) to ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the courts, shall be imposed upon any person found guilty of violating Section 1 hereof.

The editor-in-chief, in case of print media, and the news editor in case of broadcast media and other form of mass media, shall be imposed a fine not lower than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00).

The juridical entity violating this Act shall be imposed a fine not lower than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) for every violation.

For the second offense and succeeding offenses, the penalties shall be doubled.

SEC. 3. Implementing Rules - The Philippine Information Agency, in coordination with the concerned sectors and entities, shall promulgate the rules and regulations to implement this Act within three (3) months after its effectivity.

SEC. 4. Repealing Clause - All laws, orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 5. Separability Clause - If any part of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other parts or provisions thereof not affected thereby shall remain valid and effective.

SEC. 6. Effectivity - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,