

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Manila

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2832

Introduced by:
ALIF Party-List Representative ACMAD M. TOMAWIS

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF THE WORD "MUSLIM" OR "ISLAMIC" IN PRINT, RADIO, TELEVISION, INCLUDING CABLE TELEVISION AND OTHER FORMS OF BROADCAST MEDIA TO REFER TO OR DESCRIBE ANY PERSON SUSPECTED OR CONVICTED OF A CRIME OR UNLAWFUL ACT AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The effort to push further the peace process as it relates to Muslim Filipinos requires earnest support and cooperation from all sectors of society. Respect for Muslim sensitivity demonstrates good faith which promotes harmony and understanding. For the Muslim Filipinos, this enhances a sense of belonging in a country they dearly love in spite of their being a minority in terms of the country's population.

Thus, this bill seeks to prohibit and make unlawful the use of the words "Muslim" and "Islamic" to describe suspected or convicted perpetrators of a crime and other offenses punishable under the Revised Penal Code and related special laws. The use of either of the two aforementioned words in association with criminal or unlawful acts is bias and offensive to the Muslims.

Islam is a religion which propagates the teachings and virtues of peace, humility, patience, understanding and unity. Its adherents are addressed as Muslims who comprise a considerable number of the country's population, spread all over the archipelago through migration from their ancestral domain in Muslim Mindanao.

Unfortunately and perhaps unwittingly, some members of the media, both in print and broadcast, have continued to lambaste the Muslim religious culture by describing criminals and perpetrators of unlawful acts, including dastardly ones, with such terms as "Muslim terrorist", "Muslim drug pusher", "Muslim pirate", "Muslim bandit" and other terms which offend Muslim sensitivity. This practice has to be prohibited, restrained and stopped through the imposition of penal sanction so that the words Muslim or Islam shall be used with circumspection, free from bias and prejudice.

Criminalizing and/or outlawing this cultural and religious bias against the Muslims would certainly contribute in promoting understanding, harmony and peace between Muslims and non-Muslims in our country. It will lead us to the path towards a culturally sensitive, just, fair, enduring peace and sustained development in the country.

Hence, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



ACMAD M. TOMAWIS
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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 the word "Muslim" or "Islamic" in print, radio, television, including cable television, and/or any form of broadcast media to refer to or describe any person suspected or convicted of a crime or any unlawful act.

SECTION 2. Penalties. — The penalty of arresto mayor or a fine ranging from One Thousand Pesos (PhP 1,000.00) to Ten Thousand Pesos (PhP 10,000.00) or both, at the discretion of the court, shall be imposed upon any person found guilty of violating Section 1 hereof.

SECTION 3. Separability Clause. — If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, the other section or provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and effective.

SECTION 4. Repealing Clause. — All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamation, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. Effectivity Clause. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.