

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 544



Introduced by **HONORABLE LANI MERCADO-REVILLA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The use of the words "Muslim" and "Islamic" in association with suspected or convicted criminals and unlawful acts are offensively biased against Muslims. This practice is highly prejudicial and extremely injurious to the Islamic religious culture, Muslim individuals and their collective image, and the Muslim's social well being as respectable citizens of the country.

Islam is the religion of a considerable number of our brothers and sisters, mostly living in the southern part of the Philippine archipelago. Some of them have migrated and settled in many areas in Luzon and the Visayas.

Unfortunately, some members of the local and national media continue to callously lambast the Islamic religious culture by describing criminals and suspects with terms such as "Muslim Criminals", "Muslim Terrorists", "Muslim Drug Pushers", "Muslim Sea Pirates", "Muslim Bandits" or "Muslim Hold-uppers".

Outlawing this culturally and religiously biased practice would definitely contribute and result to increased positive social space and understanding between and among Muslims and Non-Muslims, and will pave the way towards a just, culturally sensitive, fair, and lasting peace and development in the entire country.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


REP. LANI MERCADO-REVILLA
2nd District, Cavite

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**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**

*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 of 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, 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 thereby.

SECTION 4. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, proclamations, 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,