

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 1843



Introduced by BAYAN MUNA
Reps. NERI J. COLMENARES and CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE

**AN ACT DECLARING MAY 17 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE NATIONAL DAY
AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Despite modest gains on social and legal rights for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBTs) in the Philippines, much has to be done for them to achieve full legal and social equality.

While the Philippine Constitution clearly states that "The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights," people who do not conform to socially prescribed sexual and gender codes are still the targets of stigma, discrimination and violence.

Thousands of LGBTs still suffer the harsh reality of homophobia (fear of homosexuals) and transphobia (fear of transgenders) in their daily lives. Many are refused employment, the use of public facilities or health care services, among others, because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Of late, there have been increasing reports of violent crimes perpetrated against LGBTs. According to Hate Crime Watch, which monitors media reports on rights violations against LGBTs, there have been 54 reported cases of killings against gays and lesbians documented in media since 1996. But it is the undocumented cases outside media coverage which are estimated to be much greater.

While laws protecting marginalized sectors such as women, children, migrants, national minorities, and the elderly have been passed, Congress has yet to pass measures protecting the rights of LGBTs.

May 17 is known as the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia or IDAHO in commemoration of that day in 1990 when the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its International Classification of Mental Disorders. Every year on this date, people all over the world pause and ponder on the high human and social cost of discrimination, violence and harassment against LGBTs all over the world, especially in 80 countries where acts, speech, works, and other things related to same-sex and same-gender relations are still punished or fined. In some countries such as Uganda, there is even a pending legislation making homosexuality punishable by death.

Advocates who defend human rights based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the Philippines join IDAHO observances around the world with a number of social gatherings and private activities that contribute to the gradual achievement of equality, acceptance, and freedom for LGBTs and their families.

This bill acknowledges the reality of homophobia and discrimination and seeks to promote public consciousness about the need to respect the rights of LGBTs and end the violence, hate and discrimination heaped on them. It hopes to provide more opportunities to discuss and search for solutions to the problems confronted by our fellow human beings.

In this light, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

Approved,


Rep. NERI JAVIER COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party-list


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-list

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AN ACT
DECLARING MAY 17 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE NATIONAL DAY AGAINST
HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This act shall be known as the "National Day against Homophobia and Transphobia Act of 2013."

SECTION 2. In recognition of the observance of the International Day against Transphobia and Homophobia which was first commemorated on May 17, 1990 after the World Health Organization removed homosexuality from its International Classification of Mental Disorders.

SECTION 3. The National Day against Homophobia and Transphobia shall be commemorated in the Philippines every year as in recognition of the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders in the country and the need to end the discrimination, oppression and intolerance they are faced with in society.

SECTION 4. All government offices, private institutions, schools, colleges and universities are hereby encouraged to extend their full support for exercises and activities in the observance, promotion and protection of LGBT rights.

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

Approved,