

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4554**



Introduced by Rep. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo and Rep. Abdullah D. Dimaporo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Muslims believe that Islam is a complete way of life, each and every aspect is designed by Allah to advance happy, healthy communities and ease the path to eternal bliss in paradise. In today's society, modesty is seen as a sign of weakness or insecurity. This is not the case in Islam, where modesty is seen as a sign of respect for oneself and others.

The *haya* (*modesty/shyness*) that every human being is born with is seen as something to be treasured. To this end, Islam has a dress code for both women and men. Its purpose is to protect the society as a whole and promote modest dressing and behaviour. It creates a barrier between the sexes and allows them to conduct their lives with modesty, dignity and respect. Islam holds women in very high esteem and the Islamic rules of covering are intended to protect and guard her dignity and honor. The attires used most often for covering are hijab, burqa and niqab.

Thus, any person who attempts to restrict the use of traditional attires or veil by Muslim women in public places is considered a personal insult on their persons and an affront to Islam. Moreover, such removal would undermine the rights of Muslim women to wear the attire and would violate their rights to freedom of religion and expression as these rights are protected and provided in the constitution of the Philippines.

Yet there are instances when Muslim women are subjected whimsically by male guards to remove their traditional attires despite the presence of metal detectors, x-ray machines and other security devices in order for the women to gain entry or access to facilities or services. Muslim Filipinos are sensitive when it comes to the sanctity of their Islam faith. Sadly, this form of discrimination against Muslims has persisted because they are hesitant to report the behavior to authorities for fear of reprisal as there is no law prohibiting and penalizing such condemnable acts.

The proposed measure, therefore, seeks to promote cultural sensitivity to Filipino Muslims especially for the treatment of Muslim women by prohibiting restrictions in the use of traditional attires by Muslim women in public places.

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



MOHAMAD KHALID Q. DIMAPORO

First District, Lanao del Norte



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Second District, Lanao del Norte

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to allow the free exercise of religion and promote equality, regardless of religious affiliation or belief, to eliminate unnecessary prejudice and discrimination against the believer and non-believer of any religion. Toward this end, it is necessary to promote cultural sensitivity to Filipino Muslims especially for the treatment of Muslim women by

1 prohibiting restriction in the use of traditional form of attire by Muslim women in
2 public places.

3 SEC. 3. ***Discriminatory Practices.*** – It shall be unlawful for any person,
4 natural or juridical, to commit the following acts:

5 a) To deny access or refuse entry to establishments to Muslim women or
6 prevent their use of facilities, utilities or services because they are wearing religious
7 symbols or traditional attires like hijab, burqa, niqab and the like; and

8 b) To require Muslim women to remove their traditional attires which
9 include hijab, burqa, niqab and other religious attires within the building or premises
10 of government offices, schools, financial institutions, business and commercial
11 establishments and other public places including airports, seaports, land
12 transportation terminals, parks, gardens and public transport.

13 SEC. 4. ***Exception.*** – Muslim women may however be requested to
14 remove the traditional attire if the removal is done by another woman and in private,
15 if justified by public safety, health, morals or general welfare.

16 SEC. 5. ***Penalties.*** – Any person found guilty of violating Section 3 of
17 this Act shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but
18 not more than two (2) years, or a fine of not less than Twenty thousand pesos
19 (P20,000.00) but not more than Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00), or both such fine
20 and imprisonment at the discretion of the court.

1 If the offender is a corporation, partnership or association, agency or other
2 juridical entity, the penalty shall be imposed on the officers of the corporation,
3 partnership, association, agency or other juridical entity who caused the violation.

4 If the offender is an alien or a foreigner, in addition to the penalty herein
5 prescribed, the offender shall, after service of sentence, be deported without further
6 proceedings on the part of the Bureau of Immigration.

7 SEC. 6. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The Commission on
8 Human Rights, in coordination with the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos,
9 shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation
10 of this Act.

11 SEC. 7. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, letters of instruction,
12 executive issuances, resolutions, orders or parts thereof which are inconsistent with
13 the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

14 SEC. 8. ***Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
15 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

16 Approved,